

Rev 26-03-04b

We're in Revelation and we now begin chapter 13, which begins with, I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. Our previous setting showed the dragon cast out of heaven. He has, and this by the way, because we are in something of a timeless presentation, the war in heaven, which includes, it may not be limited to, but it certainly includes truth versus lie.

The character, the integrity, the beauty of holiness that pertains to God and the deception, the falsehood, the ultimate destruction and death that pertains to Satan. And this conflict began in heaven. Some of you in days past and ministries past may have spent time studying something called the angelic conflict.

And the result of that conflict, we don't see veteran angels missing half a wing or got some sort of war wound in the physical sense. This is what results in belief and obedience or disbelief and disobedience, compliance and appreciation or rebellion and disaffection and departure. There are competing cases.

And when you see the war in heaven, this is retrospective as well as prospective. This war happened in the past and it's going to happen in the future. And it is happening now.

It is in a realm outside of time. When did Satan fall? Did he fall in the past? Did he fall before human history? Did he fall at the inception of human history? Did he fall when Jesus was on the earth? Is he going to fall in the future? Yes. All of them are true.

So the effect is noted in heaven and there is no more place found for him. There's this wonderful idea. You can turn this gem in the light so many different ways.

And I struggled to make a good summary and move forward. But you notice that the woman is given a place in verse 6 of chapter 12 and she's given a place again in verse 14. In the middle of that, in the middle of that sandwich that we looked at last time, the eighth verse after the war in heaven with Michael, the dragon and his angels did not prevail, nor was a place found for them.

God's people, in this case Israel pictured by the woman, have a place, nourished, protected for whatever period of time is needed. These angels led by the dragon fight and there is no place for them anymore. God determines our place.

Is it a place of blessing and provision and opportunity and security? Or are we trying to fight for a place that we can never hold? You can sort of draw that analogy from this as well. But in verse 17, chapter 12, the dragon was enraged with the woman. He went to make war with the rest of her seed.

Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, because his war is against the commandments, their truth, their result, the fruit that keeping the commandments bears and the testimony of Jesus. Let's obfuscate it. Let's hide it.

Let's twist it. Let's pervert it. Let's dismiss it.

Let's undermine it and attack it with science. Testimony of Jesus is the most powerful thing that the dragon has to contend with. So those who hold it are going to be attacked.

It is a privilege, don't you think? It's a privilege to hold the testimony of Jesus, to be ourselves a place where the testimony of Jesus resides and to be someone who knows, keeps, and reflects the commandments of God and the glory of Jesus Christ. That privilege is worth exposure and the potential of attack from the enemy. Bring it on.

Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. And the weapons of our warfare are effective and they will pull down strongholds. Jesus said, on this rock, my identity and your confession of it, Peter, I will build my group.

I will build my assembly, my ecclesia, my church. Catholics completely misunderstand this. And that Jesus goes on to say, the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

On this rock I will build my church. And we typically, you know, peel off and go elsewhere, but keep listening. On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

That's truth from the Lord Jesus. Why should I fear what man can do to me? Why should I worry about circumstance? Our house is founded on the rock, so to speak. So, in my view, chapter 12 then concludes with, then he stood on the sand of the sea, the dragon.

Circle the word I, scratch it out, say he, and then point back up to dragon at the beginning of verse 17. This is the dragon. It's important.

Some of these things, you've got to get them right. John doesn't need to stand on the sand of the sea. All he's going to do is get his feet wet when the next wave comes in.

It's important to know that the dragon is standing there because at his behest, one thing is going to come out of the sea and something else is going to come out of the land. There are going to be two beasts that are called forth, enabled, articulated, empowered, and given purpose, direction, and sway by the dragon. He is going to use them as agency to further his lost cause that he has already lost in heaven.

He didn't prevail there, so he's down here making war on the seat of the woman and seeing if he can prevail. And these are the ways he's going to prosecute that endeavor. So, he, the dragon, at a minimum, if you don't want to do all that verse moving and so on, just scratch out I and say the dragon.

It's the shortest distance between two points. It is the dragon that stands on the sand of the sea. John says, I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

The horns prop up crowns, the head props up a blasphemous name. Horns have crowns, the

head has a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard.

His feet were like a bear and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him power. Keep your finger here and turn back to Daniel chapter 7. Just shoot for slightly past the two-thirds mark in the Old Testament.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel chapter 7. Well-informed believers are immediately reminded of this passage because it is intentionally so. Daniel had a dream and visions in verse 1. I saw in my vision verse 2, four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. We've already seen angels holding back the four winds.

Four great beasts came up from the sea, each differing. The first was like a lion with eagle's wings. Watch till its wings were plucked off.

Unlike the eagle's wings that transport the woman to her place, these are like imitation wings. They're tape-on wings. They're velcro wings and they get plucked off.

It tries to have eagle's wings but it doesn't work. Like a lion, its eagle's wings are plucked off. It was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man and a man's heart was given to it.

Suddenly another beast, a second like a bear, raised up on one side had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. They said thus to it, arise, devour much flesh. After this I looked and there was another like a leopard.

On its back four wings of a bird. Birds of the air in Scripture uniformly, when they are used in a metaphorical sense, watch out. The mustard seed that turns into a great tree which is unnatural for mustard seeds and birds of the air roost in its branches.

It is an unnatural growth from the mustard seed and birds of the air. Same birds of the air that pluck the seed of the sower off of the hard stony ground. When you see birds, it's typically never a good thing.

So the back of the leopard is decorated with the wings of a bird, has four heads and dominion was given to it. Now if the leopard has four heads and the bear has a head and the lion has a head, how many heads have you got? Six, right? Leopard's got four heads. The lion has one, that's five.

The bear has one, that's six. After this in verse 7, I saw in the night vision and a fourth beast dreadful and terrible, exceeding strong, huge iron teeth, devouring, breaking in pieces. Well this is a seventh head.

It's different from all the other beasts and it has ten horns. If you add up the heads here, you've got seven heads and ten horns. You've got bear, lion, and leopard, right? How intentional is our passage in connecting to Daniel at this point? Very.

That's the point. Seven heads, ten horns, leopard, lion, bear. So back to our passage.

Seven heads, ten horns. On his horns, ten crowns. On his heads, a blasphemous name.

It's so fascinating that things are looked at from a different angle. Instead of four beasts, you have one beast. But they are connected via numbers and metaphorical or symbolic characteristics.

So he's a mash-up of Daniel's beasts. So he's got an appearance like a leopard. His feet are like the bear.

So the specific aspect of the bear that comes to the fore is the feet, the means of travel. And if you know bear attacks, bear claws, their power is in their feet. The lion, his power is in his mouth.

The leopard, the power is in their speed, right? So each has a different area of strength. That's pictured in Babylon, then Medo-Persia. You've got the lion, then you've got the bear, then you've got the leopard, which is Greece, Alexander's speed of movement.

And then the iron beast with the teeth and so on, which represents the Roman Empire. That's all combined here. It's going to take the strengths of those and amalgamate them into what is sometimes called the revived Roman Empire in some interpretations.

But, mouth like the mouth of the lion. That's the lion's foremost weapon. And remember mouth.

Anytime you see the mouth, it's like anytime you see birds, think first of the birds of the air that take away the seed of the Word of God. The birds that have to be shooed away from the pieces of the sacrifice that are divided by Abraham, and he has to wait until dark for the Lord to come like a smoking lantern and so on. Birds, they're just harbingers of doom in many ways.

Here you have the mouth of this beast is like the mouth of a lion. And this is speech that involves threat of violence. The flood that we saw from the dragon aimed at the woman trying to wash her away, this is the volume of speech.

Don't you think sometimes when you turn on your TV, it's just an overwhelming deluge of viewpoint. You listen to this person, that person, and the other person, and magically, they're all using the same word, that the same phrase, this congressman, that senator, this spokesperson, this potential candidate, and somehow they get an early briefing via email, and they're all using the same little catchphrase. It's a, we're going to flood whoever someone happens to hear, we want them to get this same message.

And we will inundate social media with a point of view. How can you have half the country of one opinion and half of another? The half of the country that doesn't understand what's going on, is being misled and deceived, and isn't getting the facts. Anyone in their right mind who

understands the facts knows that there are certain things that have to happen if we are to survive.

And it is like standing on a railroad track with a speeding train a few hundred yards away. And someone telling you a story that's got nothing to do with tracks, trains, impacts, or death. It's crazy town.

And sometimes you have to look at those people and call them out and say, these people are crazy, which our president recently did. So the beast which I saw verse two, like a leopard, it is going to be swift. It's going to be hard to stop it because of its speed.

His feet are like the feet of a bear. He can pull things down and stand on them so they can't move. Bears pin down their prey and then tear at them with their teeth, their size, their strength, with their paws.

They stand on things and then they can rip the ribs out and have three of them sticking out of their teeth as as in Daniel seven. His mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

How is this happening? The dragon is standing on the sand of the sea. Do you see it? The dragon brings this beast out of the sea and gives it his power, his throne, and great authority. And this throne is going to be expressed in ten different ways.

Little horns of authority wearing crowns. People with crowns sit on thrones. Even the 24 elders sit on thrones and have crowns, right? So, but this, this is a direct product and an active agent of the dragon, Satan, the devil, the serpent.

This is his earthly manifestation. He is standing on the beach. The dragon is standing on the beach.

On one side of him is the troubled sea whose waters cannot rest and cast up mire and dirt. And there is no peace there, saith my God to the wicked. This is in metaphorical terms, he's not literally going to come walking out of the sea like is depicted sometimes.

The sea is the roiling brew of the nations, the chaotic, unconstrained, and uncontrollable pool of wickedness. So Satan calls him forth and gives him his power, his throne, and great authority. Starting in verse 17 of the previous chapter all the way through, he is the dragon.

So now we're looking at this beast. Verse three, I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded and his deadly wound was healed. Zechariah chapter 11, verse 17.

I finally found it. So keep your finger here and turn back to Zechariah, Zechariah Malachi, second to the last book of the Bible and go to chapter 11. This is going to fascinate you.

This will be the one thing you remember from this lesson, if nothing else. I was quite impressed when this came to my attention. Zechariah chapter 11, verse 12.

If it is agreed with you, give me my wages. If not, refrain. They wait out for my wages, 30 pieces of silver.

The Lord said to me, throw it to the potter, that princely price they set on me. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter. Don't have time to go chase that down.

I cut into my other staff bonds that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And the Lord said to me, next, here we go. Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd, a foolish shepherd.

For indeed, I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock.

A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye. His arm shall completely wither and his right eye shall be totally blinded. This worthless shepherd.

Remember in one account, it says that God inspired David to number the people and in the parallel it says Satan incited him. So who was it? Was it Satan or was it God? And we say yes. God saw it coming and incorporated it into his plan.

The immediate agent was Satan that got David worried about how big was his army and he started numbering him. And then they did not pay the temple tax. You know that story or you can look it up.

Here it says God incites the worthless shepherd, the foolish shepherd and he says I will raise him up. And in some sense this is passive. God will allow him to be raised up.

I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care. I will raise up a shepherd in the earth. What happens when a shepherd rises up? What do the sheep do? They follow.

This beast comes out of the sea and the whole world, everyone in the land slash earth follows him. This is a parallel passage. Now pay close attention here.

In Zechariah 11 17, this sword is going to hit his arm and his arm is going to completely wither and his right eye is going to be wounded and blinded. So picture this shepherd. Think of a shepherd.

He gets hit by a sword and think about his eye being wounded, scarred and blinded. Think about his arm being wounded and withered. Right? So here's the shepherd that the sheep are following and he is notable and distinct and identifiable because he's got a bad eye and a bad arm, a bad hand.

Right? So here in our passage in chapter 13, this mortal wound and the deadly wound is healed.

All the world marvels and follows the beast. We are going to see before long and we'll cover it in detail when we get there, but I want to tell you now this this deadly wound that is healed leaves the beast from the sea scarred.

You know this without us turning to the passage. What is the mark of the beast? It's the number of his name 666. Where is it displayed? On the face and on the hand.

This mark, remember when Mr. Trump got his ear shot and for some days and weeks after that people were wearing gauze bandages on their ear in expressions of sympathy and affirmation that that they're with him. I suspect that the mark of the beast in the forehead and on the right hand is a sympathy mark of identification with this beast that has these scars and he's an object of adoration as well as sympathy and support and people will gladly take this mark because well I'm with him. He's got this wound on his face, his forehead, that's where your eyes are is right below your forehead and he's been struck and he's got this withered hand so this deadly wound that is healed leaves this signature scarring behind and the people who take his mark and portray his name, his reputation, his history, his identity is going to take some sort of literal form.

Anyway when when you think about the mark of the beast go back and read 1117 of Zechariah and and note that more than once we are told that this beast receives a deadly wound and the deadly wound is healed. It's almost a simulated resurrection. He's a false Messiah and in the same way that the Lord Jesus was physically attacked and slain and then returns there seems to be some artifice, some simulation, some false fulfillment of this same pattern.

Something to think about when you see the mortal wound, deadly wound is healed and all the world marvels and follows the beast. So verse 4, they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast. How much more can you falsify, simulate and fool people? This foolish shepherd may be a shepherd who fools rather than being himself foolish.

He's a shepherd that misleads the sheep in Zechariah. A fooling shepherd not a foolish shepherd will lead the sheep astray. Here they worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast.

Notice the beast is going to represent and communicate Satan and the worship will be brokered through this entity to Satan himself. They worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast and they worshipped the beast. We think of ourselves worshipping God in heaven and giving due worship and praise to the Lord Jesus.

They're going to do the same thing and what do they say? Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And again, I think a lot of this warfare may be in the realm of ideas and persuasion, policies and purposes. Are you with him? Being with him doesn't say and they took up arms to fight for him. It says they worship him and worship is in the realm of recognition of what you believe to be truth and what you believe to be right and what you believe to be productive and fruitful.

This worship goes to the dragon and to this beast that he calls forth and gives his authority and in many ways his appearance. Satan himself is depicted with seven heads and ten horns and here is this representation. Remember the Lord Jesus, the fullness of deity in bodily form.

This is going to be the fullness of the dragon in bodily form and he represents him. Notice verse 5, this is why I spent the first session talking about the mouth and the nature of what comes forth from the mouth. Sometimes it is fire, sometimes it is flood.

In our context, we went to James previous session and looked at the tongue that is set on fire by hell and the one who can bridle his tongue brings his whole body into submission. He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies and he is given authority to continue 42 months. Three years is 36 months.

Half a year is six months. 42 months is three and a half years, 1260 days. This is the same period where the woman is sheltered in chapter 12 verse 6. It is the same as the time times and half a time in verse 14 of that same chapter.

Now we have it depicted as 42 months. All of this I believe is the last half of the 70th week. We may revise that as we go but he opens his mouth in blasphemy against God.

What is he blaspheming? Blasphemes his name, his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. Fascinating. Understandable that Satan's minion, his agency, his physical embodiment at this point blasphemes God.

Blasphemes his tabernacle. Beginning of the previous chapter you have John measuring the temple, the place of worship, and you see that things can shift in their emphasis. Is he the dragon or is he the serpent? Is he the devil or is he Satan? Which facet are you emphasizing? Why would you talk about the place of worship as the tabernacle where the previous reference was to the temple? The temple is at the finished end.

This is the temple that is existing as John goes to measure it. He's not traveling into the past. This is the present-day temple.

So this is at the recent end of the spectrum. The tabernacle is the origin. This is an attack on the origins of the worship of God.

The tabernacle in the wilderness is where Israel began to experience the personal presence of God in their midst, right? So the beast is going to attack the origin. This is what is happening now in attack on biblical faith and genuine Christianity is it originated falsely. There's no such thing as the resurrection.

It's delusional. It's just another religion. It's no different.

We are founded. There's none other name under heaven by which we can be saved than that of the Lord Jesus. Paul says the gospel is Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

He was buried and he was raised again the third day according to the Scriptures. So we preached, so you believed. That's the foundation.

So the attack on God's tabernacle, there's a passage that says that the word became flesh and dwelt among us. The word dwelt in John 1 is tabernacled, tented among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The word became flesh and tabernacled.

So this is an attack on the origin of faith in Christ, which explains the third target of attack. The name of God, God's character, God's reputation, the alleged acts of God in history, originating the people of God, Old Testament and New, attacking the tabernacle, the notion that there can be the presence of God in the midst of God's people, and the origination of that idea, and thirdly, those who dwell in heaven. Who dwells in heaven at this point? You.

Me. The history of the last 2,000 years of Christianity, there's going to be an attack. Look at the horrible things that are the result of Christian faith.

Twisting it, distorting it, perverting it, calling faith what is not faith, and calling Christianity what is not Christianity, and then attacking and burning that straw man. Look at what alleged Christianity allegedly did, is how we would view it, but they're going to lay crimes, and bigotry, and racism, and destruction, and perversion, and persecution at the feet of those who now dwell in heaven. Look at the attacks on the Lord Jesus when he never did a single thing wrong, and never said a bad word.

Look at people who are pursuing and defending honest, and truthful, and biblical agendas in our culture, in our nation, in our political, and social arenas, and are vilified, and viciously attacked, and the endeavor is to destroy them reputation-wise, if nothing else. So this is the kind of attack, but notice he opens his mouth. Our warfare is in the world of ideas.

Blasphemes, his name is Tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven, that's the glorified church-age believers who are no longer on the earth. It was granted to him, notice, it was given, it is allowed, God will let these beasts arise, he will give Satan latitude, as he did in the first chapters of Job. God could end this with a word, but it is given to him, in verse 7, granted to him to make war with the sanctified ones, and to overcome them.

We just saw this previously with the witnesses. They are impervious, they are impossible to oppose or defeat for the duration of their witness, another 1,260 day period. The two witnesses are unstoppable.

When it is time, and their testimony is complete, God permits them to be opposed, attacked, and overcome. Same thing here. This is why we have to be ready.

We don't know where our service will entail faithfulness unto death. Be faithful unto death, believers in Smyrna, and I will give you the crown of life. Some of us are going to need to exploit the time that is given to us, and there will be a time when it ends.

Death claims all of us at some point, and it is a seeming victory. I thought you were given eternal life. I thought you were saved by the blood of Christ.

How is it that death has taken you out? God allows death to claim us the way it claimed the Lord Jesus, the way it is going to claim the two witnesses. But death cannot hold the Lord Jesus, and death will not hold us. But we have to be willing to be faithful unto death.

Be faithful whatever period of time God grants us. And if we are overcome, whether it is simply by death or by the forces of darkness, we are not truly overcome. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are overcomers by faith. And to him that overcomes, wonderful things are granted. Be faithful unto death.

Those overcomer blessings will follow. But you can't fade, you can't fail, you can't allow yourself to be deceived. I have seen any number of pastors, I can almost fill up the fingers of my hand with pastors I have known personally, who have been defeated before they died, have been deflected, have been deceived, have been co-opted, have been led astray, have lost their church, lost their witness, lost their ministry, have called into question all of the good things that they did in earlier phases, because they weren't faithful as long as they were here.

They're still here, and they've been defeated, and they weren't faithful unto death. The only defeat that God is going to allow for a faithful believer is the transition from death to life. It looks like a defeat, as it did with Jesus, but it's not.

Same for us. So, you've got to pay attention. Nobody talks about these verses.

It is granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. The God of glory is going to grant the Antichrist, the beast, the representative of Satan, the power to overcome the sanctified ones? What is up with that? What we just said is what's up with that. Be faithful unto death.

Play the long game. You make an investment. If you have a short-term drop, the market bottom drops out or whatever, play the long game.

Stick with it. Don't panic. And these little fits and spurts in the long haul, many times, if you invest wisely, it's vindicated.

Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. Play the long game.

Invest. Be steady and steadfast unto death. They're overcome, and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, the earth dwellers. This is where we'll pick up next time. What is the application? This conflict is going on now.

The spirit of Antichrist, this same John tells us in his epistle, is already at work. Don't be taken in. Be faithful unto death.

If we get overcome by death, so be it. I don't want to get overcome any time before that. Anyway, more to come next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, what a wonderful hope. What a tremendous opportunity we have to avail ourselves of your power.

The devil may give power to his representative and those who worship and follow him, but we have your divine grace at work in us to will and to do for your good pleasure. We pray that as we reflect on these passages, these truths, these connections, Old Testament and New God, the Holy Spirit will lead us to be fruitful, to be those that reflect your glory and the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.