

THE REVELATION

Lesson 21: Leviathan- The Persecuting Power of Government

Intro:

Read Job 41

BIG IDEA: God warns us that _____, under the power of _____, seek to destroy the Church thru _____.

The Beast from the Sea

¹ And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ² And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴ And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

- The dragon, seeking _____ in his war on the saints, summons help from the _____ and the _____.
- A hideous _____ arises from the sea that bears a striking resemblance to the _____.
- He is the _____ of the Dragon, as Christ is the image of the living _____.

Dragon	Leviathan
7 heads	7 heads
10 horns	10 horns
7 crowns on its heads	10 crowns on its horns
Giant red serpent or dragon	Like a leopard (body), bear (feet) and lion (mouth)

- The beast resembles the bodies of the first 3 beasts that arise from the sea in _____, but has 10 _____ like the 4th beast.
- The beast has _____ more crowns than the dragon.
- The horns have _____ names on them. Kings often took on the titles of "god" and "savior" including the Roman Emperors.

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- The beast receives _____ & _____ on earth from the dragon. He is the dragon's _____.
- The beast has a _____ that _____.
- Unbelievers _____ the dragon and the beast thinking them all _____.
- Given authority, rising from the dead... this beast is the _____ Christ!
- The _____ is here viewed as a counterfeit for the _____.
- Rome fell into disarray with the suicide of _____. This halted the Roman assault on the Jews and _____.
- The power of Rome was revived with _____ who resumed the Jewish War in earnest.
- Rome became the _____ source of _____ against the church.

Read Daniel 7. How does this help you to make sense of John's vision?

_____ => Medo-Perisians => _____ => Rome

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
<p>The beast is identified as Rome. Many historicists view this first beast as pagan Rome and the 2nd as either the Papacy or the apostate priesthood of Rome. Another view is that the first is the political power of papal Rome and the 2nd is the ecclesiastical power. The sea is often interpreted as the flood of Gothic invasions. The 7th head which is wounded is often viewed as Julian the Apostate. Theodosius no longer tolerated pagan worship in the</p>	<p>The sea refers to the Gentile world from which Daniel's beasts arose. The dragon looks to the sea for coming help. There is disagreement as to whether this beast refers to an individual or an empire. The individual leads an empire- the Roman Empire. The beast is often viewed as Nero. Rome is introduced now as the chief instrument of judgment on apostate Israel, and the great persecutor of the Church. The beast survives the mortal</p>	<p>The sea refers to the Gentile world. The beast refers to a Gentile kingdom, Rome. Dispensationalists believe that this represents a revived Roman Empire. This revived empire is an amalgamation of the empires it has absorbed (Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece) (again?). This time the people will love Rome. The mortal wound is often viewed as an assassination attempt against the anti-Christ.</p>	<p>The beast symbolizes any governmental system that opposes the Church. Governments regularly oppose the Lord's Anointed and His people (Ps. 2). The similarity of appearance suggests the beast is the "governmental incarnation" of Satan. The dragon works thru the beast.</p>

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<p>Empire. This is seen to have resumed under the influence of the papacy with Charlemange. 7th Day Adventists see the wound as occurring during Napoleon's victory in 1798, and revived by Mussolini's Concordat of 1929 which restored the papacy.</p>	<p>wound to a head, the head itself dies. Nero's death threatened to undo the Empire. Within a year there were 3 emperors and the Empire recovered under the rule of Vespasian. David Chilton argues that the wound was caused by the prosperity of the Gospel.</p>		
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Talk it Out: What views make the most sense of the passage?

“The death and resurrection of Jesus has caused a fatal blow. The beast is not dead, but dying.”

Derek Thomas⁷⁰

“Behind the Beast, a perversion of state power, stands the Dragon, who energizes and endorses him. Christians are to be alert to satanic influence, not only with individuals, but also with institutions and whole societies.” **Vern Poythress**⁷¹

“Interestingly, the beast arises from the sea which reflects the geographical perspective of Rome when considered either from Patmos or Israel.” **Kenneth Gentry**⁷²

The Power of the Beast

⁵ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

- The beast was filled with _____ and spoke blaspheme against God, heaven and all who dwell there.

⁷⁰ Thomas, pp. 110-1.

⁷¹ Poythress, pp. 141.

⁷² Pate, pp. 68.

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- He boasts of the counterfeit _____ as the true god, earth as heaven (counterfeit _____) and its subjects as those truly saved (counterfeit _____).
- It was given power for _____ years.
- It was granted power to make war upon the _____, trying to _____ them.
- It had _____ authority over the whole world, _____ Christ's authority over every tribe, nation, language and tongue.
- Though he's _____, he cannot _____ the saints from that book which was written before _____.
- God is in _____ even though it _____ like the Beast and therefore the Dragon are.
- The saints must persevere, _____ in God's election, Christ's work and God's _____.

Historicist	Preterist	Futurist	Idealist
<p>They usually point to the Pope as making such blasphemous claims, particularly Nicholas and Innocent III. We find Pope Leo XIII (1894) making such audacious claims as well as Pius X (1922) that "I am God on earth".</p> <p>They use the day-year hermeneutic to arrive at 1,260 years of oppression.</p> <p>They point to the many Christians slain by the Church of Rome before, during and after the Reformation.</p>	<p>All of the emperors of Rome enforced worship of themselves. People who refused to worship, at times, would be imprisoned or slain (see Pergamum). The Jews turned away from Christ to Caesar (we have no king but Caesar!). Nero's persecution of the church lasted 42 months or 3 ½ years. Some see this as the original meaning, but that this pattern continues until the end of time.</p>	<p>This refers to the 2nd half of the Tribulation period. This, again, is the revived Roman Empire of the future since they don't see Daniel 9:27 as fulfilled in the Jewish War (which took, 7 years). The Beast is viewed as persecuting the Jews, not the Church.</p> <p>Ryrie takes an alternate translation of vs. 10 as a word of comfort that those who persecute will be destroyed in the lake of fire.</p>	<p>They often see Rome as the initial fulfillment, but with many other governments falling suit until the final fulfillment at the end of time. Particular governments will abuse their God-given authority and serve Satan. They persecute the Church. The 42 months are seen as symbolizing the time between the 2 advents of Christ.</p>

Talk it Out: Which view(s) makes more sense of the passage?

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“For John this meant, of course, the Roman Empire; but every succeeding generation of Christian people knows some equivalent of it.” **Michael Wilcock**⁷³

“Successful modern democratic governments are not literally killing people. They do not need to, as long as their idolatrous programs are so successful! They tend not toward paternal severity, but toward maternal smothering.” **Vern Poythress**⁷⁴

“In the last analysis, it is always a choice between the power that operates through inflicting suffering, that is, the power of the beast, and the power that operates through accepting suffering, namely, the power of the Lamb.” **Bruce Metzger**⁷⁵

Practical Implications:

- _____ will often seek our _____ over our allegiance to God.
- This can be done thru _____ faith, a corrupted religion or the _____ of faith.
- One tool is the power of persecution- _____, deprivation, _____ or death.
- The state, apart from a lively _____ presence, will seek to be a _____ for God: hard or soft statism.

⁷³ Wilcock, pp. 124.

⁷⁴ Poythress, pp. 146.

⁷⁵ Metzger, pp. 77.