

Text: Rev. 13:1-10

Title: "Satan's first wild animal"

Time: 1/21/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: This past week I found a list of the 10 most dangerous animals in the world. Here is what I found:

10. cape buffalo – massive horns, weighs about a ton, charges at speeds of 35 miles an hour, nicknamed "Black Death";

9. cone snail – harpoon teeth, powerful venom, nicknamed "Cigarette Snail" because after one bites you, you have just enough time for one last cigarette before you die;

8. golden poison dart frog – about the size of a paperclip, poison glands are beneath the skin so that a mere touch brings trouble.

Others were the box jellyfish (7); the pufferfish (6) – a fish that has poison in nearly every part of its body, is considered a delicacy in Japan where it can only be prepared by trained licensed chefs, and where it still causes a number of deaths each year; the black mamba (5); the saltwater crocodile (4); the tsetse fly (3) – which can infect a victim with deadly parasites; the mosquito (2) – famous for its ability to spread deadly diseases that today threaten more than half of the world's population; and (1) humans (though often deadly, I would disagree with the assertion that humans are animals).

Revelation 13 is a passage that describes two deadly wild animals that belong to the dragon, Satan, which he uses for his destructive purposes during the last 3.5 years of that future period of Bible prophecy called, the great tribulation.

We have been in this period of God's prophetic calendar since chapter 11, where we read that the outer court of God's temple was to be trampled by the Gentiles. That is likely Revelation's reference to the abomination of desolation, which Daniel said would happen in the middle of this seven year period (Dan. 9:27, Matt. 24:15).

In chapter 11 we saw the ministry of the two faithful witnesses during this time. We saw also in chapter 12 that Satan is cast to earth and enraged at Israel, the woman who gave birth to the Messiah. God has protected Israel, and so the dragon is now focused on the destruction of her seed – the 144,000 believing Jews which are the first-fruits of the promised salvation of the whole nation (12:17). The deadly wild animals of chapter 13 are the implements of the dragon's war against Israel's godly believers during this future time.

This morning we will look only at the first of these beasts. Notice with me four things about this first of Satan's wild animals.

I. Satan's first wild animal is a powerful earthly kingdom (vv. 1-2).

III: If you are a believer who has read his Bible for some time, when you get to Revelation you experience a good deal of *déjà vu* (French meaning *already seen*). One author I saw counted 193 references to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation. This chapter's description of Satan's first wild animal is like that. It reminds us of the time we read Daniel 7.

Appl: This beast has 10 horns with regal crowns (v. 1), indicating that it is some kind of federation of 10 kings. It has

seven heads (v. 1), each with a name of blasphemy on it, which are described for us as seven mountains in Rev. 17:9. Evidently, the seven hills of Rome are intended here, and the blasphemy has something to do with the religion of Rome during this future period.

It is a kingdom whose image reminds one of the great red dragon who conceived it (12:3). It is like a leopard (v. 2), similar to Daniel's description of Greece (Dan. 7:6); its feet are like a bear's (v. 2), similar to Daniel's description of Persia (Dan. 7:5); and it has a mouth like a lion (v. 2), similar to Daniel's description of Babylon (Dan. 7:4).

This animal is a combination of these, and so it is very likely another vision of the Roman Empire, which Daniel described this way: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. 7:7). Our text tells us where this power to stamp on things comes from—the dragon (v. 2b). Note also that this kingdom is global in its reach, a one-world government (v. 7).

What we read about here is the raging of the most powerful political force Satan has ever assembled to rebel against God and to destroy His people and their work. And there is something ironic about the fact that we read about this powerful political entity in the writings of Daniel and John. Obviously, God sees this enemy coming. So even when it comes to the most powerful rebellion Satan is able to mount, for God Isa. 46:9-11 is always true:

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.”

Psalm 2 tells us that our God laughs at the raging of this kind of enemy. See also Daniel 7:9-10 (the Ancient of Days).

So the good news for our lives as believers is that our enemy is also our God’s enemy. No matter the destruction we suffer at the hands of our enemy, God is in control, saw it coming, and has a plan to make it right again. Satan’s wild animal is a powerful earthly kingdom, but we are the kingdom of heaven, and our King not only fights for us, the battle is His and designed for His glory.

So fight those battles like Joab and Abishai fought the battles of their king, David, surrounded by their enemy. Joab encouraged his brother, “Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God; and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight” (1 Chron. 19:13).

II. Satan’s first wild animal is an influential miracle-worker (vv. 3-5).

III: *Metonymy* is a literary device in which the name of a thing is replaced with something closely associated with that thing. So a news report might use metonymy to tell us that “the White House has decided to beef up security” for some reason. Well, it was not the house that decided that; it was people associated with the house.

Appl: We have seen that the heads of Satan's first wild animal are seven mountains, and that it is a powerful earthly kingdom. Now our passage tells us that one of those heads is fatally wounded (v. 3). Later, however, John's vision indicates that it was the entire beast that was fatally wounded (v. 12). So we must conclude that there is a specific man (Daniel calls him a little horn) who is becoming identified with this federation of horns and heads the way our president is associated with our White House. The kingdom John sees is embodied in and represented by a single man.

Evidently, there is some kind of assassination attempt on one of the leaders of this earthly world-wide kingdom, which wounds its leader fatally, but which is then healed, and then this miracle causes the world to worship this leader as the head of this federation centered in Rome. This is the antichrist. He becomes synonymous with the beast at this point, rising to the power of a worshipped global dictator. He is known for his boastful and blasphemous mouth, but everyone loves him, follows him, and worships him.

And it is a supernatural miracle that accomplishes all of this. We should remember here what Jesus told His disciples to prepare them for their future ministry: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). Our authority must be the Word of God, not the miracle-working authority we find in this passage. Watch out for miracle-workers who deceive even the elect.

Ill: Benny Hinn had a healing conference in Rome in 2016, and the advertisement for it kept calling Rome the "Eternal City." It is during the great tribulation that this idea is going to catch on, when the antichrist is worshipped as the one risen from the dead in Rome, eschatological Babylon.

III. Satan's first wild animal is a blasphemous God-hater (vv. 6-8).

III: Uzzah blasphemed by simply trying to steady the ark in 1 Chronicles 13. The issue at that time was that the Lord of glory is enthroned between the cherubim. Only certain people in a certain way should transport the ark. In our day, the holy place is where two or three are gathered together as God's local church. Jesus said, "There I am in their midst."

Appl1: Blasphemy is the opposite of reverence. It is the failure to recognize the holiness of God's name and heavenly tabernacle. When Uzzah reached up his hand to steady the ark, I am sure that he did not think he was blaspheming. But carelessness, neglect, apathy, ignorance - all of these things lack the reverence, of which God is worthy. All can be forms of blaspheming our holy God who is worthy of reverential worship.

Appl2: As a blasphemous God-hater, Satan will have one of two relationships with people. There is no middle ground with Satan. Either he will make war with you because you are unwilling to blaspheme God with him, or he will have authority over you as you willingly fail to reverence God too. You cannot be at peace with him unless you are also on his side and doing his bidding to dishonor God.

Saints determined to reverence and worship God do have it harder, and for a time may be overcome, but Rev. 12:11 tells the rest of that story. The word *overcome* is used here and there. Satan overcomes for a short time; saints overcome forever. Satan overcomes in regard to the body; saints overcome in regard to both the body and the soul. This is a fight, but it is a good fight to fight. It is a fight already won.

IV. Satan's first wild animal is a cause for concern (vv. 9-10).

Appl: All with ears should be concerned about Satan's first wild animal. To worship him is to not have had your name written in the book of the life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Jesus died to put your name there, but it can go missing if you worship Satan instead of Him. That is the one sin for which the Lamb did not die.

Appl2: But as believers we are not afraid of this wild animal. Not even those whom it overcomes during the last part of the great tribulation period need ultimately be concerned. We are God's saints, and we have the assurance of eternal life. Remember that those who lead others to captivity will go into captivity. And those who cause others to be slain with the sword will be slain with the sword. God is just. Jesus has died. Names are in the book.

Conclusion: These are the reasons for the patience and faithfulness of the saints. Do patience and faithfulness in the work of the Lord make sense to you this morning because you believe in those reasons? Have we grown impatient and weary in well-doing?

I was blessed a few weeks back by a text my sister sent me out of the blue. She started with a verse:

Psalm 27:13-14, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

Then she wrote: "Wherever you may be losing heart, in whatever circumstances you're in, continue to persevere."

Be of good courage; the Lord will complete the work. Love you all and praying for you all today.”

This is the patience and the faith of the saints.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*