

Pursuing Resilience in Revelation

Facing Giants (Part 2)

Revelation 13:11-18

Intro

If the beast from the sea represents kingdoms and powers which are in active rebellion against God, the beast from the earth represents the cultures which support the structure of those kingdoms.

In Star Wars, the Emperor revealed himself as a kindly old man with wonderful intentions. He used this deception to manipulate people into going with him into doing wickedness.

Most of the wicked rulers of the world have not presented themselves as wicked. They present themselves as enlightened despots, as benevolent. Yet behind their supposed benevolence hides great evil. That's how our enemy works. He is a deceiver and the master of deceit.

Discover

I. The beast from the earth is a counterfeit messiah. (11-12)

- A. It looks like a lamb, but speaks dragon speak.
- B. Whereas Jesus lived to glorify the Father, this false messiah lives to glorify Satan's kingdom.
 - 1. The beast from the earth supports the beast from the sea.

II. The beast from the earth is the architect of counterfeit religion. (13-15)

- A. Like Pharaoh's magicians who performed counterfeit miracles to try and dismiss Moses, the beast from the earth does the same to try and dismiss Christ.
 - 1. Scripture is clear that we are to watch out for and avoid false prophecy.
 - a) Deuteronomy 13:1-3, Matthew 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11
 - b) Any voice which contradicts God's word, no matter how smooth and convincing, is to be utterly rejected by the church.
 - (1) The greatest philosopher, guru, politician, scholar, or talk show host who promotes something contradictory to God's word is to be ignored.

(2) Satan is a smooth talking master of lies and people who follow him tend to receive this skill set from him. They sadly deceive many. Don't be one of them.

B. This same sort of deception is alive and well in our world today.

1. While we may not have as many magicians or self proclaimed prophets, we have plenty of celebrities, scientists, academics, and other talking heads who are all too happy to promote a wicked world's agenda.
2. In today's world we are called to put self above all. The golden idol of today's world is us.
 - a) Satan's mouthpieces preach a message of self empowerment in which the only real sin is being honest about sin.
3. We have to be careful as Christians, that we aren't being swept away in the flood of deception with the world.
 - a) Remember from before that the devil wants nothing more than to harm the church, to get us believing lies rather than trusting God. He wants to rob us of our joy and abundance and he most often accomplishes this through bad ideas.
 - (1) Satan is far more likely to destroy people through deceiving us than through causing us physical suffering.

III. The beast from the earth marks people for Satan's possession. (16-17)

- A. Social class, wealth, level of education... none of these are indicators of righteousness. People from every state of life and stage of life are being deceived by Satan.
 1. He twists the wisdom and logic of multitudes so that they will refuse to follow Christ.
- B. Bearing the mark of Satan is less about a physical mark and more about what we are truly like on the inside.
 1. Like God's mark, His seal which is on our head and hands, Satan's mark relates to the way we think and act.
 - a) God's seal leads us to having a renewed mind. A renewed mind leads us to live lives which resemble Christ's life.
 - b) Satan's mark leads us further into self-centeredness and rebellion against God. This hedonistic and twisted way of thinking leads us into lives which look more like the Devil's life, full of deceit and vanity rather than the charity and sacrifice of Christ.
- C. There are consequences to rejecting Satan's rule, but there is great reward in Christ.
 1. There have been many times throughout history where Christians have been rejected from society because of their unwillingness to bend the knee to Satan.

- a) Here we are told that if we refuse to go with Satan we might be utterly rejected by society, but when that happens Jesus says we are blessed (Matthew 5:11-12).

IV. The beast from the earth can be known. (18)

- A. We are called to wisdom because we can know who the beast is.
- B. The number 666 is most likely the number of Nero and possibly his successor Domitian.
 - 1. We must realize that these wicked men are not alone the beast, but are expressions of the second beast of which they are types.
 - 2. There have been many figureheads of the second beast throughout history. Anyone ruler or culture maker who resists Christ and supports the beast and the dragon fills this role.
 - a) Matthew 24:24
 - b) These cultural leaders won't look ugly or demonic in the outside. No, they seek to deceive and seduce people to evil. We are told these things so that we might be on the lookout for agents of the second beast, and to reject their teaching and fully affirm the gospel.

Nurture

Who is God? He is the Lord who exposes the works of the enemy for our good.

What has God done? He has marked us with the seal of Christ.

Who are we? We are those who have rejected the mark of the beast and received the mark of Christ upon ourselves.

What is God calling us to do? He is calling us to walk in wisdom that we might recognize and resist the works of the enemy.

Act

What is the Lord calling you to do in response today, that you might walk in His wisdom and resist the works of the enemy in your life?