

Charts: The Third Parenthetical Visions: Chart #15

PREFACE

Please turn to Revelation 6, and the breaking of the seven seals.

Read Revelation 6:1-2.

Here we have, in that passage, John's first rendering of the introduction of Antichrist to earth. He is the first character to emerge from the seals—the first horseman of what is commonly referred to as the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” In general terms it is a picture of a winner, a victor (hence the crown of victory). Here John shows him at his most benign, at the beginning of his public life, and we are not yet attuned to his motives and goal: Victory over what? Conqueror of who? Who or what will he be shooting at with his bow? As I pointed out in Session 11,

Generally speaking, for the first half of the Tribulation Antichrist is coming onto the world stage. He is clever. He is winsome. He is a strong leader who has all the answers to the world's problems. People are drawn to him like flies to honey—or should we say like a dog to its vomit. He will eventually be recognized as the savior of the world. This describes him during the roughly first half of the Tribulation. He is working, he is plotting, he is setting in place those who will assist him in his plan, but his true purpose remains secret, shielded from the rest of the world.

Now turn to our text in Revelation 13.

Read Revelation 13:1-2.

Here is John's rendering of Antichrist *later* in his career—approximately three and one half years after his emergence in Revelation 6. Now is when we—not necessarily those on earth at the time, but *we*—see him in full flower, revealing the true evil and ugliness lying beneath his heretofore benign public image. And from those first two verses it is immediately apparent: the “beast from the sea” is not a nice guy.

There is one more contrast between the two renderings: In the first we see more the *person*, while in the second we see more the *political structure* under-girding him, and over which he rules supreme. Additionally, in the second we see clearly from whence his power comes and whose servant he truly is.

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Frankly I'm a little disappointed in the NASB95 update in inserting (along with the NIVs and CSB) the word "dragon." It is not that it is inaccurate, but "dragon" is not in the text—only "he," as it is in the original NASB.

If you had the various versions spread before you, you would see that the translators do not agree on where that first sentence belongs. Some place it at the beginning of v1 (NASB, NIVs, and KJVs); the CSB makes it an *eighteenth* verse of Chapter Twelve; the ESV—best in my estimation—tacks it onto the end of v17 of Chapter Twelve. The KJVs, working from other manuscripts, have, "Then **I** stood on the sand of the sea, which implies "I, John,..." The difference between "I" and "he" in the Greek is just one letter: *estathen* or *estathe*. The older and preferred manuscripts have "he," referring to the dragon. In my opinion the ESV treats this the best; by placing the sentence at the end of 12:17, which is explicitly all about the dragon, so the pronoun "he" clearly points to the dragon. We don't have to wonder.

Remember: There are no chapter or verse breaks in the original text. These were added much later by editors. Nor are there paragraph and sentence breaks. The original Greek is just one long string of characters.

When one looks at vv1-2 as a unit, the "he" (or "dragon") makes perfect sense. It is the dragon causing the beast to rise out of the sea, and it is he who gives him "his power and his throne and great authority."

Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea,

It is easy to see this as a moment of birth, as in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, rising from the sea fully grown upon a giant scallop shell. This does not depict the beast's birth, however, nor even his introduction to the public, but him at his zenith of power.

The context, following Chapter Twelve, is not just logical, but profound. Satan—the beast's "father" and mentor—has just been cast out of heaven. Angry, frustrated, and, as it were, a dragon breathing fire, Satan turns to his disciple—his "son"—and elevates him into his intended global role. The dragon is the one orchestrating all of this (of course, with God's permission).

Sidebar: The precise sequence of this portion of the Eschaton, so bizarrely portrayed, is a debatable point. Do the events of Chapter Thirteen—the presentation of the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth (Antichrist and the false prophet, respectively)—follow *after* Satan has been frustrated by his impotent pursuit of Israel subsequent to his fall? Do they perhaps represent a step Satan took between the second and third attacks in Chapter Twelve (12:15-17), when he turns away from direct pursuit of the protected Jews to aim his venom at others? Or do they represent part of Satan gathering his forces, joining human to angelic troops, in preparation for even the first attack (12:13-14)?

Regarding the fact that the beast rises from out of the sea, coupled with, for example, the statement in 21:1 that in the new earth “there is no longer any sea,” I have included a separate handout excerpted from a dissertation by Kenneth William Lovett for his Ph.D., in which he presents his thesis that “the OT uses the sea as a negative motif and that God treats the sea as an enemy. The sea is opposed to God’s purposes in the biblical narrative and finds itself on the receiving end of God’s rebuke and restraint.” I have also included in the handout, as a preface to Lovett’s remarks, thoughts by John MacArthur on the same topic. I will reserve further discussion about this in class for when we are in Chapter Twenty-one.

having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

The first and best source to illuminate our understanding of this description of Antichrist is found in the prophecy of Daniel. [Turn please to Daniel 7.](#)

Daniel 7

It is easy to think of the figure called Antichrist as the *instigator* of everything around him—that he is the one who will create and organize all of his power structure. But that is not the case. Even before the beast comes onto the scene, there will be a central, extremely powerful political entity dominating the world: a revived Roman empire.

We are told in v1 of Daniel 7 that he was in bed when he “saw a dream and visions in his mind.” In this he first sees “the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea” (v2), symbolic of the polluted, turbulent Gentile humanity. Similar to Revelation 13, where two evil figures emerge from, first, the sea, and second, from the earth, here four great beasts representing four kingdoms or empires emerge from the mass of humanity.

We are told that the first beast was like a lion with the wings of an eagle, the second resembled a bear, the third was like a leopard with four wings and four heads. These first three beasts represent, respectively, Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, and the Greek or Alexandrian Empire.

Read Daniel 7:7-8.

Here is a beast far more powerful than the first three and the description of its teeth being of iron is a strong clue to the empire the beast represents: Rome, the colossus of the latter part of the iron age. This *new* Roman Empire will overwhelm, either destroying or apprehending all that is left over from the three previous empires. And its ten horns in the vision represent the confederation of ten states of which it is comprised; thus we might picture these horns not as separate, individual horns, but more like antlers, with five on each side of the beast's head.

As Daniel watches, a *new* horn emerges from within the ten others; the text reads "another horn," which I take to mean *not* one of the first ten. Though small at first, it soon destroys three adjacent horns. It is implied (and it would also be how these power struggles often worked historically) that the remaining horns then become vassals of this new "little horn." Finally, since we are told that this new horn has "eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts," the horn represents a specific *ruler*, rather than a nation state.

In vv21-22 Daniel appends more of what he saw this little horn doing:

"I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom."

In his vision Daniel asks someone standing nearby to explain this "alarming, distressing" vision.

Read Daniel 7:23-26.

If you have been wondering how some previously unknown figure could, in just a few years, become so powerful as to literally rule the world, these texts explain that much of the structure of his empire was already in place. Antichrist will indeed be "different from the previous ones," but the world-wide power structure will have already been set in place by the fourth beast, the revived Roman Empire, which will "devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (v23).

[Back to Revelation 13.](#)

Based on the lessons of history, one might conclude that this ten-nation confederacy ruling the world will be in existence prior to the Rapture and the beginning of the Tribulation. It challenges the imagination that in just a few short years all this would come about *after* the inception of the Tribulation. If I am correct, this could further explain the timing of the Rapture; Christ returns to remove His church not just before the evils of the Tribulation, but to save it from any further pain from being under the thumb of an evil empire.

The picture in John's vision is of the beast in full power—hence, the middle of the Tribulation. Opinions vary slightly, but we can take the ten horns, each with its own diadem, as representing the ten kingdoms of the original confederation, three of which were destroyed (or consumed) by the beast. Some say the seven heads represent the remaining kings that receive their power from the beast, but probably a better interpretation is that the seven heads represent successive world empires leading up to Antichrist. This harmonizes with an even more opaque prophecy in Chapter Seventeen.

Read Revelation 17:9-13.

In scripture, to be a “son” is to be *like*—to behave like, to share the same qualities of, perhaps even look like—one's father. Thus Jesus could say to Philip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). As with Jesus and Father God, so with Antichrist and *his* father, Satan. The red dragon (Satan) is described with almost an identical appearance as the beast in 12:3: “Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.” Like father, like son.

As the frosting on this perverse cake, the vision includes that “on his heads were blasphemous names”—slanderous, abusive, profane names.

v2

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.

This is a fascinating vision of Antichrist, the beast, for he is described here as if he has incorporated in himself the traits of the first three beasts mentioned in Daniel 7. As we saw earlier, the first three beasts represented, respectively, Babylon (the lion), the Medo-Persian Empire (the bear), and the Greek or Alexandrian Empire (the leopard). These world empires are now a part of the one who truly rules the world.

And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

John's vision makes crystal clear who is behind Antichrist. And again we have the profane mirror image of the relationship between Jesus and Father God: Jesus was God in flesh, yet at the same time subservient to the Father, obedient to Him, revealing His nature to man (Matthew 11:25-27; John 4:34, 8:29; Hebrews 10:5-9). The beast is, essentially, Satan in flesh; it is from him (the dragon) that he acquires all his power and authority.

Read Revelation 13:3-4.

v3

I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;

Here is Satan's trump card. Antichrist will already be well-known and popular after the first half of the Tribulation. During a time in which thousands upon thousands are dying, he will be—or will *appear* to be—mortally wounded, and will come back to life. Whether real or an act perpetrated by the false prophet (v14), the result will be the same: worldwide amazement and adulation of the beast.

As always, opinions vary. Here I favor MacArthur over Walvoord, who interprets this "slain head" as referencing not the individual (Antichrist), but the kingdom over which he reigns. That is he believes that that which has been slain but comes back to life speaks of the Roman Empire. But MacArthur offers far more convincing arguments for this referring to the individual.

- Here it says that one of the heads was slain, but later in this chapter John specifies the beast himself.

v12: **[The beast from the earth]** exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship **the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.**

v14: And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, **telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.** (emphasis added)

- Even in v3 it uses the personal pronoun, saying that "*his* fatal wound was healed."

- Does it track that a revival of the Roman Empire would excite such amazement, astonishment and adoration—including a worshiped statue in the Jerusalem temple—of the beast. I think that would excite, rather, dread and fear, to see the Roman Empire returning.

they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

What a horrible time this will be on earth—we might say, a *beastly* time on earth. It is true that the pattern of history has been that societal culture rises and falls in a fairly regular pattern. Periods of licentious behavior and standards will be followed by a period of relative modesty and decorum; a period of war will be followed by a period of peace; a time of conservative morality will be followed by a time of liberal immorality.

Some say the world is getting better and better, but they are either blind or they lie. This world has been toying with evil for millennia. At times it is more prevalent, at others less so, but the overall *inertia* is toward darkness, depravity, and evil. The picture before us in v4 is the portrait of a world that has abandoned all contact with righteousness, goodness, and light. To put it in *Star Wars* terminology, it will have irretrievably gone over to the dark side. In the past this period would be followed by a reflexive return to the opposite—but no more. It will be so bad that only the bodily return of the Son of God will turn it around; absent that, there will be no change for the better. By now the society remaining on earth will be so far gone it will be unrecoverable, beyond hope. The apostle Paul describes this moment in his second letter to the Thessalonians.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

Earlier in this letter, just before this passage, Paul gives one reason why the world finds itself in this state. In speaking of the coming of the day of the Lord, to some in the Thessalonica church who mistakenly thought it had already come, Paul writes,

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

Before Christ will return, Antichrist must “take his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” This is what is about to happen in the narrative.

Note: Satan’s focus on Israel is apparent in the location of Antichrist’s seat of power: not New York, not Paris or London, but *Jerusalem*—and specifically its temple to Yahweh. There is the focus of his animus and rage.

When it has never occurred before, what explains the depth of this depravity and Satan worship? The passage continues:

Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
(2 Thessalonians 2:3–6)

In the Rapture the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit and the Church will be suddenly removed from the earth, leaving in their wake a void that will be immediately filled by Satan and his demons, as well as his earth-bound servants, Antichrist and the false prophet.

Will this worship of Satan be truly worldwide? There will surely be some followers of Christ scattered around the globe—certainly the two witnesses, described in Chapter Eleven; the 144,000 remnant of Messianic Israel, protected for the duration; and the group of Messianic Jews that has recently fled into the wilderness to the place of sanctuary prepared for them by God. So will there be righteousness on the earth? Yes, in scattered patches here and there. But the predominant culture and the only authorized religion for everyone but these righteous groups will be the worship of Satan and Antichrist.

CONCLUSION

I have often mentioned that Satan, Antichrist, and the false prophet constitute an evil parody of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Verse 4 concludes with another dark parallel: crowds of worshipers crying out with great enthusiasm, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

I am reminded of another day in Jerusalem, when instead of war the worshipers were crying out, “Peace!”

As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, shouting: “BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:36–38)

But now it will be a different song being sung—a different shout heard. These will be dark days indeed.

THE "SEA" IN GOD'S WORD

John MacArthur

The first hint of what the new heaven and new earth will be like comes in John's observation that there will no longer be any sea.

That will be a startling change from the present earth, nearly three-fourths of which is covered by water. The sea is emblematic of the present water-based environment. All life on earth is dependent on water for its survival, and the earth is the only known place in the universe where there is sufficient water to sustain life. But believers' glorified bodies will not require water, unlike present human bodies, whose blood is 90 percent water, and whose flesh is 65 percent water. Thus, the new heaven and the new earth will be based on a completely different life principle than the present universe. There will be a river in heaven, not of water, but of the "water of life" (22:1, 17). Without a sea, there can be no hydro-logical cycle, so that every feature of life and climate will be dramatically different.

From a metaphorical perspective, commentators have seen the absence of the sea as symbolic of the absence of evil. Robert L. Thomas summarizes:

Most justifiably see this void as representing an archetypal connotation in the sea (cf. 13:1; 20:13), a principle of disorder, violence, or unrest that marks the old creation (cf. Isa. 57:20; Ps. 107:25-28; Ezek. 28:8)— It is not that the sea is evil in itself, but that its aspect is one of hostility to mankind. For instance, the sea was what stood guard over John in his prison on Patmos and separated him from the churches of Asia— The sea is the first of seven evils that John says will no longer exist, the other six being death, mourning, weeping, pain (21:4), the curse (22:3), and night (21:25; 22:5).

(*Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* [Chicago: Moody 1995, p440])

Kenneth William Lovett

The sea is an inanimate part of creation and has no volition to rebel against its creator. But the OT speaks of God defeating the sea, driving it away, restraining it behind prison bars, stopping the advance of its proud waves, and splitting it as one would split a snake with an ax. At the time of creation, the sea was driven away by God so that he could create the dry land. During the flood, the sea covered the dry land, killed all the people, and destroyed their property. In Exodus, the sea killed Pharaoh's army while they pursued the Israelites. The sea also served as an apt image for prophets to warn of the imminent destruction of the Holy Land. In Jonah, it was the place of his punishment and would have been the place of his death if God had not intervened. Evil beasts and uncontrollable monsters find their home in the sea. The shadowy unknown of the dark depths of the sea also associate it with Sheol, the place of the dead. The OT is so consistently negative about the sea that one would think that the sea is an enemy of God.

The enemies of God and humanity in the OT are not difficult to catalog. Satan would top the list as the first enemy to come to mind for most people. Death is another enemy that would be on such a list. Death and Satan are not the only biblical enemies of humanity and God's good purposes in the universe. Others on the list would include Babylon; Egypt; and the Philistines, who were enemies more often than not in the biblical story. The sea is an unlikely candidate for an enemy of God and humanity in the OT. However, this dissertation will demonstrate that the OT uses the sea as a negative motif and that God treats the sea as an enemy. The sea is opposed to God's purposes in the biblical narrative and finds itself on the receiving end of God's rebuke and restraint (Ps 104:6-7; Job 38:8-11).

(from *The Negative Motif of the Sea in the Old Testament*, A Dissertation presented to the faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Copyright © 2019 Kenneth William Lovett.)



COMPARING DANIEL 7 TO DANIEL 8

(If you are left with questions when comparing Daniel 7 with Daniel 8, the following excursus may be helpful.)

Gleason L. Archer, Jr.

Excursus

At this point some observations are in order concerning the relationship between the "little horn" (qeren-'ahat misf'ird, lit., "a horn from a small one") in this passage (8:9) and the "little horn" in the previous chapter (7:8). The horn in chapter 7 emerged from the ten horns of the fourth beast, whereas this horn in 8:9 arises from the four-horned beast that represents the third kingdom, the empire of Alexander and his Epigonoï (as critics of every persuasion agree). Now since the author of Daniel lays great emphasis on numbers and invests them with high significance, there is no possibility that he could have meant to equate a ten-horned beast with one bearing only four horns. **The only really plausible explanation, therefore, is that the little horn arising from the third kingdom serves as a prototype of the little horn of the fourth kingdom.** The crisis destined to confront God's people in the time of the earlier little horn, Antiochus Epi-phanes, will bear a strong similarity to the crisis that will befall them in the eschatological or final phase of the fourth kingdom in the last days (as Christ himself foresaw in

the Olivet Discourse [Matt 24:15]). In each case a determined effort will be made by a ruthless dictator to suppress completely the biblical faith and the worship of the one true God. Rather than concluding, as the Maccabean date hypothesis insists, that the little horn of chapter 7 is also intended as a prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes (with a resultant identification of the fourth kingdom as the Greek or Seleucid Empire), we are to understand the relationship between the little horn of the Greek Empire and that of the latter-day fourth kingdom to be that of type and antitype similar to that between Joshua and Jesus (Heb 4:8) and Melchizedek and Christ (Heb 7). In Daniel 11, as we shall see, both the typical little horn (Antiochus) and the antitypical little horn appear in succession, the transition from the one to the other taking place at 11:40, after which are predicted the circumstances of the destined death of the antitype that were not at all true of Antiochus Epiphanes himself. Therefore, the two figures cannot be identical, nor can the Greek Empire be equated with the fourth kingdom of Daniel's prophetic scheme.

(from Daniel, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Frank E. Gaebelien, Ed., page 99; emphasis added)

