

Rev 25-10-01a

Greetings, hardcore, diehard members of Grace & Truth Bible Church. You're in for a treat tonight. I think we all are because we're departing slightly from our direct path through Revelation chapter 2. There have been some recent events that call our attention to the content of our book that is a bit down the road.

Nevertheless, we are going to be looking at the nature of what to watch for, what is the power that is to come, what's the world situation that will pertain, and how do current events foreshadow, align with, or in some people's minds reflect those biblical prophetic parameters. So, it's going to be fun. I have enjoyed researching it.

Take a little bit of a break from the seven churches to take a look at Revelation chapter 13. So, the first and second beasts, the nature of that. There's quite a lot of talk here lately that you know, people are making peace deals.

Is this the covenant with the many and so on? We'll take a look at that. We will equip ourselves and provide ourselves with the information to rightly divide both the word of truth and to judge the signs of the times. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin.

Father, it is such a source of confidence and assurance for us to be informed, to be enabled and empowered, to have a bright light shining on our path so that we can place our feet rightly. We can move in the direction that you have established for us toward the goal that is a bright hope, both now and in the ages to come. We pray that our investigations tonight will reflect your glory, help us to appreciate the Lord Jesus even more and enable us to have power and love and a sound mind in these very exciting times.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. As you have probably noticed, there is quite a lot going on in the news, not the least of which is the proposal.

It has not been completely ratified and adopted yet, but Mr. Trump, our president, has been working diligently to try to accomplish and achieve peace in the Middle East. It remains to be seen whether that will come to fruition or not, but with that as a precedent and as a goal of longstanding and also a sign of the times of the end in terms of making a covenant with the many, it has garnered a lot of attention. So, let me first of all, and you can do this on your own time, don't do it now, but if you want a bit of perspective, you can do an internet search, Google, DuckDuckGo, whatever your search engine of choice is, but if you put in Donald Trump, peace deal, antichrist, you will get an amusing set of results, many of which were posted five years ago and change when the Avraham Accords were brought to fruition.

And watch the dates on the articles that are returned because some of them are 23 hours ago, 21 hours ago, sometime in the last two days. Others are from 2020, 2019, um, here's one, February 11th, 2020, Trump's theo-politics and the peace deal of the century and so on. Um,

you may have seen in the last week or so, uh, the presence of Mr. Erdogan with our president.

I tell you, I've told you before, I tell you now, keep your eye on Turkey in general. And at this point on Erdogan in particular, things could change, but if nothing else, you can see that, uh, Turkey is not an idle bystander to what is shaping up in the land where the great final conflict will occur. So, um, even before the Accords, toward the close of Mr. Trump's first term, Newsweek had an article in, uh, January of 2018 in the middle of his term, uh, Trump will start the end of the world, claim evangelicals.

Uh, and so on. So, uh, before anyone's hat catches fire, before, uh, we get too, uh, wild eyed and believe me, there is a video a minute on YouTube about recent developments, not just in the Middle East, but elsewhere. Let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about the first beast often tagged as the Antichrist never called that in the book of Revelation, but turn to Revelation 13 and let's make sure we understand what it is that people should look for when attempting to identify an Antichrist, the Antichrist, uh, is he on the earth at present? Are we going to zip out of here very shortly thereafter? He's going to create the signature covenant and so on.

Revelation chapter 13. Uh, there is some of a textual question, uh, whether, uh, he or I stands on the sand of the sea. Um, I'm pretty sure it's John.

I go with the text here. So John says, then I stood on the sand of the sea and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and 10 horns. Uh, it's reversed in the better text.

Who cares? Um, either way, the count is correct. 10 horns, seven heads or seven heads and 10 horns on his horns, 10 crowns and on his heads, a blasphemous name, a blasphemous name. Keep in mind that clue.

Now the beast, which I saw was like a leopard feet were like a bear mouth, like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority. And one of his heads was as if it had been mortally wounded and his deadly wound was healed.

And this evidently is the primary operating head for this beast. He's got seven heads, but this mortally wounded head is, uh, later going to be referenced. Uh, when you get to verse 12 and following the second beast, we'll see it momentarily, but here it's just one of the seven heads.

And you think that could be maybe he could do without it altogether. But later on, uh, verse 14, if you just want to glance down there, the second beast is going to deceive those who dwell on the earth by signs, which he is granted to do in the sight of the beast or in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast. The first beast who was wounded by the sword and lived, uh, granted, uh, to give breath to the image of the beast and so on.

But it seems to be a pretty important wound here. It's referenced multiple times. So one of the heads is if it had been mortally wounded, deadly wound was healed, all the world marveled and

followed the beast.

The beast is in existence, but then there is this very unusual circumstance where one of his essential heads is mortally wounded a wound unto death, but the wound is healed. This seeming resurrection is what motivates the world. It's funny when you see atheists attacking Christians and Christians say the signature issue is Christ rose from the dead.

Paul says it's gospel and that he was buried and that he rose again. Third day, according to the scriptures, this is the gospel. This is the good news.

If Christ has not raised you're yet in your sins, we are of all men, most miserable. If we have hope only in this life and there's no hope of resurrection, it is the signature piece. No other religious leader or figure or worshipful attention getter in history has been raised from the dead.

Only the Lord Jesus. So this is the counterfeit. Therefore the world marvels and follows the beast.

They worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast. Notice in the same way that when you look at the body of Christ, we should reflect that resurrection hope, the hope that is in us. We should be reflecting the Lord Jesus.

He is the way to the father. And if you know the son, you know the father. If you worship the son, you worship the father.

There is a directional path of attention counterfeited here, duplicated here, if you will. So when this beast is miraculously healed of his seemingly fatal wound, the world marvels, follows the beast. So by following the beast, they worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast.

And they worship the beast saying, who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him? He has such power. No one dares to oppose by force. Making war is opposing by force.

This is why they have helpfully changed the misnomer Department of Defense to what it used to be and what it truly is, the Department of War. By the way, one of my cousin ancestor relatives was Cordell Hall, and you can look him up and see his role in all of that back in World War II. So who is like the beast? Mi-Ka-El, who is like God.

Mi is who, Ka is like, El is God, Elohim. So this is who is like the beast, who is like the Therion. So this would be, if you mixed up your Hebrew and Greek, Mi-Ka-Therion, or I'd have to go look up, I'm spacing the word in Hebrew for beast.

In any case, verse five, he was given a mouth speaking great things. Notice he doesn't simply speak great things. You can observe a lot by watching, pay attention to details.

This beast who is enabled and empowered by the dragon is given a mouth. Some outside agency provides him with a mouth, super important detail. He's given a mouth speaking great

things and blasphemies.

He's given authority to continue for 42 months. That's three and a half years, three years, 36 months, six more months, 42 months. This is your days, your months, your time, times and half a time notation here.

So he is given authority. He doesn't seize authority. He doesn't simply exert authority.

He is given a mouth and he is given the authority. This given means something. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name, his tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven.

He opened the mouth that he has been given and he discredits, he diminishes, he demeans, he pooh poohs, he sets aside, he undermines, he does everything to discredit God, his tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven. As a quick side note here, in case I forget to say it later, why discredit those who dwell in heaven? What do atheists currently discredit? They discredit God. Tabernacle is the place of approach.

It's not the synagogue. It is the means of approach. What is the signature feature of the tabernacle and later the temple? It is the tabernacle.

It is the altar of sacrifice. If you scorn and deride the tabernacle, you are scorning and deriding substitutionary atonement. You are deriding the blood sacrifice required to satisfy the justice of God and to enter into his righteousness.

You see this happening today. But those who dwell in heaven, at this point in the 70th week, who's dwelling in heaven? Why would they try to attack angels? They don't know anything about angels. You could say, I don't believe in them.

But how do you blaspheme those who dwell in heaven? Think church with 2000 plus years of history as bearing the name of Christ and being indicted for failures, for hypocrisy, and in many cases, a well-deserved charge. Nevertheless, this is the lever by which if these people who claim the name of God are rascals, what kind of a God would claim them and potentially take them to heaven? So this is another clue to me. If you understand the pre-trib rapture, that the church isn't around to knock anymore.

So they're going to blaspheme those who are now in heaven. You won't see this on a list of rapture passages. This is my imputation.

We'll get, we'll see this in more detail. Notice over seven, it's granted to him to make war with the saints. Notice how this beast is given everything.

He's given a mouth. He is given authority to continue. And now it is granted to him.

It is given him to make war with the saints. Now these saints are tribulational saints. These are going to be under the old Testament covenants.

As I've said many times, it's the last seven years of the age of Israel. Any of those who come to faith are party to the old Testament covenants. This is the time of Jacob's trouble.

And those who come to faith, people say, oh, I've got loved ones. What if they don't come to Christ and the rapture happens? And oh my gosh, left behind, it's all death and woe and destruction. They still have an opportunity.

If they're alive and breathing air, they have an opportunity to come to God through the old Testament path. They will still have the opportunity for eternal life. It may take the rapture to turn them, but don't despair and give up all hope.

If you've got those who are apathetic and indifferent, and maybe they haven't made a decision for Christ, they seem to be in that no man's land. They haven't actively opposed. They're agnostic.

It's like, well, I don't know. In a more convenient season, as they told Paul, you know, Felix or Festus, I can't keep those two guys straight. One of them said, I'll talk to you again at a more convenient season.

If these are your loved ones or your friends or your acquaintances, there's a shot. You can be one of these saints. If you haven't been body of Christ, you can be old Testament Israel, but it is granted to this beast to make war with the saints.

Those who are of faith after the rapture and to overcome them and authority. We're going to see this in our next church coming up. We've already referenced it several times, talking about the two witnesses that are powerful and indomitable and unconquerable until they are allowed to be overcome.

And here they will be overcome. This is a part of God's plan. He'll make it right later.

Authority is given him over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation. The majority text left out the people. And these are four different ways of grouping people.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him. And this him makes it sound like this is a person. But remember the metaphor here, the symbol is a beast.

It's a male beast and his pronouns are him and his. It doesn't mean that if the beast represents something larger, this disqualifies that. And now it's got to be a person.

And I'm going to argue tonight. I don't think this is a single individual, but him is referencing the metaphorical beast here. 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.

Here we have something that we're seeing over and over again in chapter two and three. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. This we'll be looking a little further down, but let's start with this.

And I'm just going to propose something to think about. Think about rather than watching for Hitler or, you know, Barack Obama or Mr. Trump or somebody else who is going to rise and be the Antichrist. Think internet, think AI.

This is where we are today. Point one, this beast is going to have global reach and authority. Just put global reach and authority.

Think of the beast imagery in Daniel and elsewhere, but especially Daniel. The beast that is a leopard represents Babylon. The beast that looks like a bear, one shoulder higher than the other with ribs in his teeth, Medo, Persia.

Persia is stronger than the Medes ultimately kind of runs them off and out. And that's the high shoulder. Later on, it's going to be a ram with two horns and one horn is higher than the other because the Persians outdo the Medes, but it's a beast.

I'm sorry, the first beast is a lion. That's Babylon. Second one is the bear.

Third one is the leopard, and this is speed and distance covered. And this is Alexander the Great moving Greece into the forefront. So beasts don't represent individuals in the visions of the Old Testament.

Now Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Babylon is going to eat grass like a beast. He's going to look like a beast. His fingernails and toenails are going to grow and so on.

But generally speaking, these beasts represent something larger than just an individual. So this beast has global reach and authority. That's verse 7. Granted to him to make war with the saints to overcome them, authority over every tribe, every people, every tongue, and every nation.

Now, what nation can have authority over every nation? What single leader can have authority over every nation? But what does cross borders? The internet and AI connect the globe instantly, transcending borders, transcending languages, transcending cultures. The internet shapes politics, economics, and even belief systems. So this is a world system that already exists with extraordinary reach.

Now before anybody's eyes get too wide, this is currently an infrastructure. Think of your TV set. There's the TV that brings pictures into your living room, and then there's the content that comes across it.

You can watch Little House on the Prairie, or The Chosen, or something, or you can watch salacious and mind-altering material. People watch horror movies that are just grisly and just unnecessarily graphic, and I don't know why. But it's one thing to have a conveyance, and it is another thing to look at what comes across it.

So I'm not saying internet evil. We are worshiping over the internet as I speak. Anyone who

listens to the sound of my voice in the future is using the internet to get this audio file or this video.

So it's not intrinsically evil, but think of the purpose to which it can be put. Guns don't kill people. People kill people with guns, or as Sledgehammer says, guns don't kill people.

Bullets kill people. People want to say, well, he died with a fall. He fell from a height, and it's not the fall that kills you.

It's the landing. In any case, global reach and authority, the internet, and notice just the last half a dozen years, the meteoric rise of artificial intelligence. AI is perpetrated.

It is leveraged. It is accessed. It is exercised over the internet.

No internet. AI is going to be running on somebody's machine in a lab somewhere. So they are the right foot, left foot of this worldwide system.

Number two, the beast, if you look at verses five and six, blasphemes, persuades, and deceives. Thirteen, five, and six. We're going to see later on that the second beast is going to enable it to actually speak.

More on that shortly. Third, I'm sorry, as a part of two, the power of speech and image, AI, as you know, generates speech and images. Often deep fakes are so well done that you can't tell them from the real thing.

These generative models can be seen as alive for all intents and purposes. You can't tell the difference. You may have seen just in the last few days an actress named Tilly Norwood.

Have you seen this? Tilly Norwood is an AI-generated creation. There's been a fierce backlash in Hollywood and elsewhere because she is a completely fictitious AI-generated actress that is synthesized from characteristics that AI has canvassed the world of the internet to collate, to amalgamate, and to create this non-existent person who is so realistic, they can make videos using her, and you can't tell that it's not a human actress. You can look that up on your own time, Tilly Norwood.

This is an early example, and at the exponential rate that these things are developing and accelerating, it will not be long until you will have entire TV series. We've had these that are animated. You will now have very realistic-looking programs that are entirely AI-generated to include a lot of the script.

This is a second characteristic, the power of speech and the power of image, which when you read later in chapter 13 is going to be exploited by the second beast. We'll see that shortly. Number three, the beast that rises up out of the sea, and notice this is an international sea.

The sea is the chaotic realm of the nations. It rises up out of that. Number three, control of information.

The beast exerts control. We'll see a bit later in this chapter who can buy, who can sell, who can participate. This is verses 16 and 17 of this chapter, Mark the beast, and so on.

We'll see that in our second session. The internet already is an essential part of commerce, finance, and social interaction. Increasingly, if you want to participate in society, you have to be connected.

Your efforts and your life depend on being connected in many cases. This can easily be leveraged to require conformity. We've seen early signs of this in the cancel culture of a few years ago.

Don't think that's gone away. It's gone underground, but there are a lot of things that when you look for them, you cannot find them. From the past, news stories from the past have been altered, so that when you go to check history and you think you're looking at an archived copy of a newspaper or archives from magazines and newspapers that are digital especially, these things have been edited in recent years, and the language of the past has been changed, and they don't tell you this was updated.

They are changing history as much as they're changing the presence. Number four, the beast demands worship. This is in verse four and again in verse eight.

This requires a bit of thought about what is worship. We think worship is bowing down, getting on your knees, and saying, oh great image of gold, oh great Molech, oh great Ashtar, oh great fill in the name of your false god here, or worship of God. But the beast demands worship, and what is worship? Basically, what do you think of when you think, why do we worship God? What does our worship bring us? We express appreciation, gratitude.

We glorify the God who has done great things. We appreciate Him, give Him the glory, great things He has done. To God be the glory.

Well, how many people give glory to accomplishments from the internet and from AI? And there is allegiance. People now depend on internet sources for information. What I believe to be true, I get off my phone.

Believers are to get what we believe to be true, that is definitional, and undergirds our ethics, and our morality, and our goals, and values, and priorities, not from what is trending, or an argument that someone makes online, but from the word of God. So many people devote enormous time. It is shocking if you go look at the figures on the amount of time that young people spend looking at their phones, surfing the internet.

Many hours a day. Hours a day. People used to complain that kids watched too much TV.

That has dwarfed into insignificance compared to the amount of time. If you add up all the quick glances, all of the response to alerts, all of the quick thumbing through the headlines, and the thumbnails, and the clickbait, it is hours, and hours, and hours, up to half of the day among

students and working people is online. It is staggering.

If you add TV streaming, which comes over the internet, you can almost double that number. Many people treat the digital truth as their truth, and the ultimate authority. It shapes their worldview, their politics, their opinions in society, and so on.

And what is on the internet is not raw reporting. It is shaped by algorithms. It is filtered by platforms.

And it is defined and determined by money. Where is the money? How can we monetize? How can we get more clicks? How can we get more shares? How can we get more likes? How can we get more time on our videos? I saw an example of this. I mentioned it once before, but there was a gal that said, hey, my friend, it's Debbie and Donna, or somebody will say.

And Debbie says, hey, Donna, look at this. Look what I found in my toilet tank. And it's a large object, a little bigger than a baked potato, wrapped in foil.

And so then she starts unwrapping this to see what's in there. And she takes her time. I mean, like 24 minutes later, she hasn't gotten the last of the foil off this thing.

They are making you watch. Whatever it takes to keep your attention, there is monetary benefit. Because now we can say, advertise on our platform, look at the amount of minutes that people spend looking at stuff on our particular channel, our provided service or whatever.

So don't fall for that. If they don't show you what's going on in about a minute, flee. So worship and allegiance, number five, imitation of what is divine.

The beast is described in terms that are a imitation. They're a facsimile. They're a parody of the lamb.

It has a wound that was healed, verse three, echoing the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This is a false Christ. The reason he's called anti-Christ, anti, doesn't only mean against, it also means instead of.

Instead of Christ. You don't need the Christ that requires blood sacrifice, that convicts you of sin, that perpetrates judgment, that isn't going to take everybody and enfold them in his arms. Here's a new and better Christ.

And AI is often spoken of in these apocalyptic terms. It can either be the savior of humanity or it may destroy it. It imitates intelligence and creativity without originating those things.

It doesn't have true life or spirit as human beings in general and our savior in particular. So seven heads and 10 horns very quickly here. These are numbers that not only convey quantity, but also symbolic value.

Seven is the number of completeness, totality, or a full array of authority. If you have seven

heads, they talk about the seven hills of Rome. I don't think that has traction, not in my mind.

Horns are representative of power. But if you think about the heads as thinking parts or decision-making or policy-making parts of the internet. Now this is a bit of a stretch.

I'm just going to say the internet is not a monolith. It's not run by one entity. Who are the major entities? Just list them in your mind.

Facebook, which is Meta. And Meta has Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Those are huge.

X, formerly Twitter. TikTok, number three. YouTube, Google, number four.

And Google itself. It's not just YouTube, but the whole Googleplex, if you will. Fourth, fifth, Snapchat.

Huge in younger generations. LinkedIn, in the business world, if you don't have a profile on LinkedIn, you're a nobody. You're immediately overlooked and cut out of the communication loop.

You have to have a profile on LinkedIn if you're in business, although I don't. And Reddit. Enormous.

Anybody that's been on Reddit, I mean, that's huge social influence and so on. You might swap a few in or out, but those are some big players and there's basically seven of them. Now, if you look at the force, the power, as opposed to those who are thinkers in charge of it, look at where the power comes from.

Ten horns? I'll just give you a clue. In fact, I'll give you the clue and I'll give you my list when we come back from the break. But this is helpful because there are certain things that do not yet happen, either with an individual, with a national power, with a consortium of nations like the UN, or even on the internet yet.

And that is compulsory worship, compulsory participation, and blasphemy of God. Unless and until you see those things, compulsory participation, compulsory worship, and this blasphemy of God, blasphemy of his tabernacle, blasphemy of his people. Notice the people are in heaven when this beast arises.

So we are not going to have to duck and weave and stop, drop, and roll because the Antichrist shows up. Blasphemy of those in heaven. You can't find enough about angels to blaspheme, but you certainly can about the body of Christ and its history over the last 2,000 years.

It can be twisted and distorted, ignore the good, take the evil, and so on. So we won't, we don't see those things yet. But look at the provision of infrastructure for when this beast arises.

We'll see more when we come back from the break.