

SERMON 5

True and False Worship

(Revelation 13:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

Dear young people, the message we are going to present addresses the very heart of the book of Revelation. According to scholars, chapter 13 is the center of the entire book. Now, what do we find in this chapter? Why is it so important? What teachings does it have for us today? Without further ado, let's study what Revelation chapter 13, has for us.

DEVELOPMENT

In Revelation three powers of evil are presented: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (Revelation 16:13). You may wonder... and who are they? You'll see how easy it is to know. Revelation 12 and



13 identify these three satanic powers. We have already seen that chapter 12 speaks of the dragon (Revelation 12:7-9), while chapter 13 speaks of a "beast" that arises from the sea (Revelation 13:1-10), and then of another that arises from the earth (Revelation 13:11-18). These three powers constitute the false trinity known as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

We have already identified the dragon with satan, but... **What do the two beasts that appear in Revelation 13 symbolize?**

THE FIRST BEAST (REVELATION 13:1-10)

Let's begin by reading Revelation 13:1 and 2:

The dragon 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. 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.

What a strange being...it is definitely a very weird animal! It has the body of a leopard, the mouth of a lion and the legs of a bear. This would be interesting material for a science fiction movie! But it is not a movie, it's a real-life drama!

Let's analyze this strange animal. In order to do this, we must resort to the key of biblical interpretation that we talked about in our last message, do you remember? It is very simple: *let the Bible interpret itself.*

To identify this strange animal that arises from the sea it is necessary to study chapter 7 of Daniel, where a vision is narrated in which four other strange animals also emerge from the sea.

Daniel, chapter 7, presents us with the emergence of four different beasts:

the first was a powerful lion that had on its back two powerful eagle wings (Daniel 7:4); then followed by a bear that was more up on one side than the other and had three ribs in its mouth (Daniel 7:5). Later, it was followed by a strange leopard that had four heads and four wings (Daniel 7:6); finally, a horrible and indescribable animal arose from the sea that the prophet could not compare with any other creature, for it had iron teeth and nails; moreover, he had ten horns on his head (Daniel 7:7).

When the prophet had that vision, he was as confused as you are now; however, later God explained to him the meaning of these mysterious animals. Let's see how the following two verses make everything clear for us:

- Daniel 7:17: *The **four great beasts** are **four kings** that will rise up from the *earth*.*
- Daniel 7:23: *The **fourth beast** is a fourth **kingdom** that will appear on *earth*.*

What does a beast represent in prophecy? It represents a political power! So, when Daniel and Revelation tell us about beasts, they are referring to political powers. This should come as no surprise, for even today animals are used

to represent political parties; for example, in the United States a donkey is used to represent the Democratic Party and an elephant to represent the Republican Party.

It is important to add that the symbol of “beast” does not simply represent political power, but also power that rises up against God’s people. Therefore, the Bible identifies the four beasts of Daniel 7 with the four great historical kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

With this clarification let’s go back to Revelation 13, where we find these four beasts summarized in one, as if to show that they are all managed by the same power.

So... What fundamental features does the beast of Revelation 13 have? let’s see:

1. IT IS A BLASPHEMOUS POWER

Let’s read Revelation 13:6: *It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven*

The Bible presents two actions as blasphemy: first, *claiming power to forgive sins* (Luke 5:21); and second, taking

God’s place and impersonate him (John 10:33).

2. DEMAND WORSHIP

Verse 8 of Revelation 13 says: *“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.”*

3. PERSECUTE GOD’S PEOPLE

This beast was *given the power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them* (Revelation 13:7).

4. MAKE AN IMITATION OF CHRIST

A careful look at the actions of this “beast” reveals to us that it is the “anti-christ,” that is, the satanic human power posing as Christ.

Now, let’s look at the following comparison between Christ and the beast:

Christ (As presented in Revelations)	The beast (In Revelation 13)
With seven horns (5:6)	With ten horns (13:1)
With headbands (19:12)	With ten headbands (13:1)
He was slain (5:6)	Receives a mortal wound (13:3)
He was resurrected (1:18)	His wound is healed (13:3)
Receive authority from the father (3:21)	Receive authority from the dragon (13:4)
He sits on the father's throne (3:21)	He sits on the throne of the dragon (13:2, 4)
He is worshipped by the universe (5:13, 14)	He is worshipped by the earth (13:4, 8)

In short, the beast that rises from the sea in Revelation 13 is an imitation of Christ. It imitates the being and passion of Christ; it presents itself with the authority of Christ, usurping his authority and power on earth. He says he forgives sins and demands worship.

Before closing with this point, dear young people, let me ask you a few questions:

- Do you know of a power that, in addition to being religious, exercises a powerful political authority on earth?
- Do you know a religious power respected and admired by kings, presidents, and ministers of state?

- Do you know of a power called “Christian” that has persecuted other Christians in the past?

I would like you to come to a conclusion for yourselves. The beast of Revelation 13 is the antichrist who seeks worship by all means necessary.

THE SECOND BEAST (REVELATION 13:11-18)

The second beast of Revelation 13, which completes the trilogy of satanic powers, is presented as an animal that rose from the *earth*; *and had two horns similar to those of a lamb but spoke like a dragon* (Revelation 13:11).

Like the first beast, this second power has some distinctive features: *firstly*, it arises from the earth; *Secondly*, it has two horns like those of a lamb; *Finally*, it spoke like a dragon.

This second power must rise in a place that is uninhabited or has had little presence, and that according to Revelation 17:15, the waters in prophecy symbolize “peoples, nations, and tongues,” therefore, the earth is a symbol of “little people.”

Likewise, this power must be raised up with the principles of Christianity, since it “has horns like a lamb”; but even though it has risen up defending Christian principles, this power will end up speaking like a dragon. In other words, this wants to say that it would rise up against Christian principles and The People of God.

Dear young people, allow me to ask you a few questions again:

- Do you know of any powerful country today that at the beginning of its history was a Christian nation, a student of scripture and, above all, of religious freedom?
- Is there any nation today that, having had a Christian origin, has become over time a secularized

nation opposed to the principles presented in the Word of God?

THE AGENDA OF THE FALSE TRINITY

Dear young people, what do you think the false trinity comprised of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet is pursuing? Its purpose is summed up in one word: *worship*. The dragon, the beast and the false prophet want you to adore them.

To achieve its purpose, the false trinity has set out to attack the Ten Commandments, especially the first four. Before continuing, I will understand something that I think will help you understand this point. The Law of God can be summarized, according to Matthew 22:36-40, in two great commandments: firstly, “love the Lord your God”; secondly, “love your neighbor”.

If you look at Exodus 20, you will notice that the first four commandments speak of our love for God, and the next six commandments of love for our neighbor. So:

If you love God

- You will have no other gods (Exodus 20:2-3).
- You will not make an image to bow down in worship (Exodus 20:4-6).
- You will not take God’s name in vain (Exodus 20:7).

- You will observe the seventh day as the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11).

If you love your neighbor

- You will honor your parents (Exodus 20:12).
- You will not kill (Exodus 20:13).
- You will not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).
- You will not steal (Exodus 20:15).
- You will not bear false witness (Exodus 20:16).
- You will not covet (Exodus 20:17).

Dear young people, the Commandments are the key to fidelity in the final battle and, therefore, what will the false trinity do? It will attack the first four commandments head-on, which speak of the love we must have for God!

That's it. The dragon, the beast and the false prophet will all work so your love for God declines; this false trinity will seek the worship by any means, and in order to achieve it, it must erase from the minds of children, young people and adults the first four commandments that speak to us of love and worship of the true God.

CONCLUSION

Young people, loving and *worshipping God is the most important thing in life.* And I believe that your love for

God will be tested at this time! You must be prepared, for at some point you will have to face the same trials that the three young Hebrews faced (Daniel 3). You will then have to choose between worshipping the true trinity (God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) or the false trinity (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet).

Therefore, the most important question ever asked is the one Jesus once asked Peter: Do you love me? (John 21:15). Do you truly love God? I invite you to love him today with all your heart and with all your mind!

REFLECTION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who makes up the false trinity?
2. According to Daniel 7:17-23, what represents the beast?
3. List the characteristics of the first beast in Revelation 13.
4. Why does the false trinity attack the first four commandments of God's Law?
5. What is the most important thing in life?