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## Revelation

### Chapter 13 - Revealing the Beast Deified by the World

#### The Origin & Attraction of the Beast (vs. 1-4)

**Revelation 13:1-4:** And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 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. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 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; 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?"

One of the reasons why I love Chapter 13 is because it's so revelatory. That's what the book is about, isn't it? Revealing things to us. And what this chapter does is it reveals what man loves, strangely enough. The perception of the beast, you would think, "Oh no, we're really afraid." No, no, think again. It's exactly what man loves. It's what he's been worshipping all along and he deifies the beast. The imagery that is given within the passage is, and we know that it's imagery, why? Because we hear the phrase "like". So, a metaphor is "like" something. So, we know that the imagery is given to us in this particular passage as he begins to describe the beast, like a leopard, like a bear, like a lion. He is conveying the personality of, he is conveying the nature of, these beasts that God has created. But what man has so desired more than, interestingly enough, in the contrast of the Book of Revelation, a lamb. It's quite a contrast when you think about the two images that he's been given us throughout, of a Lamb as if slain, and this mighty beast that is now going to be described. As we just read the chapter before, in Chapter 12, the passion of God and what He feels passionate about, and really it's an interesting description

of a Father that is caring for His family. And this dragon is going after His kid. Well, how would you feel? Well, intense, passionate. And why is God angry? Because somebody's trying to kill His kid. Somebody wants to hurt His wife, the people that He loves. So, what better way than to put it in a capsulized type picture in which we can relate to, we can understand that. If you were to talk to us about terms of the universe, I couldn't comprehend what God would be going through. But if you put it in the scenario of a household and a family, I get it. I understand what you're feeling. So, He does that to reveal His emotions to us, and we saw that in Chapter 12.

What we're going to see in Chapter 13 is this beast coming up out of the sea. And you see John saying, "I stood by this seashore, and I see this beast coming up out of the sea." There is a reason why he's described as one coming out of the sea. As you probably have read throughout Scripture, but just by way of reminder, so many passages give reference to the sea as a tumultuous place. Why? Because the sea is unpredictable. At one

moment it can be calm, the next moment it can be terrible and tumultuous.

In Isaiah 57:20, It reads this way,

“But the wicked are like the tossing sea,  
For it cannot be quiet,  
And its waters toss up refuse and mud.”

You get the picture that it's always being moved by something. And it's a volatile place.

In fact, Revelation 17:15 will declare,

“... “The waters which you saw... are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.””

What is He saying? Well, out of that tumultuous mass of humanity is going to come the beast. It's an interesting picture.

Throughout Scripture, we read, and we are actually warned, whether it's in Ephesians or the Book of James, that sense of volatility is really described by waters. Paul will write in Ephesians 4:14 that if you're childish, you're like somebody that is tossed here and there by waves and

carried away by every wind and wave of doctrine. It's an interesting way of describing it.

James 1:6 will talk about those who have a lack of faith. And he'll say, "You're like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind." And he'll actually add this on, "unstable in all your ways." There's nothing really that describes humanity more than instability. I mean, a fad will come and all of a sudden people will change.

Situation ethics will change or ethics. I mean, you look back 30, 40 years ago, and you go, "Wow. Our nation has really changed." Why is that? Because people are volatile, they're changeable. And they, strangely enough, seem to like change. We oftentimes quote the verse, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray." And we think in terms of that wandering. But there is that sense of wanderlust in man, that a sense of restlessness and wandering is something that he seems to be drawn to, which seems kind of bizarre when you think about it, that he's attracted to those kinds of things. What Scripture's going to reveal to us is he's not only attracted and that's a part of who he is, but he seems to be attracted to brutality and fierceness

and ferocity and all these things that are going to be described in this beast; that man is attracted to those kind of things and that he's actually allured by them. Which, once again, the pictures that are given, even at the beginning, is that God is telling us that the greatest power in the heavens is the Lamb as if slain. We would perceive that the greatest powers in the heavens, of course, are the great beasts.

When you look at the very beginning in Revelation 4, and he begins to describe some of the great powers in heavens, angelic beings, he gives this picture of an eagle or a lion. If you look with me, just by way of reminder, in Revelation 4. We'll just pick up in verse 7.

(Revelation 4:7) “The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

(Revelation 4:8) And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY,

HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.””

Now, what you're seeing is clearly a picture of powerful forces that God has created. And whether it's the eagle that you consider with this unattainable advantage that is superior to all others, I mean, one of the benefits of being an eagle is nobody can touch you. You can fly to heights way beyond, and you have this advantage of sight that nobody else has. Well, if you think about it, that's a power. For somebody to have a superior understanding and comprehension of things and be able to ascertain things from a level that nobody else can, there's a power that's involved in that. There's a power in majestic strength, bravery, like a lion, that is oftentimes used to describe the great powers of even nations. It's no surprise that, you know, you look back, whether it's Assyria or Babylon, and you see these lions on their flags, it's their description of who they are. It has that sense of power. The same thing is true when you consider a calf. Now, it purposely says in the text, not like a grown cattle, but a calf, which makes reference to something amiable and

something caring and something approachable. And there is a power in that. If you've ever known anybody that was just very approachable and easy to talk to, and, you know, before long, they own the company. And you go, "How did you do that?" And they go, "I just learned to get along with people." But there are powers that God has given and are from the heavens. Everything is from God, right? One of the greatest powers is, and it's interesting if you remember reading, one of them was the face of a man. And that face of a man is that of reason, that of being able to put things together. But what Scripture's going to reveal is that he's the greatest beast. Man is the one that reasons through vindictiveness. You know, a lion may eat you, but it's nothing personal. But man will come after you with great vengeance, and he'll invent ways to hurt. He's not satisfied with just devouring. He wants to hurt you.

So, what you're going to see as we go through are these powers and these forces that in many respects are attractive to us. But the question is, which power are you most drawn to? Not one of the powers in and of

themselves is evil. It's not a terrible thing to have the ability to reason. But of course, used in the wrong way, it's going to be extremely destructive. There's nothing wrong with majestic strength. There's nothing wrong with advantage. But once again, if left in the hands of twisted man and distorted man, it's going to be horrific. What Scripture will do is it'll take us out of the realm of this power, and as all these powers are standing before the heavens and saying, "You're the One that knows what's best." That's why these angelic beings are going, "Holy, holy, holy." And then you wonder, "Okay, so what is the greatest power in heaven?" And that was Chapter 5, right, of Revelation? So, you know, here John is standing and he's going, "Okay, there's this great book that will take back all of creation, and it's a title deed to creation, and who's going to get it? Which power is going to get it?" And God goes, "The Lamb."

The text reads basically this way in verse 2,

(Revelation 5:2) "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

(Revelation 5:3) And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

(Revelation 5:4) Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

(Revelation 5:5) and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

(Revelation 5:6) And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) ...”

Well, we've already had them described, the great powers of the heavens.

“... a Lamb standing, as if slain...”

Not even a full-grown sheep.

“... having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

(Revelation 5:7) And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”

And everybody begins to sing a new song, and they go,  
“That's the One. Worthy is the Lamb.”

It says this in verse 9,

(Revelation 5:9) “And they sang a new song, saying,  
“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals;  
for You were slain, and purchased...”

“It was Your love that paid the price,” as John will say,  
“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the  
world.”

So, you have this magnificent picture in which, as it ends  
Chapter 5, all the heavens are proclaiming, verse 12,

(Revelation 5:12) “... “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain  
to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and  
honor and glory and blessing.””

And every created thing is saying, “You're the One that's  
going to be leading and ruling the heavens.”

So, Revelation begins to reveal what is true in the  
heavens. But then he comes back down to earth and it  
says, “But what does man think?” And man strangely  
seems to be drawn not to the Lamb. You'll hear the news

or you'll watch the movies and man is drawn to violence. He's drawn to ferocious, brutal things. And Psalm 49 will say man in his pomp and his arrogance is like a beast that perishes. So, it's an interesting picture that is given to us. And so, what we're going to see at the beginning of Chapter 13 is man's admiration and his adoration for beastly things. Now, you just remember, he's already restless. I mean, why is it that man loves violence? Because he's restless. I mean, you're not going to find somebody that's at peace with himself, at peace with his family, at peace with God, violent. He's just not going to be a violent person. But you show me somebody that their whole life is in turmoil, and I'll show you somebody that is going to gravitate towards that which is hostile. So, the passage begins this way in Chapter 13,

(Revelation 13:1) “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast...”

Now, the emphasis, of course, obviously, of the word is that which is brutal and forceful.

“... coming up out of the sea...”

Coming up out of the turmoil. I mean, we live in a world that's unsettling. We live in a world full of fads and fashions, obviously, ever-changing trends and impulsive things that are happening. But in addition to that, we live in a world full of philosophies that are ever-changing, governments that are ever-changing, education that is, well, more than convoluted. Even if you think about it, our religions are fluid. I was watching some of these, well, you hear from some of these dignitaries of the church, I guess is what you want to call them. And they'll stand before the camera, "Well, we used to do things this way, and now, we do things this way." And I'm going, okay, so when did truth change? When did gravity cease to exist? Because the point is that truth is an absolute and it never changes. That's why it's truth. I mean, that's why you embrace it. But religion is ever seemingly fluid, and people are always going, "Well, this used to be true, but now the fads have changed us and everything like that." And we have ever-changing laws. If you think about our ideologies, ethics are ever-changing. It's just not the same. So, out of this mayhem of this world that we call, it's interesting that Paul will write, "We live in a world

that is ever-changing and ever-searching for knowledge, but never seemingly able to come to the knowledge of truth.”

It's an interesting statement, 2 Timothy 3:7,

“Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

You can feel that unsettledness. As Pilate will say, “What is truth, right? You really can't know it.” And I do believe that we're coming more to a point of being agnostics than anything else, because we believe in truths that change. That's what we call them. But we don't really believe that you could actually have a truth that never changes.

As you look in this passage that begins to describe, and it's the imagery that Scripture is getting you to feel. Once again, I still contest that the purpose of Revelation is to get you to feel things. So that ultimately, as you read the end of the book, the church is saying and crying out, “Come quickly!” So, if you can understand the world that you're in, guess what you're going to be saying? “Get me out of here.” Yeah. If you fully comprehend what's going on. So, I don't want anybody shooting themselves or

anything like that. But what we do know is that if we can comprehend what is going on, then there's a piece that says, "Okay, God knows this is happening, but He's going to make it all right, and this is how He's going to do it." Sometimes if you know things are going to get worse in order to get great, you go, "Okay, no big deal. I'll take the worst in order to get great." So, that's why people have children, right? Nine months of not so great, and then all of a sudden, a baby, and then maybe not so great. But eventually, things will get better. There's hope there.

But in Revelation 13, you see this beast coming out of the sea in this tumultuousness. And if you look in the text, it begins to describe it. Now, what we're going to find in Revelation is oftentimes, like I said, many of the things are written in paper journalistic form. So that you'll have a heading, you'll have a description, and then detail will be added as you read into the text. So, we're going to see some of these things being described. I've already described one of them as the sea. And in Chapter 17, he says, "Remember the waters that you saw? These are peoples and nations." And so, it describes the turmoil.

The same thing is going to be true with the 10 horns, the 7 heads. And in each case, it's going to give a description. I'm not going to go too much in detail now because we will be talking about it later as we go, but I will give you a comprehension of what is being said.

(Revelation 13:1) “... Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns...”

“Horns” is making that reference to power. It was an age-old power, and it's a comprehensible power even to this day. Not only a horn in which you blow and the fear of the soldiers are coming, but a sense of the horn itself on the animal. Basically, the animal's innocuous until it grows a horn. And you better run, because he's coming at you with a horn. So, it gives us a demonstration of power. What it's talking about is that there's going to be a force of 10 powers. Now, what we're going to find out is that the lawless one is going to give men these powers, great powers. And they're going to wield their powers. And what's interesting is that these horns are going to be described as powers without a nation. So, today we would actually call them terrorists, a person that has

brute strength and power, but they don't have a nation. And you understand how they can be powerful. So, we'll see that as we go on.

Then he describes, if you look at the passage, “seven heads,” and of course, “heads” is making reference to authorities of nations. Now, the reason why, and he'll go on to describing these not only as leaders, but he'll describe them as nations, and that's why as you read on, and once again, I won't take you into the text because we're going to get there, but as you read on, he's going to describe them as mountains, and as leaders, heads. “Heads” is authority. And I believe the reason you're going to see this as it goes, 7, is he's talking about 7 kingdoms. And the reason why he describes them as mountains, mountains has an enduring effect. So, I know that every time I go to North Carolina, there's Saluda Pass, and you start heading up the mountain. Now, it was there this year. It was there the year before. Actually, I remember it when I was a kid. So, the point of a mountain is it has an enduring quality. And so, what it's conveying is that there are going to be leaders that are coming up

from nations that have existed throughout the years, powers that have existed throughout the years. And they may have different names, but they're the same powers. And it's the same kingdom. And we're basically going to be seeing that as the description is given.

Now, if you look at the passage, it says,

“... and on his horns were ten diadems...”

Of course, making reference to the fact that they were elevated and exalted in the minds of the world.

“... and on his heads were blasphemous names.”

Which means that there seems to be this bold, brash intimidation, but more specifically, a hostility towards God. So, coming out of the turmoil of the world is going to come powers that begin to unite, that are extremely hostile towards God. I don't know. Does this sound familiar? So, he's now going to begin to describe the nations by virtue of brute force. What do they look like?

And if you look with me, it says in verse 2,

(Revelation 13:2) “And the beast which I saw was like a leopard...”

The best way to describe these, and without me going too much into the Hebrew or the Greek, which in the Hebrew, interestingly enough, the word for “leopard” and in the Greek as well is very similar. The emphasis is that of spots or that of camouflage. They say that, I think the Greek would actually translate it more like a panther, which, I don't know. You know what I'm talking about here, jaguar or panther, whatever. But they say that a black panther actually has spots. That if you look, even a black panther will have spots. Jeremiah will make reference to the fact, “Can a leopard change his spots?” It'll be from Jeremiah. But the point is that you have a beast that wants to devour. But the one thing that makes this beast unique is his ability to be stealth, his camouflage, his ability to hide. And so, what Scripture is revealing within the kingdom, is there's going to be a kingdom that arises that will begin to take over by virtue of their ability to hide. You won't see them coming. It's kind of like Psalm 10, where it says they lie in wait and then they pounce on you. And it literally is kind of a description of an animal hiding within and the weak and the defenseless they destroy. The power is going to come. And so, as it's describing, it's a strength

that God has created. Why did God create panthers? So you would see what nations would be like. And why did God, if you look within the passage, describe or have bears? Now, from what I understand, a leopard can probably go upwards of 30 to 35 miles an hour, in some cases upwards to 40. Surprisingly enough, a grizzly bear can go between 30 to 35 miles an hour. That's pretty fast. And they can do this, they say, for upwards of 10 to 20 miles. So, don't try to outrun one. It's not going to work. But the name itself seems to make mention of gliding. And if you've ever seen a bear, it almost seems like they're fluid on the ground. But more specifically, as it's described in Scripture, bears actually have five fingers, five toes. Did you know that? They call them paws or claws, but they're actually five, like a man. And they stand flat-footed like people do. That's why they can stand up the way they do. So, they're very interesting creatures. But their paws are such that, and their strength and their ability to move so fluidly, allows them to be, as their name literally means, obstructionists. That is to say, that they have the ability to surround you and you can't move. Their claws will grab you and you can't get away. A

leopard may hit you and in his stealth be able to capture you, but a bear, he'll grab you and won't let you go. You won't leave unless he wants you to go. So, it's an interesting picture of a force that's coming in and going to be able to literally keep you from moving, is the description within the text. So, there's a bear. And his feet are actually holding you, because the description is of his feet, right? That's the way I'm getting it anyway.

“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...”

Which is the picture of tearing. Actually, the word “lion” makes reference to something that tears. So, it seems that without any kind of concern for decorum, just a ripping and a tearing and just wants to destroy. Scripture says Satan is like a devouring lion, seeking whom he may destroy. And when you think about it, they prey upon the slow, the weak; they're waiting for them, and then they ultimately destroy them. So, it has that tearing effect.

And it says at the end of verse 2,

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

Okay, so the strength of the dragon, i.e. the dragon being... By the way, if you were just confused about this, go back to Chapter 12.

And if you look with me in Chapter 12, and drop on down to verse 9,

(Revelation 12:9) “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth...”

So, who's the dragon? Okay, so at least you know who he is. And here again, I just want to emphasize the reason why he's called dragon, “*drakōn*” is the Greek word that is used, makes reference to you can't take your eyes off him. The glory of this creature is so magnificent, by virtue of his great strength and power, that you're mesmerized by his appearance, and you're drawn by his appearance. Is it strange to you that people are so visually and intensely drawn to things? I mean, all you have to do is put sparkle or a little glitter or something in 3D, and people go, “Ooo!

Ahh! Wow!” and you've got a follower. Well, that's the picture of “*drakōn*”. And he has so much power in this world that he begins to give it to the beast.

Now, there is a parallel to all this in the Book of Daniel. And once again, I don't want to go all the way through Daniel to demonstrate this. But if you turn with me to Daniel 7, just by way of drawing some sort of connection, what you're going to see in the passage is the description of nations. I'll just mention who they are. Babylon, right? He's going to describe Babylon. Medes and the Persians. And he's going to describe Greece, Alexander the Great, that are mentioned, and ultimately Rome.

But if you look within the passage in Daniel 7, he says, (Daniel 7:3) “And four great beasts were coming up from the sea...”

Is it surprising? In other words, nations, coming up out of people groups.

(Daniel 7:4) “The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking...”

And then verse 5,

(Daniel 7:5) “And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear...”

Okay. Alright. So, what we're looking at in Revelation is that in the final days, the kingdoms that were like Babylon, kingdoms that were like the Medes and the Persians, a kingdom that was like Greece or Rome are going to start resurfacing. These 7 mountains are going to start resurfacing. By the way, if you're confused whether or not these are nations or anything like that or that I'm reading this right, read the rest of Daniel, you'll see he describes, “Well, this beast was this nation...” So, anyway, without me going into a lot of detail. But the point is that the day is coming when the Ancient of Days is going to come and He's going to claim the world back for Himself. The point of the text is this, that man gravitates towards that kind of ruling. Nobody ever establishes a kingdom and put sheep in front of it. They don't do that. They put a snake, you know, from Egypt. I mean, you go and look at all the kingdoms, and what is it that they have? Eagles, right? There's some nation we know that has an eagle. Anyway. But it's those kind of things that we love. And we

say, "Well, I mean, eagle's perfect, isn't it?" What do we worship? Freedom. Isn't that what we worship? That's our god. "So, the greatest thing that could ever happen is freedom." God goes, "I wouldn't go there if I were you." "Well, it's great. You get up there and you can see things that nobody else sees and you can go anywhere you want to go. How wonderful freedom is." "Okay. So, you want freedom to rule the world?" "Yes." Okay, what you're now watching, what's happening, is exactly the result of that. Give a murderer freedom. Guess what he's going to do? Give a rapist freedom to everyone. Worship freedom and tell him he can do anything he wants to do. You take freedom to the nth degree, and as Paul will say, people are going to use their freedom to devour one another. Because that's what happens. So, you can't worship anything but the Lamb. This is one of the great revealing points of Scripture.

So, as you come to this, you see that you have these great forces that are now coming together. And if you look in verse 3, there's going to be something else that moves everybody to embrace the beast. Guess what it is? Health

care. No, really. One of the beasts is going to look like they have a fatal wound and they're going to come back to life. And people are going to go, "I want that guy." That's what they're going to do. Read the text with me. We'll pick up in verse 3.

(Revelation 13:3) "I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain..."

Now, that "as if" means that he had not been, which means that there's obviously a little delusion or trickery involved.

Take a moment and turn with me to 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul actually uses this same phrase in 2 Thessalonians 2, in which he says in verse 2,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2) "That you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us..."

That's actually the same construct that's being used in that other passage, "as if slain."

Now, if you drop on down,

(2 Thessalonians 2:9) “That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.”

“They healed me.” “Oh yeah, whatever.” It's magic tricks.

In fact, verse 11,

(2 Thessalonians 2:11) “For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false.”

So, anyway, what you have is this miraculous event. Now, the point, and really the theme of the Gospel of John, is you don't necessarily believe what you see. You believe what you love. So, because man is so infatuated with these powers, anything that gives them any sense of, “Wow, they can do this?” is that which would push everybody over.

So, the text reads this way,

(Revelation 13:3) “I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed...”

“*Thaumazō*” is the term that is used. They wondered, they admired, they adored. You know what's going to happen under this? Worship. And all from what? Listen very carefully. Healing. Quasi-healing. Fake healing. Whatever you want to call it. A miraculous thing happens. Maybe it's through technology. But people are going, “Wow, we could live forever.” **Now, wait a minute, didn't Jesus already promise that?** But they're not attracted to the Lamb. They're attracted to these other forces. Listen, the hospital will tell you, “We can help you live. We can help you live longer.” Of course, people are thinking, “I'll never die.” That's not true. They're lying to you. They're deceiving you. “Oh, we'll give you such...” I told Connie, I said, “I can't listen to an advertiser without people telling me how much they care for me. I didn't know that many people cared. My credit card company cares for me. Their number one concern is my welfare.” Did you know that? I didn't know that up till this year. But you're hearing repeated over and over again, “care, care, care, care.” And it really is anything but that. I mean, we're finding old people that are sequestered in little rooms, and people can't get to them that care for them. But anyway, this is

the hostility of man, but man will believe anything because of what he wants to believe, not because of what is true. And it doesn't matter that the world is blaspheming God. That doesn't matter to people. Well, you know, they're just having a bad day, maybe. These are the same people you're putting your trust in and they're railing Jesus Christ. They see no reason for Him at all. And you're going, "They're my savior." In fact, we don't call them saviors; we call them "heroes". Those are the new names that we've given everybody today. Everybody's a hero. So, "These are the ones that saved my life." No, Jesus saves your life.

So, the passage goes on, it says,

"... And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast."

Now, what you're going to find out, and it shouldn't surprise you... Did you ever read the last of the book so you can figure out what actually happened? So then you weren't so tense the rest of the book? So, I'll give you a little insight. As you come to the end of Chapter 13, it

actually tells you who the beast is. Read it with me if you pick up with me.

It says, in Chapter 13, that the day is coming,

(Revelation 13:16) “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.”

We're already kind of starting that stuff now, but just to let you know.

(Revelation 13:17) “And he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.”

A while back, my mom needed some medication. So, we took her to the hospital, this is a doctor's office, and we said, “We understand that this is a good medication. Do you think we get that?” “Uh, I don't think your insurance pays for that.” And so, we asked the doctor, we said, “Well, do you think she needs it?” “Yeah.” I said, “Well, we'll pay for it. How much is it?” He told us how much, “We'll pay for it.” He goes, “I can't accept your money.” I

said, "I thought you said it costs that much." He says, "I know, but I can't go against the insurance company." And I thought to myself, "You won't be able to buy or sell without the mark." It's pretty interesting, very controlling. But it says in verse 17,

"And he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name."

Now, it's referring to the beast and the number of his name. It's interesting that the beast is now, as a conglomerate, becoming like one. Let's see, the whole world worships.

Okay, so verse 18,

(Revelation 13:18) "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

The number of who? Who's the beast? The same thing in Daniel. Who is the beast? It was the nations. Who's coming out of the sea of turmoil? The nations are coming

out of the sea. And they've come together to form powerful coalitions that devour. That's what they do. And because man, in his aggressiveness, can control and literally hems you in and then he does some side show miracle, people begin to go, "You're our god. You're our god. You're the person that we worship." Now, it shouldn't surprise you that the reason why man worships the beast, himself, not only because he's basically narcissistic, is because the dragon, the evil one, has given him all power and all authority. Now, here's the point. If Satan came up to most people today and said, "I'll give you all the riches that you want. I'll give you control of everything. I'll give you all the power and strength to rule nations." Most people would go with him. Do you remember the testing of Christ? "I'll give You the kingdoms." He puts them on the pinnacle and says, "They're all Yours." He doesn't mind giving them to us because he's going to use them to destroy us. Listen, if a politician stands up and says to you, "I'm going to give you things for free, you won't have to work for them, you won't have to do nothing for them, I'm going to give them to you. In fact, I'll give you the power." Isn't that what

they say? “I'll give you the strength. You're the ones in charge. You're the ones in charge.” While all the way in the back rooms, they're making decisions against you. But they're telling you the opposite. Now, who are you going to worship? See, that's the problem. Once man has perceived that he's on the throne, he'll worship anything that will say, “I'll give you the power.” The reason why people don't follow the Lamb is because the Lamb's on the throne. And we step back and we go, “You know how to solve things better than me. You'll do what's best for me. You love me. You gave Your life for me. I'm not afraid of Your decision making. You know far better than I do.” But man won't worship Him because he's not in control.

Look at the end of verse 2,

(Revelation 13:2) “... And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

Tools.

(Revelation 13:3) “... and followed after the beast;

(Revelation 13:4) they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying..."

Well, this phrase belongs to God.

The phrase is,

"Who is like the beast..."

No, no, no. That's a phrase of God. That's what Isaiah said when he stood before the presence of God, "Who is like You?" And now man is saying it to himself.

Once again, Psalm 49, if you look with me, makes mention of this same kind of mindset, as it reminds us that really, we don't have the power that we think we have. But we boast of great things.

(Psalm 49:5) "Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me,

(Psalm 49:6) Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches?"

But let's get to the bottom line. I love the way Scripture does that, don't you?

(Psalm 49:7) “No man can by any means redeem his brother

Or give to God a ransom for him—

(Psalm 49:8) For the redemption of his soul is costly...”

You can't save anybody. You might as well stop. You're not going to do it. Verse 8. You're not going to live forever unless there's another power force.

He says in verse 10,

(Psalm 49:10) “For he sees that even wise men die;

The stupid and the senseless alike perish

And leave their wealth to others.

(Psalm 49:11) Their inner thought is that their houses are forever

And their dwelling places to all generations;

They have called their lands after their own names.”

Alexandria.

(Psalm 49:12) “But man in his pomp will not endure;

He is like the beasts that perish.”

(Psalm 49:16) “Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich,

When the glory of his house is increased;

(Psalm 49:17) For when he dies he will carry nothing away;

His glory will not descend after him.

(Psalm 49:18) Though while he lives he congratulates himself— ...”

And even, maybe, perhaps deifies himself and calls himself “god”.

“... And though men praise you when you do well for yourself—

(Psalm 49:19) He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light.

(Psalm 49:20) Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish.”

Scripture tells us that we have a Lamb that has come to take away the sins of the world, and whatever you're attracted to, I guess you're going to be drawn to. But I'm drawn to the Lamb. And I believe that He'll do right by

me, and I'm not afraid, because I know that all that is perceived on the earth is that violence and strength and advantage is the power that rules. But I know that's not true. I know that what's true is that grace and mercy and love and sacrifice reign in the heavens. And that's the one I'm going with.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, we give You thanks for Your revealing to us just the things that man is drawn to. Certainly, the heart of man is desperately sick. We can't really know the degree of that sickness. But we also know that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. I'm actually born again, no longer of the flesh, but of the Spirit. And the things that I used to love have changed, and now I actually have the eyesight of the Lamb. And my pursuits have changed, my endeavors, my perceptions.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you've never received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, man, couldn't be a better time. We are not as those who have

no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep. And the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be. In a place free from violence and hatred.