

The Beast from the Sea

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

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The notes (Presentation Page xx) are a reference to the Presentation version of this sermon.

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(Presentation Page 1) Our study today comes from Revelation 13, the first 10 verses revealing the “beast that comes from the sea.” These verses contain some of the most powerful information in all the Bible. (Presentation Page 2) The Scriptures were given to us to reveal truth and to expose error. This makes perfect sense, since we are told that there is a rebel who is out to deceive people and thereby cause their destruction. This is what happened in the Garden of Eden and his strategy hasn’t changed. He’s had 6,000 years to perfect his mastery of disguise and deception through which he can disseminate error.

(Presentation Page 3) The sad truth is that often his agents are those who profess to be God’s people. In Genesis 3 we find that he used Eve to entice Adam. His temptation was much more effective in this way than if he had spoken to Adam directly. He used the Jews of Jesus’ day to put Him on the cross. Mark it well: this has been his pattern. He uses the tool of deception, wielded by those who claim to be God’s followers. In Revelation 13 we find that this pattern is employed again.

(Presentation Page 4) This prophetic portrayal is sheltered in the very heart of the Book of Revelation. It comes right after chapter 12, in which the entire scope of human history is depicted (Presentation Page 5) and before chapter 14 which highlights the final warning to the world and the coming of Jesus. Revelation 13 places under the prophetic spotlight those entities and those issues which will compose the elements of earth’s last struggle. What could possibly be more important than understanding the information contained in this chapter? (Presentation Page 6) That it is vital to know what this is about is evident in that in this very chapter we are warned about the “mark of the beast,” the reception of which results in one being lost forever. How could you know what the “mark of the beast” is, unless you know what the “beast” is?

(Presentation Page 7) “Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, (Presentation Page 8) having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. (Presentation Page 9) Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, (Presentation Page 10) his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” Revelation 13:1, 2. (Presentation Page 11) In symbolic prophecy, we have learned that a “beast” stands for a power or kingdom. The prophecies of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 make that crystal clear. (Presentation Page

12) This is not unfamiliar to us; we associate a bison with America, a lion with the United Kingdom and a bear with Russia. Bible prophecy makes use of similar symbolism. So the beast that John saw represents a power or a kingdom.

From where did John see it coming? He saw it coming from the sea. What is the significance of that? (Presentation Page 13) We're told later that water represents people; the "sea of humanity," if you please. "The waters which you saw...are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues." Revelation 17:15. This will be a clue as to identity of this beast, or power. It will emerge from a populated area, in contrast to the second beast introduced in this chapter which comes "from the earth." (Presentation Page 14) We are told that this beast has heads and horns; seven heads and ten horns, and there are crowns on the horns. Crowns represent kingship. The word in Greek here is *diademata* (our word "diadem" comes from this), or "kingly crown," as opposed to *stephanos*, the "victor's crown." These crowns represent the monarchies, the political kingdoms which support the agenda of the beast power.

What about the seven heads? They represent the various manifestations of Satan's tools of attack through the ages. We're told that in another way, as this beast is seen as resembling a leopard, bear and lion. (Presentation Page 15) To any student of prophecy, the mention of those animals is going to direct ones attention to the animals of Daniel 7. In that chapter, these animals stand for the kingdoms of Babylon (lion), Medo-Persia (bear) and Greece (leopard). This beast shares many of the same characteristics of the beasts of Daniel 7. In Revelation 13 they are given in the reverse order, because John is looking backward in time from where he is standing as he sees the vision. His perspective is from the time of this beast's "rising." On its heads was the name of blasphemy. We'll read more about that a few verses later.

"The dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority." (Presentation Page 16) We saw in chapter 12 that the dragon represents Satan or the devil. This beast's power and authority come from an ungodly source, that of the devil himself. But it is true also that in chapter 12 the dragon was working through an earthly empire to accomplish his goals. What was the empire which sought the Savior's life as soon as He was born? (Presentation Page 17) That was Rome, wasn't it. So we could rightly deduce that the dragon of chapter 12 is the devil, but more specifically, the devil working through the power of pagan Rome.

(Presentation Page 18) History tells us that Rome collapsed and the empire moved eastward to Constantinople, founded by Emperor Constantine. When Rome fell, who was there to occupy the vacuum? It was papal Rome. Following the removal of the seat of the empire and the decline of Civil Rome, it was the bishop of Rome who gained more and more authority. He assumed the political powers vacated by the absent emperors and rose higher and higher in influence. When in 533 A.D. Emperor Justinian assembled his famous Code, he identified the bishop of Rome as the head of the church and the corrector of heretics. His general Belisarius was dispatched to make this possible.

So the dragon, in a secondary sense representing pagan Rome, gave to the Church its power, its throne and great authority. This proved to be a historical fact. (Presentation Page 19) It was as if civil Rome passed the baton of leadership to papal Rome. The Popes of the middle ages occupied the place of the Caesars before them. They governed from the very seat formerly held by the rulers of pagan Rome previously. Amazing! (Presentation Page 20) Professor Labianca, who taught for many years at the University of Rome stated, "To the succession of the Caesars came the succession of the Pontiffs in Rome. (Presentation Page 21) When Constantine left Rome, he gave his seat to the Pontiff." (Presentation Page 22) The historian Stanley adds, "The Popes filled the place of the vacant emperors of Rome, inheriting their power, prestige, and titles from paganism. (Presentation Page 23) The Papacy is but the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon its grave." Stanley's History, page 40. These words are a striking fulfillment of Revelation's prophecy that the "dragon" would give its "power, its throne and great authority" to the "beast."

(Presentation Page 24) "I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. (Presentation Page 25) And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him.'" Revelation 13:3, 4. Bible prophecy has a pattern of giving a brief overview, then retracing with more detail. This is what we see here. The first four verses draw the skeleton of the picture, and then the following verses fill in with more specific information. Remember, Scripture is addressing the system of the Papacy, not individuals. Today there are many God-fearing people within that system. When God's true children are made knowledgeable of His truths, they will act on them.

What about this mortal wound that was healed? (Presentation Page 26) We recognize that this entity would enjoy uninterrupted power for a prophetic period of 1260 years. This is mentioned no less than 7 times in the Bible; twice in Daniel (7:25 and 12:7) and 5 times in Revelation (11:2, 3; 12:6, 14 and 13:5). It is the most frequently mentioned time prophecy in Scripture. The period of time is represented variously as 3 ½ years, 42 months or 1260 days, but they all refer to the same period of 1260 literal years (since a day in symbolic prophecy represents a literal year Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). (Presentation Page 27) This period of time extended from 538 A.D., when the last remaining obstacles were removed that opposed the Papacy, through 1798, when under the direction of Napoleon and the generalship of Berthier, Pope Pius VI was captured. His ring was forcibly removed and he died in exile. Many thought the Papacy was dead.

But there was to be a resurgence of power. The formerly removed papal states were reinstated by Mussolini in the Concordat of 1929. (Presentation Page 28) Even secular newspapers, such as the "San Francisco Chronicle," (Presentation Page 29) heralded the event as "healing the wound," (Presentation Page 30) almost quoting verbatim Revelation 13. The power of the papacy would rise to the point that "all the world marveled and followed the beast." We're nearly to that point now. In his eight years as president, George Bush received many heads of state as visitors. Only one time did he go to the airport to meet his guest; that was when the pope came.

(Presentation Page 31) One way of understanding the seven heads is to recognize them as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, Papacy of the middle ages, Papacy of the deadly wound and the resurgent Papacy. This line of thought corresponds well with the language of Revelation 17 when it speaks of seven kings and says, "five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time." Revelation 17:10.

(Presentation Page 32) "And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven." Revelation 13: 5, 6. While we may think of blasphemy as being cursing or profane language, the Bible has a more specific definition. When Jesus was on earth He made the statement, "I and My Father are One." John 10:30. Understanding the divinity of Jesus, we can accept His statement as being accurate. (Presentation Page 33) But the majority of the Jews didn't accept His divinity, and they took issue with what He had said. They took up stones to stone Him. When Jesus asked, "Why?" they responded, (Presentation Page 34) "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man make Yourself God." John 10:32, 33.

Blasphemy then, in the biblical sense, is the unauthorized claim to equality with God. Did Jesus have the right to make that claim? (Presentation Page 35) Yes He did! Within Him dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead." Colossians 2:9. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1. Does anyone else have the right to make that claim? No! It would be blasphemous.

Remember that Satan has always wanted to be equal with God. It was that aspiration which caused his fall in the beginning. "I will be like the Most High" was his lofty and ambitious desire. Isaiah 14:14. For that reason he was removed from heaven. But he has ever since attempted to achieve that goal. When Jesus was about to begin His ministry, Satan came to tempt Him. The last of those temptations included an offer to give Him all if He would bow and worship Satan. To this offer, Christ said, "No thank you."

Satan has always wanted to be equal with God, or at least claim that he is. Thus through unsuspecting humans, perhaps even well-intentioned churchmen, he has spouted his assertions. With sadness we read the boastful and arrogant claims that have fallen from the lips of pontiffs through the ages. They are all hollow echoes of the great claim made by Lucifer himself ages ago. "I will be like the Most High."

Keep in mind that this matter of boastful, blasphemous claims is one of the hallmarks of the Bible's picture of the apostasy. (Presentation Page 36) Daniel mentions it in his description of the horn power that was "speaking pompous words." Daniel 7:8. Paul includes it in his description of the "man of sin," who "sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." II Thessalonians 2:4. (Presentation Page 37) John underscores this point in identifying the power as "*antichrist*," with the prefix "*anti*" having the meaning of "in the place of," or "instead of." It is the Greek equivalent of the Latin *vicar*, which means "in the place of," or "instead of." Do you realize that when the Pope says, "I am the 'Vicar of Christ,'" that if he spoke those words in the Greek language he would be saying, "I am the *antichrist*"? That's what it means; the one who is "in the

place of Christ.” (Presentation Page 38) Revelation 17’s picture of the “harlot” who “rides the beast, full of the names of blasphemy.” Revelation 17:3.

(Presentation Page 39) The very title “pontiff” is blasphemous. It hails back to the priests of ancient Babylon, who styled themselves the ones who made the connection between heaven and earth. The root of the word is “*pont*” or “bridge.” One who wears this label is claiming to be the “bridge” between the “here” and the “hereafter”; the connecting link between God and man. Is there a mortal being on this earth who would dare to claim that title? Who would claim to be the connecting link between man and God?

Presentation Page 40) What does the Scripture say? “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” I Timothy 2:15. Who was the Ladder of Jacob’s dream, stretching from earth to heaven? It was Jesus. John 1:51. When we read, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25), of Whom is this speaking? Is it speaking of a human being? Is it speaking of a pope or priest? Certainly not! It is speaking of Jesus!

Nonetheless, here are a few of the claims made by popes and prelates. (Presentation Page 41)

Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical Letters said, “We hold on this earth the place of God Almighty.”

(Presentation Page 42) “The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ.” Decretal De Translat. (For references for these and the following quotes see <http://amazingdiscoveries.org/AD-Articles-TotalOnslaught-ThePopelsGodOnThisEarth.html>)

(Presentation Page 43) Cardinal Bellarmine stated, “All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that he is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope.”

(Presentation Page 44) In an 1895 article appearing in the “Catholic National” we find this startling statement. “The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.”

(Presentation Page 45) In 1512 Christopher Marcellus said this to Pope Julius II: “Take care that we lose not that salvation, that life and breath which thou has given us, (Presentation Page 46) for thou art our shepherd, thou art our physician, thou art our governor, thou art our husbandman, thou art finally another God on earth.”

(Presentation Page 47) “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God...(Presentation Page 48) The Pope alone is called most holy...Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of hell.

(Presentation Page 49) Moreover the superiority and the power of the Roman Pontiff by no means pertains only to heavenly things, but also earthly things, and to things under the earth,

(Presentation Page 50) and even over the angels, whom he is greater than. So that if it were possible that the angels might err in the faith, or might think contrary to the faith, they could be judged and excommunicated by the Pope. (Presentation Page 51) The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power.”

(Presentation Page 52) A secondary application of the blasphemous indictment is the papacy's claim to forgive sins. When Jesus spoke the words, "Your sins are forgiven" to a lame man, the Pharisees charged Him with "speaking blasphemies. Who can forgive sins but God alone." Luke 5:20, 21. They were correct in their understanding of the definition of blasphemy, but woefully ignorant of the divine nature of the One Who had spoken those words. Yet the Catholic priest claims the power to forgive the sins of one who comes to him in the confessional.

Catholicism stands for the principle that the Church and its Traditions are above the Scriptures. (Presentation Page 53) "Q. What if the Holy Scriptures command one thing, and the Pope another, contrary to it? A. The Holy Scriptures must be thrown aside. (Presentation Page 54) Q. What is the Pope? A. He is the Vicar of Christ, King of kings, and Lord of lords and there is but one judgment seat belonging to God and the Pope." Roy Livesey, Understanding the New Age, p. 101.

(Presentation Page 55) This blasphemy is directed against God to "blaspheme His name, his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven." Revelation 13:6. We've seen the quotations that represent blasphemy against God's names and titles, as well as His temple (where sins are forgiven). The papacy also presumes the power to elevate to sainthood those whom she wishes, and has placed Mary on a level equal to (perhaps even above) that of Jesus Christ. (Presentation Page 56) "He falls and is lost who has not recourse to Mary. Mary is called the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her. (Presentation Page 57) The way to salvation is open to none otherwise than through Mary." Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides the Beast, P. 438.

The Holy Bible, of course, teaches something completely different. Through the Scriptures we understand that Mary, a mortal being, is dead and asleep in the grave awaiting the resurrection at Jesus' coming, and is not in heaven. Jesus is the One through Whom salvation is offered and by Whose name we are saved. (Presentation Page 58) "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Note: these words were spoken by Peter, adjudged to have been the first "Pope."

The Papacy fulfills the specifications of the remaining verses. She is guilty of the blood of millions of martyrs who dared to "choose" a different way than hers (the word "heresy" comes from the root "to choose). Her span of uninterrupted rulership precisely fulfilled the 1260 year prediction offered seven times in Scripture.

(Presentation Page 59) We have entered an era when the clear interpretation of Scriptural symbols has taken a back seat. Gone are the strident voices of Protestantism borne in the cradle of Martin Luther, Zwingli, Knox and the other reformers. (If you want to learn more about the Reformers and their views on the papacy, please request the study, "Holding High the Torch of Protestantism.") Protestants today do not believe what their spiritual forefathers taught. Preterism ("the antichrist came and went long ago") and Futurism ("the antichrist hasn't come yet but will appear at the end of the age"), invented to forestall the advance of Protestantism have

done their job remarkably well, in that those who formerly taught the truth concerning the horn, the beast, the man of sin and the antichrist are silent strangers.

Even among Seventh-day Adventists, at least some of them, the voice has been quieted. There seems to be, at least among some, a mist, a fog of uncertainty as to the identity of these prophetic symbols. Maybe it's a desire to avoid offending. Maybe it's the product of political correctness. Whatever the cause, uncertainty as to the application of the prophetic symbols of Daniel and Revelation is dangerous and will be costly. If you're not sure who the "beast" is, how will you know what the "mark of the beast" is?

(Presentation Page 60) A lonely woman of Sychar came at noon to get water and met a Man Who opened to her mind spiritual truth as she had never seen it. She went and told her neighbors, "*This couldn't be the Christ, could it?*" John 4:29. Could this really be the One of prophecy, sitting right before her eyes? It seemed impossible to grasp. Yet the prophetic requirements were all met in Him. (Presentation Page 61) And so today, many wonder with respect to the historical Papacy, "This couldn't be the Antichrist, could it?" It would be easier to look into the yellowed pages of history to find his uncomfortable existence, or shove his appearance into the far distant stretches of the future. And yet, right before our eyes, we see that prophecy has spoken and history has confirmed. And yes, their own statements corroborate the fulfillment.

(Presentation Page 62) Having said that, and recognizing that it is important to know about the "beasts," (Presentation Page 63) it is *far more important to know the "Lamb."* You can have all the prophetic symbols correctly identified, but without knowing Jesus it will do you no good. It's not what you know, it's Who you know. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are soon to be completely fulfilled. If you listen carefully today, you can hear the echo of those sentiments which will soon result in the formation of the deadly "image to the beast" foretold later in the 13th chapter of Revelation. Today we must make sure of our salvation. Today we must study, pray, work and wait for the fulfillment of God's plan, which surely will soon come to pass.