

## Revelation 13:1-10 | The First Beast

### Introduction

For the first time in Revelation, we are introduced to the Antichrist. He is not specifically called “Antichrist” in Revelation but rather, “beast.” Along with the timing of the “rapture” and the nature of the millennium period, no other aspect of eschatology (study of the end-times) has generated more speculation, sensationalism, and confusion than the nature and identity of “The Antichrist.” Thus, we must tread carefully through these verses.

### Verse-By-Verse Notes

#### Verses 1-2

- The “sea” in the Bible is typically depicted as uncontrollable chaos tamable only by God Himself (Psalm 29:3; 89:9). In the new creation John notes that “sea will be no more” (Revelation 21:1). Whether he means that *literally* as in no more oceanic water or *figuratively* in that the chaotic threat represented in the sea is no more is debated. IN any case, the imagery is clear: the beast arises from chaos.
- The 10 horns likely represent a political alliance the beast will make during the tribulation.
- The seven heads likely represent seven successive world empires: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist’s final world kingdom.

#### Verses 3-4

- The “mortal wound” one the heads of the beast may represent the revival of a dead conquered/dead kingdom (such as a revived Roman Empire). If we are *consistent* with our interpretation of the beast’s “heads” as world kingdoms, then a revived kingdom is surely what it represents. However, many interpreters believe it is a reference to the death and resurrection of the Antichrist himself, mimicking the death and resurrection of Christ. Some commentators understand it as a combination of *both* kingdom and person.
- The miraculous resurrection of the kingdom/Antichrist will amaze and convince the world to worship the beast and the dragon (Satan) who gives him power. This is likely to take the form of unquestioned allegiance to the man Antichrist and the government he leads.

#### Verses 5-6

- The beast will assume a “god-like” disposition and will be ferociously irreverent and irreligious.
- Notice the sovereignty of God over the beast and the double-agency of both Satan *and* God in verse 5 – Satan gave him his blasphemous mouth, God allowed his authority.

### Verses 7-8

- Again, the sovereignty of God is clearly seen: the beast was *allowed* to persecute tribulation believers, and was *given* authority over all the world.
- The extent of the Antichrist's rule and "god-like" allegiance is universal – "all who dwell on earth will worship it." The phrase "all who dwell on the earth" in Revelation *always* refers to the unbelieving wicked. Specifically, John identifies them as the non-elect – "everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." (Note how some translations place the phrase "before the foundation of the world" after "written" and others after "slain." See Revelation 17:8 for clarity as Scripture interprets Scripture. In short, the phrase "before the foundation of the world" applies to both the names written (or in this case, *not* written) *and* the decree of Christ's death. See Acts 2:23; 4:26-28; Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:29-30.

### Verses 9-10

- There are textual issues here (variant readings), but the point of verse 10 is clear in its surrounding context: the persecution of believers during this time will be inevitable. *Many* will die because they refuse to worship the beast. Thus, the call for endurance.
- Mark 13:19–20 <sup>19</sup> **For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.** <sup>20</sup> **And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.**

**BIG IDEA: THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE MAN'S FULLEST EXPRESSION OF DISDAIN FOR GOD AND WILL DECEIVE THE WORLD INTO ALLEGIANCE TO HIM.**