

The Sea Beast of Revelation



9 in a series

Introduction

The early 1950s saw the release of the Japanese movie “Godzilla”. The film (and the many subsequent remakes) featured a hideous, giant monster coming out of the sea to indiscriminately destroy cities and the lives of tens of thousands of people.

The monster Godzilla is portrayed as an unstoppable force which no human power is able to stop its mass destruction.



Unknown to many movie-goers, the original Japanese ‘Godzilla’ is a metaphor for the United States. The destruction caused by this monster of the sea is symbolic of the two nuclear bombs dropped by the United States on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. At the time of the movie’s initial release Godzilla represented the significant trauma many Japanese civilians felt about these nuclear attacks and the fear they had regarding the possibility of it happening again.

Just like this movie’s “beast from the sea” was representative of something real, so too is Revelation’s ‘beast from the sea’. We will discover in this lesson that the Sea-Beast in chapter 13 of Revelation is a prediction of an organization which is an agency for the Dragon (that is, Satan). This Sea-beast will oppress God’s people for an extended period of Earth’s history. This organisation has already appeared in our planet’s history and Revelation says will appear again just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Overview for Session #9

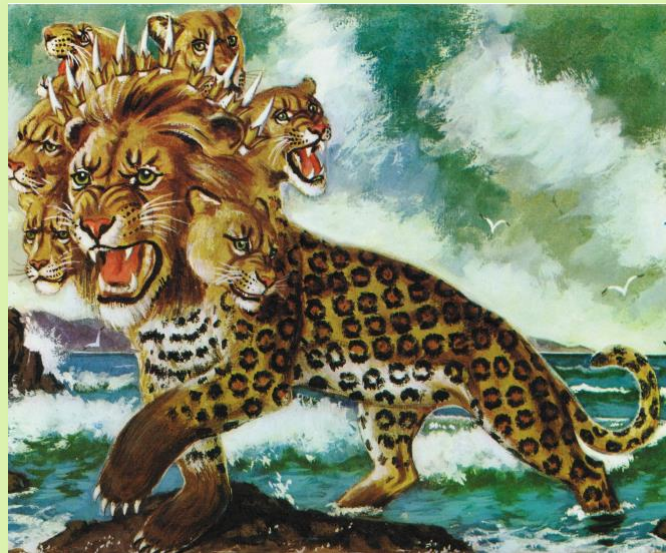
- 1. The Sea Beast of Revelation**
- 2. Links Between Revelation chapters 12-13 and Daniel 7**
- 3. Identifying the Sea-Beast and the Little Horn in History**
- 4. The Sea-Beast Rises Again; Revelation’s prediction of an end-time religious power**

1. The Sea-Beast of Revelation

Revelation 13:1-7

13 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.



Question 1: What are the main characteristics you notice about this beast? _____

Let's examine the main characteristics of the Sea Beast.

The imagery used to introduce the 'Sea Beast' comes from Daniel chapter 7.

1. The 'Sea Beast' represents the Dragon.
2. The 'Sea Beast' has a resurrection.
3. The 'Sea Beast' is a religious power and competes against God for worship.
4. The 'Sea Beast' works against God's purpose and His people.

Those who believe the Scriptures to be inspired by God have always been interested to understand the identity of the Sea Beast and also avoid its deceptive influences. God's people endeavour to avoid the traps Satan places before them, and the Sea Beast of Revelation is a reminder to all believers down through history that not everything "religious" is necessarily inspired by the God of heaven. To be deceived by the powers of darkness is extremely detrimental to our spiritual life and can even lead us on a path to eternal destruction.

The Apostle Paul gives us some revealing words of warning which we would be very wise to heed-

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

Question 2: What might be some of the deceptions you think Satan tries to inflict on God's people? _____

2. The Link between Revelation chapters 12-13 and Daniel chapter 7

In the vision of Daniel chapter 7 we note the following summary:

1. The beasts come out of the sea. (verse 3)
2. The first three beasts are: Lion, Bear, and Leopard. (verses 4-6)
3. The beasts combined have seven heads and ten horns. (verses 4-7)
4. The Little Horn (the main focus of the vision) blasphemes against God. (verse 20)
5. The Little Horn attacks God's people. (verse 21)
6. The Little Horn rules for 3.5 symbolic years. (verse 25)



The comparison Revelation chapter 13 (with Daniel chapter 7) is most interesting. Note the following -

1. The Sea Beast comes out of the sea. (Revelation 13, verse 1)
2. The imagery includes a lion, bear and leopard. (verse 2)
3. The Sea Beast has seven heads and ten horns. (verse 1)
4. The Sea Beast blasphemes against God. (verse 20)
5. The Sea Beast attacks God's people. (verse 7)
6. The Sea Beast rules for 3.5 symbolic years. (verse 5)

In our last lesson, we studied the day for a year principle when interpreting some time based Bible prophecies. Therefore the 1,260 days represents 1,260 years.

7. The Dragon (who is represented by the Sea Beast) makes war against those "who obey God's commandments". (Revelation 12:17)

As you can see, there is an obvious link between the Sea Beast of Revelation 13 and the Little Horn of Daniel 7. In fact, Revelation and Daniel are both speaking of the same power using two different symbols.

Jesus has confidence in the book of Daniel. Read what Jesus says in *Matthew 24:15-16* "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains".

Question 3: Does the fact Jesus quotes the book of Daniel give you confidence in Daniel as a prophet? _____

3. Identifying the 'Sea-Beast' and the 'Little Horn' in History

Let's summarise this power's characteristics from Scripture.

1. The Sea Beast / Little Horn comes out of the fourth beast who history says is the ancient Roman Empire. (Daniel 7:7-8)
2. The Sea Beast / Little Horn is different from the previous empires in that it would be religious rather than military. (Daniel 7:24-25 ; Revelation 13:4)
3. The Sea Beast / Little Horn will try to stand in God's place and attempt to speak as God. (Daniel 7:8,11,20. Revelation 13:3-6)
4. The Sea Beast / Little Horn will oppress God's people. (Daniel 7:21, 25. Revelation 13:7)
5. The Sea Beast / Little Horn will have authority for 3.5 years / 1,260 days. (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 12:6,14; 13:5)
6. The Sea Beast / Little Horn will try to change set times and the laws. Daniel 7:25 (Revelation 12:17; 13:4,6,14).

Question 4: How might you explain the "Sea Beast" as a religious power rather than a political power? _____

So what power has had these characteristics? In other words, who is the Sea-Beast/Little Horn? Let's take a look at the Medieval Christian Church of history?

1. The Medieval Christian Church rose out of the remnants of the ancient Roman Empire.
2. The Medieval Christian Church began its rise to power between the fourth and sixth centuries A.D. and was religious rather than military.
3. The head of the Medieval Christian Church claimed to be God's representative on earth.
4. The Medieval Christian Church oppressed anyone who threatened its authority.
5. The Medieval Christian Church ruled for more than a millennium. From 538AD to 1798AD (which equals 1,260 years).
6. The Medieval Christian Church attempted to change the Ten Commandments. (More details of this act will be given in our next lesson).

It's ironic that the organization who was meant to represent the loving values of Christ's kingdom here on Earth has often done the most damage in turning people away from Jesus.

4. The Sea Beast Rises Again: Revelation's prediction of an end-time religious power

Revelation 13:8-10 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Here we see Revelation's prediction that **just prior to Christ's Second Coming there will be a religious power that dominates like the Medieval Church** did before it. Likewise this future religious power will be used by the Dragon (that is, Satan) to lead people away from God. More detail will be given when we study Revelation chapters 17 and 18.

For now, we will introduce the prediction based on Revelation 13:8-10.

Interestingly, there is a change of tense seen when comparing Revelation 13:1-7 and verses 8-10.

Past tense

In Revelation 13:1-7 we read:

1. *And I **saw** a beast (V1)*
2. *The whole world **was** astonished (V3)*
3. *The Beast **was** given a mouth to utter proud words (V10)*

Future tense –

In verses 8-10 it moves to present and future tense

1. *All the inhabitants of the earth **will** worship the beast (V8)*
2. *If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he **will** go (V10)*
3. *If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they **will** be killed (V10)*

Revelation is now describing a **future scenario** at the end of time where **church and state will once again unite**, just like it did during the period of the Medieval Christian Church. This predicts that at the time just preceding the Second Coming of Christ, the Sea Beast power will be present and active in the world again. This power will have similar destructive characteristics like the Medieval Church to persecute God's people.

Question 5: What is the significance of the change of tense in these verses? _____



This should be a deep concern for Christian believers, and it also concerned the Apostle John. In Revelation 13:10, the instruction given to God’s people who are living at this end-time is to remain faithful to their Creator God and endure these times because the end of all things is very close.

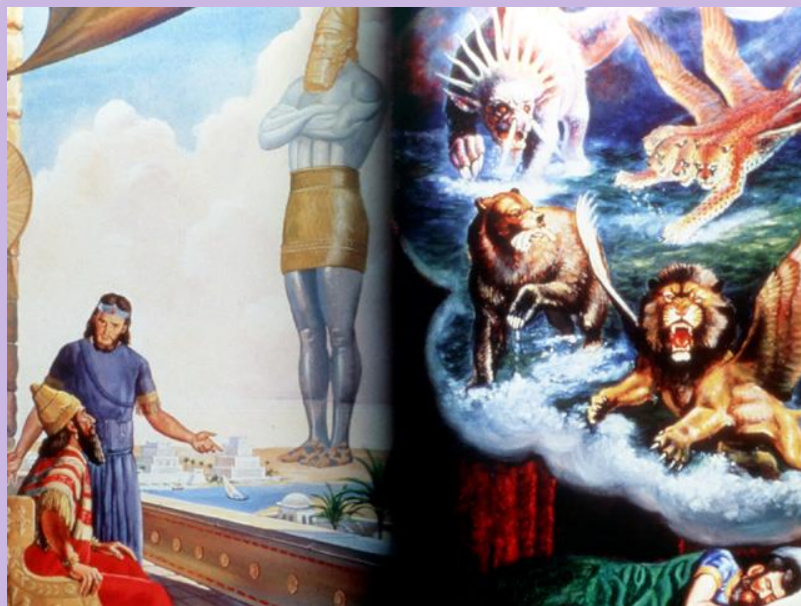
The prophet Daniel was also disturbed by this vision. As he was given a view into the future, Daniel saw that **the church itself would be the primary persecutor of God’s people**. Even though Daniel knew that God and His people would ultimately succeed, the symbolic “Little Horn” power deeply troubled him (Daniel 7:28)

Question 6: Why were Daniel and John disturbed by this vision of the beast? _____

The Little Horn power in the Old Testament and the Sea Beast power in the New Testament are given as an example of how a religious power that deviates from God's truths can soon become a tool in the hand of the evil one. Churches and denominations may start out with a Godly purpose but can ultimately succumb to the temptations that come with increased power resulting in corruption of the worst kind. Some churches have badly hurt the people they were meant to minister to.

In our study today, we have seen an end-time warning of a religious power that will conspire with the Dragon as part of an unholy trinity. This end-time power, just like the Medieval Christian Church, will hold deceive people and demand their allegiance using the threat of death.

Question 7: Why should we not fear persecution (particularly if we are alive at the end-time?) _____



A personal choice to surrender your life to Jesus and to follow His commandments will place you in a minority and therefore open you to persecution and ridicule. The assurance we are given in Revelation is that God's people will endure to the end and shall not give up.

The book of Revelation has not been written simply to satisfy our curiosity of the future. Rather, it is written to motivate us to live faithfully for Jesus today and follow His truth, even if it means being in a minority. Throughout history, God's true believers have always been in a minority.

Today, God asks us to be part of His remnant. God is searching the whole world seeking those who will be faithful to Him. This group of faithful people are given the spiritual strength to stand for His truth and will be rewarded with everlasting life.

Rather than basing our faith in an organization or church, we are much wiser to place our confidence in Jesus Christ. He will confidently direct our paths to unite with His true followers who faithfully keep God's commandments and hold unflinchingly to the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17)

Question 8: Is it your choice to be faithful to Jesus whatever the future may hold?

