

Revelation The Beastly Strategies

From Bruce Ashford...It has been said, famously, that all Western philosophy is “footnotes to Plato.” And, while this statement rings true, the deeper and more salient observation is that much of Western philosophy is footnotes to Lucifer. <https://bruceashford.net/2022/footnotes-to-lucifer-the-7-most-destructive-philosophers-in-western-history/>

Indeed. At the Fall, the Evil One spoke a word against God’s word, calling into question the truth of God’s word, the goodness of his created order, and the righteousness of his character. Lucifer’s destructive word can be viewed as his “antithesis” for the world. Satan’s rebellion against God and his influence in the world has been such that he is called the prince of the power of the air. (eph 2)

How does he exert his influence in the world? Through fallen people, institutions, and governments. He is opposed to the Divine Agenda – human flourishing through obedience to God’s good instruction. He seeks to create confusion and chaos through lies and deceit and FEAR.

- He questions God’s Word and His character.

A RECAP highlight from Rev 13

Rev 13:1 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. 2 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.

5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him....

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Two kinds of people: those who follow the Lamb or the Dragon – each has a mark on the forehead. Only those two ways to go.

Remember this summary:

Jesus has won – he paid for sin

Jesus will win – He will clean everything up

Jesus is winning now – that is harder for us to believe. He is executing his plan to win the nations of Ps 2

And to win and keep our hearts staid on Him.

He is also working to awaken the church to stand firm in the midst of the trials and temptations of this life. We are to engage those around us. We don’t know how much time is left, so there is a sense of urgency.

We left off in the midst of an interlude of a vision of heaven.

The context from ch 12-13 is that of the Woman and her offspring – Us, the church

And then the dragon who sought to destroy the woman and her offspring and then the two Beasts- the Beast of the Sea and the Beast rising from the earth.

The second beast causes the earth dwellers to worship the first beast

The dragon wages war against us through the evil deeds of mankind, especially as perpetrated by the state or rulers.

He also wages war through THE second Beast of false religions and ideologies that seek to capture the hearts and minds of all who are exposed to them. This can come through non-biblical religions, secular ideologies that function as a religion – (EX: John Lindsay New Discourses has an entire episode on Marxist Theology); or the beast may come from liberal or conservative variants of Christianity.

“The first beast speaks loudly and defiantly against God, the second beast makes the first beast’s claims sound plausible and persuasive.” [Beale, 708] He poses as a champion of the truth while leading the world astray. Those who are deceived don’t know it. Those given over to their own way will not believe that they have rejected the truth.

Revelation shows that things are not as they seem. We get the behind the scenes look in ch 12 and 13 that indicate how the devil works through beasts – any powerful figure of the state or culture, at any time, that the devil uses to advance his causes or agenda i.e. to destroy the kingdom values of God and God’s people.

What is unique here is the religious nature of the dragon and the beast. The ultimate battle is one of a spiritual nature as the Beast has his new view of man, of ultimate meaning, of worship, and identity. He has signs, flags, and symbols to go with his religion.

The devil is less horn like in a red jump suit and more messianic like, offering “freedom, authenticity, and safety” that would come from the State.

TruthXchange ministry has an upcoming symposium: STOLEN IDENTITY: The Theft of the Binary in Contemporary Society. That theme was laid out 2 weeks ago by Tom Hudson, as he preached on Romans 1

1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

<https://truthxchange.com/resource-library/articles/a-cataclysmic-transformation-of-our-society/>

A clever tag line for the symposium might be **“He is a self-made man, and he worships his creator.”**

That would sum up the agenda of the Dragon (Satan) and his use of the two beasts of Rev 13.

Peter Jones helps us see what is at stake in many of the current issues swirling around us.

The current frictions we see and feel in our Western culture are not actually between bigots and progressives or between traditionalists and futurists. The real debate touches the root question of how the world is put together and by whom. If you do not understand the profound worldview conflict that “non-binary versus binary” creates, you will not understand the biblical God, human sexuality, or spirituality.

Perhaps you may think of yourself as not being of the left or the right, but in the middle and you’d prefer to not engage in the “political issues of the day.” Sadly, I don’t think that is an option anymore because as Dr. Jones points out, the issues get to the core of our worldview.

As politics becomes more all-inclusive it becomes more religious and it will bump into some basic core spiritual and theological issues.

(hat tip to Aldo Leon, PCA pastor in south Florida for some helpful understanding of this passage)

Today, by way of review, I want to consider how the two Beasts work together in various ways, EVER SENSE GEN 3.

The first is to offer a religion or ideology of redefine, confuse, gaslight and restart. The goal is to create a sense of chaos and confusion about basic biblical issues such as when life begins, the created order, what is a woman or a man or a boy or girl.

<https://4w.pub/planning-familial-pregnant-men/>

This poster is from the French branch of Planned Parenthood. Above the photo it reads, “At Family Planning we know that men can also get pregnant.” I think we are dealing with a level of delusion and confusion here that goes beyond mere human ignorance or rebellion.

The core of the assault on truth is an assault on God and his People.
The adversary has long been working to deny the existence of, or redefine the meaning of, God.
“The fool says in his heart, “there is no God.” Ps 14

Note that the ideas of Beast (serpent), image, and spirit are terms used in Genesis 1-2
This new beastly religion also has the same categories. **The devil is looking to make a new version of creation, to remake it after his own image.**
He knows that if you can flip and twist the first 3 chapters of Genesis, then you can flip everything else.

The devil has a ‘great work’ agenda that does NOT include a Trinitarian Creator, the Creator / creation distinction or the distinction of male/female in God’s image. The agenda of the beast is to blend and merge all into one i.e. we are all part of the one essence of the universe.

Friends, if we give up on the gender issue, then everything else is on the table, and we’ve lost civilization.

Revelation shows us that this is not a political or issue, but a theological issue. An attack on the Male / Female distinction in the image of God is an attack on God Himself. Confusion about this issue, intentional or unintentional, is confusion about God Himself.

This beastly reset is not about science or civil rights or even politics. It is about a RESTART or Redefinition of reality. For us to understand a Biblical worldview of the gospel of salvation, we need to see the big picture of the spiritual warfare that is raging as the Psalm 2 rulers and kings devise schemes to get God out of the way.

They want to put God away from us, get him out of view and out of our collective consciousness so that “man becomes the measure of all things.” AN ancient idea (Protagoras) 400 BC
<http://www.antiquitatem.com/en/plato-protagoras-philosophy-sophist/>

We can’t have good salvation doctrine if we don’t have good creation doctrine. We can’t understand salvation and redemption if we don’t understand the fall and the scheming deceptive nature of sin.

The beast wants to re-set our identity as image bearers of God and give us a new identity based on color, socio-economic status or skills, or some other human characteristic of OUR CHOOSING.
He wants to redefine us and come up with a new salvation.
He wants a new start so he can get a new outcome.
The religious and ideological threats come from outside the church and at times from inside the visible church: Peter Jones cites

Progressive theologian, Brian McLaren, once a conservative evangelical, now calls for a new definition of god as “a bigger, non-dualistic, non-binary god.”[4] He prefers a god who is “in the story, not outside of time and space like a prime mover or divine watchmaker.”[5] The Great Spiritual Migration

The Beast is a counterfeit to the Messiah v. 13ff

In the Beasts we see a counterfeit Moses and Elijah. This comparison or allusion was already made in regard to the two witnesses of Rev 11:3-12, who, taken together represent the church.
In Matt 7, 23 Mk 13:22; 2 Thess 2:9 we hear of false messiahs and prophets who show signs and wonders so as to mislead people.

With the Beast we see power and authority located in human rulers of various models – elected or non-elected.

The Beast is making promises about what he / the State/ the Rulers can do for humanity. They promise great things to impress and mislead.

The true church is always impressed first and foremost with the miracle of salvation in Jesus - his life, death, and resurrection. (Aldo Leon)

“An evil generation looks for a sign.” Jesus gave the sign of Jonah – resurrection.

The religion of man or Beast will always look for something other than an empty tomb as the focus of its power.

Either we exalt the Messiah of the empty tomb, OR we exalt some man centered religion (self is usually at the center).

The Beast is always seeking to replace the core gospel issues of salvation in Christ with something else.

EX: 100th anniversary of Harry Emerson Fosdick’s sermon “Shall The fundamentalists Win?” In this 1922 sermon from a prominent NYC pulpit, he attacked the Virgin Birth, the Inspiration of scripture, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and the return of Christ.

The Beastly ministry is about Man. The beastly religion has its own signs, symbols, and images.

Gen 1:27 – first image of scripture- Man made in God’s image, but we messed it up and distorted it through sin

Col 1 shows that Christ is the perfect image of God. He came to restore the distorted image.

We in the church have signs that point us to Christ – baptism, communion, and the Word.

The beast has sacred symbols and signs that point to human power – echoes of Daniel 3

Image of king Nebuchadnezzar and people called to bow down or be cast into the furnace.

In John’s day, the original audience would have easily seen the correlation with Rome. The Emperor was to be worshipped in some form or you’d be excluded. Rome allowed Christians to worship if they added some of the signs of the emperor cult to their practice.

The method of the Beast is to demand some level of obedience to its values and symbols, or else life will become hard for you. At least you must pay your respects to the symbols.

“Pay homage to these signs or symbols and things will go well for you” is a red flag of man-made beastly religion. This can be a secular or a religious practice.

The bible says, “to follow Christ you must deny yourself and take up your cross.”

Examples of the Beast over the years...

-England after reformation – Book of Common Prayer or shut down church

-Cuba – pay tribute to Castro

-USA – pay tribute to symbols of culture – the left or the right. **You can identify the Beastly sacred idols and symbols based on what the RULING elites WON’T allow YOU TO CRITICIZE.**

While it varies with the times, for our current age, the sacred symbols look like rainbow flags, three lettered government agencies, unrestricted killing in the womb, “the science”, and an alphabet + self-identity.

OR depending on the time and place, it may look like the story of a pastor in FL who was pressured to wear an American flag lapel pin and put a flag in the church during the month of July. “You can’t preach in July without a flag displayed.”

We reject beastly symbols because they replace the Cross and point to man-centered solutions instead of the Good News of Christ.

-You must endorse certain symbols to keep your job- over the years, that has cut both ways. Currently they tend to cut one way – EX; TEACHERS fired who won’t use “preferred pronouns” ; medical professionals forced to cooperate with the abortion agenda or the current mantra on gender affirmation. One could mention the medical and military personnel who were heroes in 2020 but were fired in 2021 because they wouldn’t violate their own conscience and follow the dictates of the ruling elites.

The Beastly ministry is about implicit faith or treason – mark on the hand or forehead

14:1 – the church has a mark which identifies those who identify with Jesus. So too, those who identify with the Beast will receive a mark.

The Beast demands faith that gives no resistance and asks no questions even in the face of obvious error.

The idea of the head and hands being marked is not new. It goes back to Deut 6 :4 head and hands. This is a metaphorical way of saying that your mind, heart, and actions are to reflect God in word and deed.

Rev 13 – give allegiance to the beast or you are a heretic against the State. Remember these words...

As politics becomes more all-inclusive it becomes more religious and it will bump into some basic core spiritual and theological issues.

Those who stand for the rule of God against the arbitrary rule of man will be branded as dangerous heretics or terrorists.

The devil uses force because he has no real or ultimate power. The opposite posture is that of Christ who laid aside His rights and gave himself for us. He was for us while we were His enemies. He gives us his righteousness and takes our sin.

How do we respond to those who demand tribute **Dan 11:32? “The people who know their God will Stand firm and take action.”**

“NO tribute to your religion”. “Fine us, jail us, kill us, but we will stand firm for Christ.”

All the talk in the letters to the churches about standing firm was there for a reason. They were being pressured to show allegiance or pay respect to the false religions of their day.

Right now, we too are being pressured from all sides.

The final method is 666 Synergism vs God’s sovereignty

The attempt to synergize all the levers of power – social, political, academic, medical, technical, and economic – for the purpose of imposing an anti- God agenda.

666 is the number of man.

Here’s the tragic secret – The Dragon and the Beasts hate those who receive their mark as much as they hate those who don’t. Like the great Florida serpent, the alligator, The Beasts eat their own, if not intentionally, then as collateral damage to their policies. Under the guise of “affirming care or health care”, children, adults, and the unborn are being mutilated and killed. That is Beastly.

6th day God made man

7th day God rested

The world’s system is one of trying to enter into God’s final rest by Man, Man, Man (666) assisted by the unholy trinity of the Dragon and the two beasts.

Jesus died on the 6th day as THE solution of our man-made efforts. He rescues us from our six-day problem.

-Aldo Leon

Much of what we’ll hear during the election cycle is 666 religion, i.e. we can change the world, your lives, and even save the planet if we enact certain policies. It is no surprise that the world’s elites use the term “The great reset” to describe their agenda.

Outside of the historical Biblical faith, all other religions and secular ideologies are built on a 666 foundation of works. Sadly, 666 Christianity is often twisted to “try harder to do better”, and secular religion uses ongoing guilt and condemnation for your views or behavior, even if you apologize and repent to the spirit of the age. They will still hate you.

We need the “777 religion” of God’s gracious redemption, and we see it right here in these God given signs of the bread and cup.

Jesus came to solve our 6-day problem by giving us Himself. On the 6th day of the week, He broke the powers of sin and death, and He invites us to come to the table and celebrate His gracious redemption

COME TO THE TABLE - all who know Christ as Savior and have been admitted to the table by a believing church.

If you are in a silent or open rebellion against God and His Word, then scripture admonishes you not to partake lest you eat and drink judgment on yourself.

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