Revelation 13 The Dragon and Two Beasts:

The Beast from the Sea The Beast from the Earth UNHOLY TRINITY

• From last time, as we neared the end of the passage in 2 **Thessalonians 2:9-12...**

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- "Among those who perish..." Those deceived by man of sin are perishing (apollymenois, pres. part.; noun "destruction" [apoleias]
 because they refused to love truth of God and accept His gift of salvation.
- Their <u>choice</u> brings their condemnation. In spite of saving truth of the gospel, unbelievers refuse it. To love truth of the gospel indicates true acceptance and adherence to it. Nothing else is required.
- Truth contrasts lies of the man of sin.
 "Consequence" of believing and loving Truth is salvation.

The consequence of unbelief: God will make these people even dumber...

¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



Homer Simpson never looked so good!

- *"For this reason..."* So <u>why will God send</u> <u>this "delusion</u>?" Answer provided in the previous passage: *"...because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*
- This is the consequence for rejection of the truth. Just as with all other things, there is a "fullness" of unbelief that can be reached. This is the place where God knows a believer is beyond accepting the truth. It is at this point this "strong delusion" is sent.

- In John 5, Jesus spoke about what happens when a person believes in Him. He described it as "passing from death into life." This happens at the moment of belief. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24)
- Conversely, when a person reaches their "fullness of unbelief" (complete rejection of Jesus), they will <u>never pass from death into</u> <u>life</u>, as God sends a delusion that will prevent that life saving passage.

- <u>God does not make this choice</u> or send this delusion arbitrarily. He desires that none perish. The person has made their own choice. God merely acknowledges it.
- The person who makes this choice has chosen to remain under the sentence of death. ("Death" here is the "second" death, eternal separation from God.)
- <u>This is the point of no return</u>. The unbeliever has chosen his or her future. *It is tragic and heartbreaking, even to the Creator Himself, the One who seals it.*

COMMENTARY: "People who prefer to love sin and lies rather than gospel truth will receive severe, divine recompense, as do all sinners. God Himself will send judgment that insures their fate in the form of a deluding influence so that they continue to believe what is false. They accept evil as good and a lie as the truth. Thus does God use Satan and Antichrist as His instruments of judgment."

(MacArthur)

COMMENTARY: Indifference now (even though it involves hearing the Gospel) may not rule out an acceptance of the Gospel in the Tribulation. But hardness brought on by continued rejection seems more likely to carry over into the Tribulation and become even more rigid, so as to rule out any acceptance of the truth. This is a difficult question to answer clearly, and although one hopes everybody (including present rejecters) will have opportunity and will accept the Savior during the Tribulation, one must consider the import of these verses. (Ryrie)



"Strong delusion ... "

STRONG: energeia

Efficiency (energy) - operation, strong, (effectual) working. (From *energēs*, active, operative: - effectual, powerful.

DELUSION: planē

objectively fraudulence; subjectively a straying from orthodoxy or piety: - deceit, to deceive, delusion, error. (from *planos, roving* (as a *tramp*), that is, (by implication) an *impostor* or *misleader:* deceiver, seducing.)

literally "a powerful, effective working of error"

¹³ But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, <u>because God from the</u> <u>beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification</u> <u>by the Spirit and belief in the truth</u>, ¹⁴ to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul wraps up this subject matter, he closes with thanks that "God from the beginning chose you for salvation...."

This often brings up the subject of the doctrine of election, or <u>predestination</u>, and it's a good idea to *briefly* address that here.

- We must note there are <u>two parts to our</u> <u>salvation</u> – a divine invitation and a human response. God chose us, but <u>we decide</u> whether or not to choose Him, and then also to choose to allow the work of the Holy Spirit (sanctification) in our lives.
- Paul indicates it is more than mere belief, it is <u>submitting to God's work in us</u>. (The difference between "carnal" Christians and Spirit-led believers.) Paul says these believers had done both things necessary – belief and submission.

- There is controversy about these verses, mainly due to phrase *"from the beginning."*
- Does this support what some suppose to be "predestination" or a singling out by God for salvation or not? Absolutely not.
- We have discussed before how God has chosen ALL for salvation, and has offered ALL the free gift of eternal life with Him, through His Son, Jesus. In the same way, ALL are called for this same purpose. <u>We make the choice</u>.

Let's take a closer look...

- *"…knowing, beloved brethren, your <u>election by God</u>. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)*
- Many have tried to explain "doctrine of election." Essentially, the word means "chosen." Believers have been chosen by God. We cannot fully understand this concept.
- <u>Does not mean predestination</u> to heaven or hell. Best way to understand, if we can, is to know that God *elects*, or <u>CHOOSES everyone</u> to know Him and be saved by blood of His Son.

- He desires that none perish. (2 Peter 3:9) "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."
- MUST REMEMBER: There are <u>two parties</u> <u>doing this choosing</u>. God choses us first, and this is all *initiated by Him*. We would not have done so without Him first choosing us.
 However, we must also choose. We must choose Him, to become the chosen.

THE ELECT



God begins process. He desires that none are lost, but that all come to repentance (turn to Him, turn away from the world.)

There are <u>two parties making a choice</u>. God made His, we make ours (*free will*).

> Our destination, and our "designation" is the result of our own choice.

By our choice, we are either chosen (elect) or lost.

Lesson reminder...

- Remember, as we learned earlier, <u>all</u> <u>names</u> are written in Book of Life...
- Names are blotted out from this book when an individual <u>chooses to reject God</u>.
- When a believer accepts Yeshua (chooses Him), that person's name is written into the "Lamb's Book of Life."

THE BOOK OF

 In essence, the original Book of Life *becomes* the Lamb's Book of Life.

COMMENTARY: The doctrine of divine election confuses some people and frightens others, yet neither response is justified. A seminary professor once told me, "Try to explain election, and you may lose your mind. But explain it away — and you may lose your soul!" We will never understand the total concept of election this side of heaven. But we should not ignore this important doctrine that is taught throughout the Bible." (Wiersbe)

Revelation 13

Before we can move on into the remainder of Revelation 13, there is one more place we need to go to get information about this final world ruler. We have hit bits and pieces, but now it's time to take a look at....

Daniel 11

- Daniel 11, verses 1-35, are prophecies regarding Israel's immediate history relating to Gentile powers <u>up through the end of the</u> <u>Greek Empire</u>, or the Seleucid Dynasty (kings of the north) and Antiochus Epiphanes. (type for antichrist)
- Verses 36-45, focus on the final "week" of Daniel's 70 week message in chapter 9 (which we will look at later), the last seven years of human government, the final world ruler, and the period we call the "Tribulation."

- Verses 1-35 cover a vision given to Daniel of <u>consecutive time periods</u> from that moment in Daniel's timeline, until the end of the Greek Empire.
- There is an implied gap of time at verses 34-35, with the narrative beginning again in verse 36 after an unspecified length of time which projects these events into end times.
- Most believe this "king" is a direct reference and prophecy regarding the antichrist.
- We'll start at verse 35.

³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

³⁶ "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. ³⁷ He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

³⁸ But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. ³⁹ Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain. ⁴⁰ "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

⁴¹ He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. ⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

REMINDER (my disclaimer!): These verses relate to a person in history who has not yet been revealed. This is pre-written history, and only God has foresight and complete knowledge. All we have is speculation, and there is plenty of that when it comes to the identity and actions of the Antichrist. These verses may give us some idea of his nature and identity, but until he is actually seen in history, we cannot be sure. Until then, the interpretation of these scriptures is the source of major disagreements and controversy among the "scholars" who debate them.

REMINDER (continued)...

There are many seemingly "sound" positions that can be argued. We do not want to insist on any one of them. Be open to everything you hear, but test all according to the scriptures. It is very important to keep this in mind when studying these passages. We believe these verses will be most useful and important to the people who live on earth during this time when Antichrist is revealed. They will be able to positively identify him then.

³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time. (Daniel 11:35)

- This is a **transitional verse**, which concludes local history of times of Antiochus Epiphanes, but indicates future of Jews before verse 36 will be filled with persecution and hard times. But many will be purified (saved) in this time. *An "implied gap" of time, a common Biblical literary tool.*
- *"until the time of the end"* says we are now *leaping forward in history*, where another "king" will be introduced. He is the <u>king of the last days of human</u> <u>government</u>, a final world kingdom.

³⁶"Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

BEING BOASTFUL

- All events up to verse 35, easily traced by historical record. Beginning in verse 36, events to end of chapter <u>take us into the</u> <u>future, so far unfulfilled</u>. These latter verses refer to final ruler during Tribulation who will attempt to substitute himself for God.
- "Then the king ..." In verse 36 a new individual is introduced simply as "the king." He's not the king of the south, or the king of the north, as seen in previous verses – he is merely THE king. He is someone new on the scene, now advancing the timeline well into the future.

- *"...shall do according to his own will: ..."* This
 "king" will do whatever he wants. He is sometimes referred to as "the willful king."
- Actions go beyond Antiochus Epiphanes, or anyone else in history so far. Verse refers to the same individual already prophesied by Daniel, the little horn of 7:8 and "the prince" of 9:26; that is, the Antichrist.
- Person described here aligns perfectly with work of Antichrist described in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation chapters 13 - 17.

- "...he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods,..." The little horn (name given to Antichrist in Daniel 7) tries to be a big horn "And magnify himself above every god."
- In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Paul wrote of the Antichrist: *"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*

- Antichrist will claim to be god, and will establish himself in the Temple. In the Daniel verse, he will also apparently blaspheme the One true God, the "God of gods." This is <u>confirmed in Revelation</u>, <u>Daniel and 2 Thessalonians</u>.
- Antiochus Epiphanes considered himself deity to some extent, as evidenced by his coins and other archeological evidence and by historical record. This will, however, be one of the <u>main</u> characteristics of the Antichrist as seen in the passage in 2 Thessalonians and here in Daniel.

- Other world leaders (i.e., Egyptian Pharaohs) considered themselves gods, but never in history is it taken as far as the final world ruler.
- He will exalt himself *above* God, blaspheme the true God of Israel, and demand worship.



• We are reminded of Isaiah 14:12-15, that speaks of the enemy himself:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit."

- It is clear Antichrist will serve and be empowered by Lucifer himself.
- This final world ruler is not a nice guy (we can see that merely in his names). He will stand in stark contrast to the Messiah, the Son of God, yet he will try to put himself in His place and <u>be a substitute for the Messiah</u>, the Savior of the World.
- He will "mimic" and "imitate" Jesus in many ways, passing himself off as the Messiah. But he is a fake.



- "...and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. Yet another reminder <u>God has</u> pre-determined all of this. (Remember main lesson: GOD IS SOVEREIGN!)
- This evil ruler will seem to "prosper," be successful in attempt to rule entire world and exalt himself as god, but it is a temporary success, "...until the wrath has been accomplished."
- "Wrath" here is God's wrath on unbelieving world. Thankfully, that too has a predetermined end.

These times will be terrifying, but those who live through them must know that God is in control. He always has been, and always will be.

³⁷"He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.



- "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers..." This phrase has stirred up a lot of controversy. Some argument about whether or not this says "the God" or "the gods" of his fathers. Either way, he has no time for the God, or gods, of his ancestors.
- However, many argue that this phrase is <u>inherently Jewish</u>, and that what is implied here is the God of Israel, and the Messiah. In other words, that the Antichrist would be Jewish.

- Evidence in scripture points to an identity of either Jew or Gentile. Both positions can be supported, though somewhat weakly. Using this phrase to support the fact that the Antichrist will be Jewish is not enough.
- There are many others who believe he will be Gentile. Micah 5 calls him "The Assyrian" and the fact that Antiochus Epiphanes, the first major historical "type" for the Antichrist in Daniel, was an "Assyrian." This would seem to indicate he is not Jewish.

- Either way, Antichrist will vehemently oppose God, the true Messiah, and God's people.
- He will magnify himself above all, but have particular animosity towards Jesus – and his followers. Paul declared that the Antichrist would enter into the Jewish Temple and declare himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).

- "...nor the desire of women ..." Also a very Jewish phrase and as such, refers to desire of Hebrew women to be mother of Messiah.
- Not only will the Lord Jesus Christ be absolutely rejected, He will be the enemy. Antichrist leads a rebellion against God and Messiah.
- As Psalm 2:2-3 puts it: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

- However, again, this phrase <u>does not in itself</u> indicate the Antichrist is Jewish.
- Also, others have interpreted this to mean that Antichrist is homosexual, or at least not interested in women.

COMMENTARY: "There is another possible explanation of this scripture. We are told in several prophecies that in the last days there would be a great increase in homosexuality. Jesus said that it would be as it was at Sodom. We are seeing this alarming rise in sexual perversion to the extent that marriages between members of the same sex are becoming quite common. ...

The laws against homosexuality have been removed in almost every country in the world. By the time Antichrist appears, homosexuals may be considered more normal than heterosexuals. Therefore, the prophecy that the Antichrist will not regard the desire of women could simply mean that he will be a sexual pervert." (Noah Hutchings)

 The scripture reference for this is Luke 17:28-30: *"But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed."*

• Yet another interpretation of this phrase is that Antichrist **is Islamic, a Muslim**.



- The Islamic faith has little regard for women, treating them as second class, necessary only for procreation. They are repressed, and kept "in their place" hidden behind veils and heavy clothing.
- They are considered temptresses, worthy only to be used and hidden. Some believe this phrase is referencing this Islamic practice and mindset about women.



- The potential of this possibility seems to be getting more real every day.
- We will not pursue a study of this potential (Islamic Antichrist) here, at this time.

- Some even say when Antichrist mentioned in scripture, characteristics and nature of this person may imply that it is <u>two people</u>, not one.
- Based on Revelation 13:11-18, which mentions two beasts and comes after the initial discussion of the first beast.
- Most, however, see two beasts, so there are two men, one is Antichrist, other is called the False Witness or False Prophet – the one who testifies to the Antichrist and enforces his will.
- Some see descriptions of Antichrist as *applicable also to the False Prophet.*

COMMENTARY: "... I believe that it takes two men to fulfill this office, and they are both presented in chapter 13 of Revelation. This first one is a political ruler who comes out of the Roman Empire and probably the Greek section of the Roman Empire. He is the one who doesn't have to be an Israelite.... The second beast that arises is a religious leader, and he imitates Christ—I assume he will be an Israelite." (McGee)

 It is also possible that the Antichrist may be <u>Jewish</u> of Seleucid ancestry, which would be in fulfillment of Daniel 8/Micah 5.

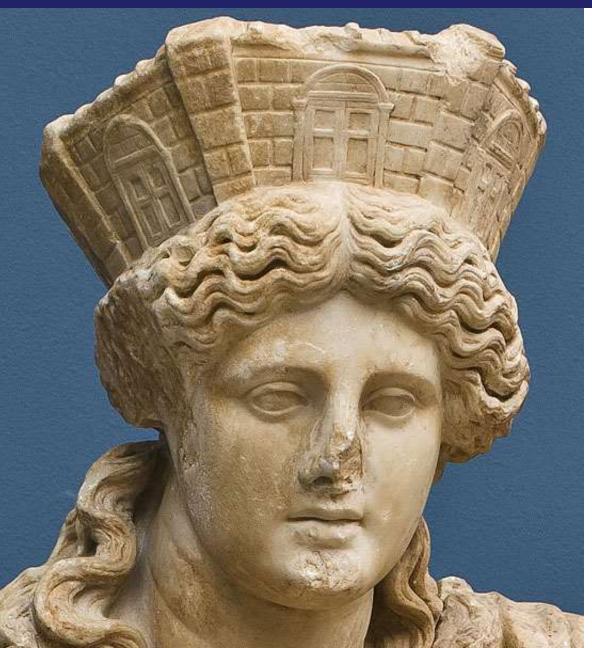
- This coming world ruler <u>will mirror the real</u> <u>Messiah</u> in so many fake ways that this is a big possibility (AC is a Jew). However, there is much discussion and controversy over it, so we will let you make up your own minds about that. We should not be surprised if it goes either way.
- (However, keep in mind that scripture is clear there ARE two beasts, two men who will work together in their evil pursuits, but only ONE is the Antichrist.)

- *"...nor regard any god ..."* Very clear he will oppose all religions and worship, except worship of himself, and of the evil one who empowers him.
- He is not only a *believer* in the ecumenical movement, he promotes it; in fact, he is it.
 One religion for one world will be his agenda, and ultimately <u>he is that religion</u>, and is the object of all worship.
- *"…for he shall exalt himself above them all."* Ultimate desire of this willful king. His total ambition is self-praise, and even worship.

- Reminds again of Isaiah 14, of the enemy who wished to exalt himself even "above God." The Antichrist will do this as well.
- He has no interest in any gods except himself.
- A quasi initial one world religion will emerge during the early part of the Tribulation *(perhaps even before official start),* but according to Revelation 17, the Antichrist will destroy that and insist on worship of himself instead.
- He <u>will not share worship</u> with anything or anyone else.

³⁸ "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. ³⁹"Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

- "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know..." Another source of much controversy and disagreement among commentators.
- "The God of <u>forces</u>" (in some translations) is more accurately translated "the God of fortresses."
- This passage states that the Antichrist will honor a god previously unknown to his ancestors – a god of fortresses.



COMMENTARY: "We know from pagan mythology that both Cybele and Diana are variously represented as crowned with multitiered crowns, plainly setting forth the idea of fortification with turrets, battlements, and so forth" (Newell)

COMMENTARY: "I am sure you have seen pictures of these heathen idols with their multi-tiered crowns with all kinds of fortresses on them which represent the kingdoms of this world. Antichrist will honor the god of fortresses who had the kingdoms of the world. Who is that? Well, it was Satan who offered to Christ the kingdoms of this world, and our Lord rejected his offer. Apparently, Satan had a right to make that offer. Antichrist will accept the offer and become the world's dictator. We are told in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and **Revelation 13:4 that Antichrist will accept worship and** will have the world worshiping Satan in that day. All the kingdoms of the world will be under his rulership, the first truly worldwide dictatorship." (McGee)

- McGee believes this "god of fortresses" is Satan himself. The enemy will empower this world ruler, and will give him power over the earth. The enemy will make the most of this short time. He knows his time is short, so he intends to do the most harm possible (Revelation 12:12).
- Some have interpreted this to be military force, that the AC will make such force his "god" which requires all his focus and all his resources.

- "...he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things..." Antichrist will be willing tool to completely do will of enemy, including amassing wealth of world for him.
- He will rule over many people and dispose of property as he pleases, all for the benefit of the enemy and himself. They are in league together. He will dedicate all he gets to enemy ("god of fortresses").
- Perhaps he will even openly worship the devil, and encourage others to do so. Occult activity and paganism are on the rise.

- "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory;..." Even strongest earth powers cannot stand against this ruler, who has the backing, power and the opportunities given to him by this "foreign god" who most believe is Satan, the dragon of Revelation.
- He will even apparently "advance its glory" meaning that many others will also honor
 Satan (this "god of fortresses") in this time because of the Antichrist's activities.

- "... and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain." Antichrist will obtain very quick power and popularity because he is going to have a great sounding plan for the world.
- When everyone else throws up their hands and wonders whether the world can get out of the mess it's in, this final world ruler will come on the scene and **seem to have all the answers.** But it will all be for his gain, not the good of the world.

COMMENTARY: "In his ingenious plans to reform the world's economy the Antichrist will win great popularity with his plans to redistribute the wealth of society. Early in this century the communists won initial popularity in their promises to divide the land of the rich to distribute it to the peasants. The rise of democratic socialism in Europe has prepared the masses for the promises of the coming world dictator to "divide the land for gain." A growing sense of entitlement in the citizens of the West is setting the stage for the economic system of the Antichrist. (Jeffrey)

AARONIC BLESSIN The LORD bless you and keep you The LORD make his face shine upon you And be gracious to you the LORD lift up his countenance upon you And give you peace