Revelation 13

The Beast out of the Sea

13 The dragon[a] stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its 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. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 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 filled with wonder and followed the beast. 4 People 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 wage war against it?”

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.[b]

9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.10 “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go.If anyone is to be killed[c] with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.”[d] This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

Counterfeit Trinity:

The dragon, the beast of the air, the beast of the sea make up a fake trinity. “Evil mimics the true God, which is partly why evil can deceive”

Dragon (12) mimics God (4)

Beast from the sea (13:1-10) mimics Jesus the Lamb (5)

OT Reference:

Beast from the sea: Leviathan (Job 41:1),

Four beasts coming from the sea - lion, bear, leopard, indescribable (Daniel 7:1-14) representing four kingdoms that had rejected God- Babylon, Persia, Mede, Greece reciprocates the description John gives about the beast from the sea

“Who is like the beast?”: “Who is like me?” (Isa 40:18, 25; 44:7; 46:5)

Beast from the earth: Behemoth (Job 40:15)

The beast is able to survive and return into power after the fatal wound has been inflicted— showing his strength and resilience. People naturally turn to follow the person they believe is the strongest and naturally, they turn to the beast.

“Given” (vs. 5. 7) refers to the authority and power given by God. Ultimately God is still in control and he allows the beasts and the dragon to exist and to rule over the world for the time being. This is to test the allegiance of his people. God will enable believers to stand for Him even in the midst of oppression—whether we are in-prisoned, in captivity, or killed as martyrs.

Discipleship applications:

1. Healthy suspicion of political institutions - blasphemy and beastliness
   * 1. Hmm…interesting. Discussion item\* US Presidential Elections
2. Hold allegiance to political institutions and the state lightly. Our allegiance to Christ should take ultimate priority in our lives. This will allow us to disengage from political regimes and to identify when they have deviated from the word of God.
3. Pledge allegiance to the trans-national kingdom of God. Two christians coming from different countries, backgrounds, cultures and nationalities ultimately have more in common than two non-believers coming from the same backgrounds. Have we taken time to engage and build communities with believes who harbour differences; socioeconomic, racial, cultural…etc
4. Beast cannot be destroyed by the sword- we cannot fight with our own strength but rather with the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. Remember chapter twelve when we can overcome the beast by not being afraid of death. In similar ways, the only thing that will defeat the beast is declaring that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour even in the face of death
5. Worship- who will you worship and to whom will you give your undivided allegiance?

The Beast out of the Earth

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honour of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man.[e] That number is 666.

Counterfeit Trinity:

Beast from the earth (13:11-18) mimics work of the Holy Spirit (11)

It moves us to worship the beast of the sea and the dragon in the way that the Holy Spirit moves us to worship Jesus and the Father

The two horns on the beast mimic the witness to the Lamb instead of the Lamb itself - two witnesses, two lamp stands, two olive trees (11). Thus the beast is mimicking the Holy Spirit which is the Witness to Jesus Christ.

“And yet lived” references to the resurrection of Jesus Christ but yet there is no mention of a resurrection of the beast. Resurrection means Jesus will never die again whereas the beast is not given this!

Second Beast’s Role:  
Mimics signs and wonders: Moses (Ex 4:17, 30; 10:2; 11:10), Elijah (1 Kings 19:38, 39; 2 Kings 1:10-14) in order to get people to praise the beast of the sea and the dragon.

Manipulate people into trusting and following political power (first beast).

* + - Tells people on earth to make an idol or image to worship the first beast who “was wounded by the sword yet lived —>ref: Jesus”

Represents religious power and institutions- false prophets, messiahs and propagandists (Mark 13:22)

* + - In the first century, political leaders were supported with religious affiliations - they worked together to promote emperor worship!
    - “religious powers give life to the worship of the state” —> Pilate did not wan tot crucify Jesus but was pushed by Caiaphus.
    - often used trickery to deceive people into worship - ventriloquy, hidden pulleys, magicians

Brands people- sets apart those who are unwilling to bow down and worship the first beast- a mark on the forehead and on your righthand.

* + - This is not a literal “mark” but rather a mark of character. Just as we are believers because of our character and we have Christ in us, the beast will mark his followers with his presence through their “ideological commitment (head) and practical out workings (hand) of that commitment”

\*\*\*Religion can be the enemy of discipleship\*\*\* The false prophet operates in the church! Teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans in Pergamum (2) as well as the prophetess Jezebel in Thyatira (2) —>

1. theology of compromise with culture and economics and society
2. in the things that are instead of the way they should be; from culture instead of from scripture
3. trust in human power and institutions; to seek salvation by human means

666

1. Gematria- using numbers to spell words (names) In the first century, letters of alphabet used as numerals! It’s hard to change numbers back into a name.
   * + Thus the gematria method is too hard— remember John is writing for lay people in the churches in the first century. Some of them haven’t even gone to school!
2. Triangular Number approach- (formula) Tn=[n(n+1)]/2
3. Symbolically - Rev 13:18 says that “the number is that of [a] man” 7-1=6 one short of completeness! Thus the beasts and dragons of the earth tries to mimic the Trinity bu falls short and can never measure up! 666 is three sixes and three- another number of completeness symbolically affirms the notion that the beast is “completely incomplete”
   * + - Thus the number 666 is used to characterize the beast and not to identify it as “something else”

Discipleship applications:

1. Healthy suspicion of the secular. What might be the intentions and origins of signs and wonders? Are they pointing you to Jesus?
2. Remember religion can lose its way when it puts faith in power of human institutions to save and heal the world
3. Worship -partake in worship that is complete, that is purposeful, and that leads you to the true and mighty God!

Bonus\*\*\* using the gematria, Jesus’ name in greek Iesous comes out as 888