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Sermon Notes

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The Beast from the Sea

Revelation 13:1-10

Romans 13 depicts human government as a “servant of God” established to do us good. Human governments around the world protect its citizens from criminals, armed thugs roaming the streets, looting and pillaging in the chaos of anarchy.

But Revelation 13 depicts the final form of human government as a terrifying Beast, embodied by one final world ruler who will use his absolute power to establish himself as God on earth and demand worship from every human being on earth.

History has shown how dangerous human government can be:

- The Pharaohs of Egypt used slave labor to build their pyramids
- The Assyrian Empire introduced new depths of human brutality into government... piles of skulls and the invention of crucifixion as a particularly vicious and cruel form of execution
- The Greek Empire under Alexander the Great sought to spread the fruits of Greek culture—advanced philosophy, architecture, government, and the concepts of democracy—but ignored by the tyrant Greek kings that followed Alexander
- The Roman Empire backed up its Pax Romana (Roman peace) with the iron domination of its invincible Roman Legions... they brought stable government, a form of Roman justice, widespread commerce and order... along with terror and corruption to its almost thousand-year domination of the Mediterranean
- The barbarian hordes swept across Europe from the steppes of Asia and put out the lights of culture and of government for centuries... they crushed by sheer military power but left no culture or order in

their wake of devastation; here we speak of the time from the Huns to the Vikings

- The “divine right of kings” dominated Christendom in Western Europe during the Middle ages with its feudal system... the government was as good or bad as the king’s moral character...
- In England, the legendary King Arthur and the golden era of Camelot represented the aspirations of all who lived under the concepts of feudalism and the divine right of Kings... to have a perfect government of a righteous king, noble knights, beautiful maidens... the perfect vision of feudalism; but it was just a myth
- The American Revolution sought to break away from monarchy and establish a government “of the people, by the people, for the people” in Abraham Lincoln’s famous words...but the government established here has proven to be far from perfect
- The 20th century saw an experiment in governmentally-forced sharing for the supposed benefit of the poor. It was called Communism, and it has proven an gross economic, social, and moral failure all over the world
- Representative democracy with all of its weaknesses and corruptions still remains the best the human race has developed... but Winston Churchill said famously in a speech on the floor of the House of Commons in 1947:

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Human government should **SERVE** the people in the pattern of Jesus Christ, the servant King... but human rulers usually use their positions of power to steal, kill and destroy... to be honored and to live lives of self-indulgence.

When I was in Cameroon this summer, the whole capital city of Yaoundé was shot down for four hours because the President of that tiny central African nation **MIGHT USE** the main road to travel on. There were police everywhere, and no one could even walk on the sidewalk. It

turned out he traveled by helicopter that day anyway. The Wycliffe Missionaries there said he does that kind of thing all the time!

Even now, around the world, we see the range of human governments and their danger... we see Kim Jong Un in North Korea, crushing his own people with his totalitarian regime, threatening Japan and the US with nuclear war; we see demonstrations in Kenya as the local population is enraged over the questionable outcome of a presidential election; we see ongoing civil war in Syria with Isis... a major movement in Catalonia seeking independence from Spain; a military clampdown because a coup is threatened in Venezuela; in China, the government is led by Xi Jinping, the most aggressively antichristian leader China has had since Mao Zedong—there are more and more crackdowns led by the communist government... more and more of our brothers and sisters incarcerated and oppressed by the government

But all this is NOTHING compared to where we are heading.

As we come to Revelation 13, we will begin to probe the depths of corruption that human government will reach at the very end of human history... the most powerful and most corrupt of all human rulers who will be overthrown only by the true King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ

Today, we will meet the BEAST FROM THE SEA, whom most Bible scholars identify as the Antichrist

I. The Beast's Origin (vs. 1)

A. Context:

1. By this time in Revelation, the world is reeling from all the horrendous judgments that will have come on the earth
2. The seven trumpets will have brought untold suffering—widespread destruction growing things; the turning of the sea into blood; the poisoning of fresh water; the striking of the sun, moon, stars; the unleashing of a swarm of demons bringing torment to the bodies of people; and the onslaught of an army of 200 million warriors slaughtering 1/3rd of all human beings alive at that time—perhaps as many as 2.5-3 billion people

3. At that time, people will be yearning for a leader, someone who can bring order out of this horrendous chaos
4. They will be ripe to follow Satan's masterpiece—the greatest delusion he will have ever perpetrated on the human race—the Antichrist
5. For centuries, Satan has been the secret power behind the throne of every rebellious nation on earth

1 John 5:19 the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

6. He revealed the truth to Jesus on the Mount of Temptation concerning all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor:

Luke 4:6-7 "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

7. Satan has organized his demonic warriors into subdivisions ruling different parts of the world: rulers, authorities, powers of this present darkness
8. These demonic rulers have effectively but secretly swayed and influenced the decisions of the movers and shakers of human history for all the centuries of man's rebellion against God
9. But at the end of the world, he will consolidate the governments of the world in one massive empire and will give worldwide power to ONE MAN... the Beast... the Antichrist

B. The Antichrist = a Grotesque Parody of the Trinity and the Savior

1. The word "Antichrist" does not appear in Revelation or anywhere but in 1-2 John... but it means "substitute" Christ... one who takes the place of Christ

1 John 2:18 you have heard that the antichrist is coming...

2. Satan (called the Dragon), the Beast from the Sea (Antichrist), and the Beast from the Earth (called the false prophet) make up a repulsive and grotesque parody of the Trinity

3. The Dragon is like God the Father, the Beast from the Sea like God the Son, and the Beast from the Earth is like God the Spirit
4. The Dragon desires to be worshiped and uses the Beast from the Sea to cause men to worship him as they do God
5. The Dragon “gives” his authority to the Beast from the Sea... a repulsive parody of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 28:18

Matthew 28:18 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...”

6. Like the Father and the Son, the Dragon and the Beast share a throne and extend it to the ends of the earth
7. The Beast was apparently slain and raised from the dead; the world will be convinced in this vast deception
8. After his apparent resurrection from the dead, the Beast will seek to be worshiped as God
9. The Beast will have power to do great signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2)
10. Like the Holy Spirit, the Beast from the Earth (generally called the “False Prophet”) will not speak of himself but will cause people to worship the First Beast (the Antichrist) (vss. 12-13)

this repulsive parody of the Trinity is the final blasphemy

C. The Beast’s Origin

1. We begin with the Dragon by the seashore

Revelation 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea.

2. This brings us back to two things... the immediate context of Revelation 12 with the Dragon and Daniel 7 for the sea

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down-- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

Revelation 12:17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring-- those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

- a. Antichrist—the Beast from the Sea—is Satan’s instrument to carry out his hatred and warfare against Christians
- b. He stands on the seashore calls the Beast up out of the Sea
- c. This immediately calls to mind Daniel’s vision of the Four Beasts from the Sea in Daniel 7

Daniel 7:2-3 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.³ Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

3. What the Sea Represents

- a. The vast teeming, seething mass of humanity, waiting for a leader to organize them and move them in one direction

Isaiah 57:20 the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud

Revelation 17:15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute [Babylon] sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.

Picture the huge crowds of people in teeming cities like in Asia—hundreds of thousands gathered in India by the Ganges River for a festival; hundreds of thousands in Mecca around the black stone of the Kaaba; tens of thousands in Tiananmen Square for a demonstration... seething, pulsating mass of humanity... calling, crying out loud... like an undulating ocean

- b. Also the sea may represent the abyss from which the demons poured in Revelation 9, the nether regions of demonic power

Revelation 17:8 The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction.

II. The Beast's Nature and Authority (vs. 1-2)

A. The Beast Described... the Consummation of a Flow of Human History

Revelation 13:1-2 And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion.

1. In Daniel 7, the beasts are empires represented by ferocious animals
 - a. The first was like lion with the wings of an eagle = Babylon
 - b. The second was like a bear = Medo-Persia
 - c. The third was like a leopard with four wings = Greece
 - d. The fourth was indescribable... a terrifying beast that trampled everything underfoot = Rome
2. These various symbols have been COMBINED in some sense into one great final empire
 - a. The beast as a whole represents a demonic human geo-political realm, a world organized against the Lord and against his people... up till that final phase, no one ruler dominated it all
 - b. The seven heads represent a flow of empires throughout human history that come into a final form at the end of the world...

1 John 2:18 "Many Antichrists have come..."

- c. The three listed animals of Daniel's vision are COMBINED in this final beast, this final empire: it is like a leopard, which represents speed, agility, stealth and cleverness; the feet like a bear represents the beast's ability to trample its enemies underfoot with massive power; the mouth of a lion represents the beast's roar and ability to tear its enemies

B. The Beast and the Individual Man Are Combined

1. The "Beast" is ultimately an empire under a single man

2. Obviously a single man cannot influence the whole world without an army and thousands of minions to do his evil will
3. This individual is the head of a horrifying world system and becomes the solitary focus of that system

President Roosevelt spoke specifically of stopping Hitler after a German U-Boat fired a torpedo at the USS Kearney:

Radio address, October 27, 1941: "The forward march of Hitler and of Hitlerism can be stopped - and it will be stopped. ... Hitler's torpedo was directed at every American, whether he lives on our seacoasts or in the innermost part of the Nation, far from the seas and far from the guns and tanks of the marching hordes of would-be conquerors of the world."

The single leader becomes the representative symbol of the entire empire

Revelation 13:4, 8 All those who live on the earth will worship HIM

The Greek is clear that there is a PERSON being spoken of here

C. Authority: Heads, Horns, Crowns.... and BLASPHEMY

Revelation 13:1 He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

All of these are symbols of the power and authority that this empire will have... the horns represent kingly power, so also the crowns

The whole system is BLASPHEMOUS... an open challenge to the true King, Jesus Christ

D. Antichrist will be a "King of Kings"

1. The "ten horns" represent kings, and their diadems represent their kingly power
2. The final world empire will be made up of lesser kings who have been subdued by the Antichrist and submit to him and lend him their power and armies

Revelation 17:12-13 "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³ They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast

3. So we can well imagine the Antichrist will begin as one among many leaders; but by his diplomatic skill, he will maneuver around the others and topple others (perhaps by assassination, perhaps by Machiavellian intrigue)

Daniel 8:23-24 "... a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. ²⁴ He will become very strong, but not by his own power.

Daniel 11:21 "He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue.

Daniel 11:23 After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power.

Daniel 11:32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

E. The Dragon's Supernatural Power

Revelation 13:2 The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

1. Satan has been ruling the world in secret... but always through many kings and kingdoms... divide and conquer
2. Now, at the end of the world, he will empower his masterpiece... consolidating world power into one man
3. GREAT AUTHORITY... the first worldwide empire in history
 - a. The largest contiguous land empire in history was that of Genghis Khan in 1309... encompassing 9 million square miles or about 16 % of earth's land mass
 - b. The British Empire is the largest empire ever... 13.7 million square miles or 23.8% of the world's land
 - c. However, each of these empires lasted a very short time

- d. Satan will give to the Antichrist a full expression of his throne and power worldwide... because he WILL MEET the requirement Jesus refused to do... he will bow down and worship Satan

F. The Worldwide Extent of the Antichrist's Reign

Revelation 13:7 he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

1. We don't need to wonder if someone or other is the antichrist
2. If the person does not attain to worldwide rule, he is not

III. The Beast's "Resurrection" (vs. 3)

Revelation 13:3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.

A. Here We Have the Greatest Satanic Deception in History

1. The Beast's ability to perform miraculous signs and wonders

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders

2. Paul also speaks of a "powerful delusion" that will get the world to believe the LIE
3. The apparent resurrection of this man from a fatal wound is his greatest miracle

Revelation 13:12 [the false prophet] made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

Revelation 13:14 [the false prophet] ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

4. This will cinch his power and popularity, and usher his reign into a whole new realm of worship and blasphemy

IV. The Beast Worshiped (vs. 3-4, 8)

Revelation 13:3-4 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ⁴ Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

A. The Whole World Will Be Amazed and COWED

1. After the Antichrist comes to life, the people of the world will realize that resistance to this powerful man is futile
2. Nothing can stop him, no one can defeat him... so they will think!!
3. Obviously they don't know Christ or his power... and neither does the Antichrist himself
4. This awe is essential to the Antichrist's world domination... what's the point in fighting him... you're just going to lose
5. Mere power and fear is not enough, however, for this man... he wants to be worshiped as a god!

B. This Blasphemous Worship is the Culmination of Both Satan's Rebellion and Man's

1. Satan wanted to become like the Most High God, and to be worshiped like God
2. So did the human race, beginning with the Garden of Eden

Genesis 3:5 you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Idol-makers have often made HUMAN gods to worship

Isaiah 44:13 The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine.

3. Many rulers have sought to be worshiped

Alexander the Great thought himself an incarnation of a deity; coins depict his head with the horns of Zeus Ammon, a clear symbol of deity

Many Roman Emperors sought to have themselves declared to be gods... this was the IMPERIAL CULT that the Apostle John fought against... burning a pinch of incense to Caesar

Caesar Augustus began this Roman worship, and Diocletian further enforced it when he demanded people to prostrate themselves before him and declare him to be “our Lord”

Inca emperors demanded worship as gods, and used that fear to dominate their subject peoples

Napoleon grabbed the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII and crowned himself Emperor, essentially rejecting the church’s authority over him

Until the end of World War II, the Japanese Emperor was thought to be a living god, descended from the gods that established Japan

William L. Shirer, an American correspondent at the Nazi rallies in Nuremburg in Germany in the 1930’s said the crazed population looked on Hitler as if he were a Messiah

This has been the tendency of human nature... either to seek worship, or to give it to some dominant leader

C. The Whole World... ALMOST... Worships the Beast

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

This will cause him to begin to wage war actively on Christ’s followers, both Jewish and Gentile Christians (more in a moment)

D. This is the Abomination of Desolation

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

The quintessential act of self-worship will be when the Antichrist seizes the Jewish temple and sets himself

This may be exactly the moment that causes the Jews who did not up to that point trust in Jesus to flee and begin seeking Christ

V. The Beast's Blasphemies (vs. 5-6)

Revelation 13:5-6 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶ He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

A. The MOUTH of the Antichrist is His Most Powerful Weapon

1. We already discussed his smooth talk and flattery... his lying and deceptive diplomacy, as predicted in Daniel 8 and 11
2. He speaks "great things"... NIV has "proud words" but it is more likely moving oratory
3. Again, keep in mind the world will be reeling from the judgments of God on the planet
4. This man will be able to help people survive and return to some level of normalcy and prosperity
5. He is able to unite the world under his leadership... Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists... at last, all of them find unity in following this man

B. Blasphemy

1. The blasphemy of the little horn of Daniel is a prominent feature

Daniel 7:8 This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

Daniel 11:36 He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods.

2. After his resurrection, this man will become insufferable and arrogant

3. His mouth will lay claim to heaven... his mind will be puffed up with blasphemies
4. Blasphemy = words spoken to the direct detriment of the glory of God
 - a. Either a person curses and denigrates God himself
 - b. OR a person demands worship as God
5. Probably this wicked man will do both

Notice how much of God's salvation is designed by him to humble us deeply, to slaughter our pride, to prevent us from **BOASTING** before him... we are saved by grace "so that no one will boast"; not many of us were wise or influential or of noble birth, "so that no one will boast"; we are justified by faith not by works... "where then is **BOASTING??** It is **EXCLUDED!**"... as it is written, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." The white-robed redeemed from every nation on earth stand and say "Salvation is of the Lord!" The redeemed will be truly, deeply, fully **HUMBLED** by the Lord

But this man, this little horn, this Antichrist will have a great mouth filled with blasphemies... he will put himself forward and demand people to worship him

6. **BUT** the clock is ticking!

Revelation 13:5 he was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.

The same time frame we have already learned about earlier... the second half of the final seven year period... 1260 days... 3 ½ years

He is on a strict time leash... like his master, the Dragon... who at least knows that his time is short

C. Who the Beast Blasphemes

Revelation 13:6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

VI. The Beast's Conquest of the Saints (vs. 7-10)

Revelation 13:7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

A. This Shocking Development is the Hardest Part of All

1. When the beast directly attacks the people of God and is successful in slaughtering many of them, it will be the greatest test the believers will have to endure
2. Throughout the history of the church, believers have paid for their faith with their lives... Roman emperors burned them or crucified them or fed them to the lions... this only began a trail of blood that has continued to this very day
3. But nothing in the history of the church will remotely compare to this final persecution

B. Directly Predicted by Daniel

Daniel 7:21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them

Daniel 7:25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

C. The Beast Has Worldwide Power and Worldwide Worship

1. Every nation on the face of the earth will be under his dominion
2. More than that, because of his wonder-working power, he will be worshiped openly as God by all but the saints
3. But this will not satisfy him... it will deeply bother him that the followers of Christ will resist him
4. And he will WAGE WAR on them
5. Beginning with the Two Witnesses, whom he kills in the streets of Jerusalem (Revelation 11)

6. Then he will begin to hunt down and destroy Christians
7. Jesus warned Christians of the need to FLEE when they see the Abomination of Desolation... the Antichrist setting himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God... to RUN FOR THEIR LIVES (Matthew 24)
8. The woman in Revelation 12 (Israel) will flee into the desert to escape; so also many will flee to the mountains... to caves and other secret hiding places
9. The terrifying part will be how seemingly impossible it will be to hide from such a supernaturally powerful ruler who has special knowledge fed him by Satan himself
10. The days of warfare against the saints will be carefully counted by God, measured out because of how severe that trial will be
11. We will speak in coming weeks of the Mark of the Beast... any that refuse to receive it will be slaughtered

D. The Saints Refuse to Worship Him

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast-- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

1. The elect will be guarded from this world-wide worship
2. This verse speaks of the LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE... and names written in it; a record of the elect chosen by God
3. "From the creation of the world"... either their names were written in the Lamb's book of life from then, or that Christ was SLAIN from the creation of the world
4. In any case, these elect will be preserved from worshipping the beast... forewarned by the scripture we will SEE THROUGH these deceptions

E. BUT the Warfare will be Fierce

Revelation 13:9-10 He who has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

1. These refer to the various ways that the saints might suffer and die
2. Some will be destined for this outcome, some destined for that
3. Despite this comfort, the saints are called on to stand firm in perseverance to the end

Matthew 10:22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

VII. Applications

A. See the Proper Role and Scope of Government

1. Every election, candidates are hailed with Savior-type language
2. When Barack Obama was elected, there were campaign posters linking him directly to hope in almost religious terms
3. Many times in our history, Presidents and other high-ranking officials have been hailed as all-powerful Saviors and have ended up breaking their promises and deeply disappointed their followers
4. It is even worse in other countries
5. We are called on to see government as a servant of the people, hindered deeply by the sinfulness of the actual leaders
6. We Christians should know enough to submit to God-ordained authorities without trusting in them to save us

B. Worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

1. All human rulers will disappoint us and fail us because of their sins
2. All human rulers will ultimately sink back into the dust of the ground because they are mortal
3. Christ alone rules perfectly and forever

Isaiah 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

4. Trust in Christ alone to save you from sins!
- C. Understand Satan's Present Role as Puppet-Master of the Governments of the Earth
- D. Study and Understand the Doctrine of the Future Taught in the Bible
- E. Grow and Develop in Your Prayer Life
- F. Understand the Future of Persecution