

A Devastating Duo (Part 1)

Revelation 13

I. Deception.

- A. *The act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid.*
 - 1. A mix of emotions—Betrayal, hurt, shock, anger, disappointment, self-doubt.
- B. Personal deception: family, spouse, friends, family, business.
- C. Modern technology: AI.
- D. Spiritual deception: spiritual abuse.
- E. The Red Dragon—Satan.
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 11:3-15

II. Context.

- A. The world is a mess.
 - 1. Chapter 13 begins at the end of the first 3 ½ years of the seven year tribulation, just before the “great tribulation” where Satan unleashes evil over the entire world.

III. The beast from the sea: the antichrist (13:1-10).

- A. The dragon on the sand of the seashore—Satan.
- B. The appearance of the beast from the sea (V.1).
 - 1. Ten horns—ten world leaders in alliance with the beast.
 - 2. The beast will have world dominance and control: he will deceive the entire world.
 - 3. The beast will receive a “fatal wound” and will be “resurrected”—Deception.
- C. The “resurrected beast” will have the adoration of the entire world (V.3).
- D. The beast will be worshipped (V.4).
- E. The beast is extremely arrogant: Blaspheming God with his “God given” mouth (V.5).
- F. The beast’s power (and time!) is limited—God has determined his parameters (V.5).
 - 1. The power of all authorities is limited by God.

G. The beast has great anger towards God (V.6).

H. The beast devastatingly attacks the saints V.7).

Those gentile that come to Christ during the tribulation (are not the church!) will be killed (“Overcome”).

I. The affiliation of all those who worship him (V. 8).

A. All believers will be “written in the book of life”. All unbelievers will not be found in the book of life.

B. How does one get into the book of life?

1. Revelation 2:17

2. John 5:4-5

IV. The “overcomer” (Vs.9-10).

A. ***Our responsibility***—"If you have an ear, let him hear." Listen to the Spirit through reading God’s Word.

B. ***God’s retribution***— If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed.

1. The law of retribution—Genesis 9:6

C. ***Our rewards as a believer***— Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

V. The antidote to deception.

A. Discernment—Detects deception.

1. Hebrews 5:12-14

A Devastating Duo (Part 1)

Revelation 13

Deception is the act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid. It involves deliberately misleading or tricking others, whether through lies, concealment, or manipulation, in order to gain an advantage or avoid negative consequences. Deception can take many forms, from outright false statements to more subtle methods like omitting important information or presenting facts in a way that distorts the truth.

We have all been deceived at some level... deception is a terrible thing... it's worse than being lied to... someone can lie to you and you're not deceived because you didn't buy it... you weren't convinced... it becomes deception when you buy into it...when you believe the lie.

And when you find out you've been deceived...it brings a mix of emotions... shock, anger, disappointment... you feel betrayed, hurt, and even question your own judgment or trust in others. It can lead to a sense of vulnerability, as the foundation of what was believed to be true is shaken.

Deception in marriage... deception in business... with friends...family... financial deception... you trusted a financial advisor with your retirement money just to find out the funds he was managing didn't exist... the money was gone...now you can't retire the way you had sacrificially planned... you're greatly hurt... you feel taken advantage of... a sick feeling... now you don't trust your own ability to make decisions.

All that is terrible... but add to that that we've entered an age of technology that makes deception a routine practice with galactic ramifications... with greater impact than ever before...now masses of people can be deceived all at once.

I often listen to a podcast with Victor David Hansen... a bright historian and political commentator... I've gotten to know his personality, his mannerisms, his speech so forth... a couple months ago his podcast popped up so I listened to it... something was askew... something was wrong...

VDH was using all sorts of expletives, coarse language and had an uncharacteristic bad attitude...angry... but it was VDH!... sitting in his study... surrounded by the same books in all his podcasts... but something was very wrong!... come to find out... AI had remastered VDH...some nefarious techno-nut had hijacked VDH and through AI made him say things he would never have said.... And you couldn't tell it was not the real VDH.

Victor found out about it and was horrified!....while everyone who watched was deceived....think of the potential of AI! [Next week I'll be looking at the reality of today's technology in light of Revelation.] technology is wonderful and it is horrible!

All that is terrible... but none of those come close to spiritual deception... today it is also called “spiritual abuse”... You place yourself under the leadership of what you believe is “godly leadership”... you’ve expended your trust... you’ve placed your faith in the teachings... only to find out they are less than genuine in their own Christianity... they’ve been playing with your spiritual life... for their own advantage...

You feel victimized because you are... you are deeply hurt... terrible pain... I had placed myself under the teaching of one such man for the last ten years... a great Bible teacher... well known... a highly sought after conference speaker... a writer of many solid theological books... a tough, hard hitting preacher... only to find out just over a year ago he was living a sinful duplicitous life for at least the last five years....

It stunned me... I felt duped... betrayed... taken advantage of... even questioning whether or not his biblical teaching was true... it obviously wasn’t working in his life.... living a lie, deceiving a massive amount of people.

All that is terrible... but worse... there is one who thrives on deception... who influences the entire world... [that was hard to imagine 100 years ago... the world... but now?... I listened to a sermon from 1979 from Chuck Swindoll talking about the advances of technology that have made many of the difficult to imagine sections of Revelation become a possible reality with... Television!]

But This one... he is our greatest enemy... the most powerful enemy... and that of course is Satan... Satan’s greatest weapon in his arsenal of evil is deception...

His favorite method is deception... he is powerful, attractive, alluring... in actual physical appearance he is far from the image John describes in Revelation 12:3... **a great red dragon... having seven heads and ten horns**... that image was a sign... symbolic language that describes more his character...

Satan disguises as one who is beautiful... disguises are a tool for deception... he’s beautiful like an angel of light but it is just a disguise.... He is an angel of darkness...

He is a master at cunning and deceiving... John 8:44 says he is “**the father of lies**” his favorite method of deception is to use religion... **2 Corinthians 11:3**... the apostle Paul tells the Corinthians that he is “**afraid**” for them... I picture the apostle Paul as one not afraid of anything!.... but here... he says he’s afraid.

3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve... there’s that word! Deceived!.... it is a strong Greek word that means fully, completely blinding someone... moving them in a direction that they would never had gone left up to themselves...

I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his trickery, your minds will be led astray from sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Get this... SATAN'S MAIN OBJECTIVE... HIS UNIVERSAL PLAN AND OBJECTIVE...IS TO DECIEVE OUR MINDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEADING US AWAY FROM DEVOTION TO CHRIST!

Satan's exists to deceive our minds...which is his method to achieve what his mission has been since Eve's deception in Genesis 3...to oppose God, derail His plans, to destroy Jesus Christ... and he seeks to do this through believers in Christ...

*I'm afraid Satan is going to lead you astray from Jesus Christ... **4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, this you tolerate very well!***

See... the problem with the Corinthian was their willingness to entertain from deceptive preachers a false gospel...**all this part of Satan's plan!**

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Deceptive... like an angel of light.. dazzling, attractive, elegant, full of logic, brilliant, smart, very smart...**15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.**

All this is relevant for us today... this very hour... what we see in Revelation chapter 13 is all this on steroids... It is Satan's final hurrah...He knows the end... he's read Revelation... he knows he's headed for the abys... but he is audacious in his persistence to derail God's plan...

He knows he is headed for the eternal lake of fire... **and he wants to take as many of us with him as he possibly can!**

[My first house had a swimming pool... I learned to never stand anywhere close to the edge when my friends would come over... if I did and was in my good clothes, five or six of them inevitably would circle around me... and it became apparent what they were going to do... thrown me in the pool... I was doomed, nothing I could do to stop them... BUT.. As they all grabbed me to throw me in...I unleashed all the energy I could muster to grab as many as I could to take them into the pool with me.

That is a mild picture of what Satan is wanting to do... He is doomed and he knows it... but he is going to take as many of us with him as he is thrown into that eternal lake of fire...]

We are to be vigilantly aware of what Satan is doing now... and where it all is going...this week and next...understand that deception is underlying everything that Satan is doing...we come to

chapter 13 the world is a mess... there is turmoil and wars... there is economic strife throughout the world... as I mentioned last week...

When the world is in chaos, it is ripe for some world leader to come in and do a great sales job for peace and prosperity... Chapter 13 I believe begins at the end of the first 3 ½ years of the seven year tribulation...on the cusp of entering into the final horrifying 3 ½ years we call “the Great tribulation”.

Last week took a look at the prophesy's in Daniel that provides vital background for what is going on here in chapter 13...if you missed that I encourage you to go back and listen to that message...

A quick recap of where we left off.... The dragon, Satan standing on the sand of the seashore in Revelation 13:1...then a “beast” comes out of the sea., with the same appearance as the dragon...revealing their close connection... this is who is known as the “antichrist”

1st John 2:18

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared. From this we know that it is the last hour. AND, great deception will be at it's greatest level. [expound]

Interesting...

In Islamic theology... the Shia to be specific...they have an eschatology... an end time scenario... they are anticipating the return of the 12th Iman... their leader called the Mahdi...they say the Mahdi will take control of the world's system...and then not only will Mahdi come... but Jesus Christ himself will return.

Recently...The crowned prince of Saudi Arabia said “*we believe that Jesus Christ is coming...*” But, according to Islamic theology...Jesus will return as a radical Muslim. He will tell the Christians they were wrong...he will then lead the world to worship the Mahdi... and institute Sharia Law.

Finally after him the Al-Dajjal will come...The Al-Dajjal is a false Christ...a deceiver...who will attempt to stop the Mahadi and will be killed..... what's interesting... when you put the two stories together... The Bible and this Islamic teaching... you discover...[not getting hung up on the names, but what they do]

The Bible's antichrist is Islam's savior...and the Bible's false prophet is Islam's Jesus Christ... and the Bible's returning Christ (the true Christ)... is Islam's antichrist.

Islam... One of Satan's greatest deceptions.

So the beast...

His appearance is symbolic as I mentioned earlier... He has ten horns... Horns symbolize great strength and power...we know from Daniel and the prophets... that the beast will form a **one world alliance** with ten world leaders... ten horns...he will have world dominance... He will deceive the entire world...

Apparently this antichrist will suffer a fatal wound...(3a) perhaps an assassination attempt... but he will apparently “come back to life”... a resurrection (a false one, the great deceiver)... and the masses... the entire world will be blown away by this “miracle”...

This great world leader... who has come to save the world from the great mess its in... miraculously defeats death....all this too obvious not to be a slam to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ....because of this mock resurrection

1. **Adoration. 3b And the whole world marveled and followed after the beast.**

Can’t you imagine...see how this could happen?... Not just the “miraculous” resurrection” of this beast impressing people... [people are so hungry for the sensational, the miraculous that they will allow their brains to accept just about anything!...setting themselves up for great deception.]

Add to this resurrection the world is finally looking like peace ...equity across the board... the economic system is working... there’s prosperity everywhere because of this beast’s amazing ability to govern...

“*We’ve finally arrived!*”... who will be saying this?.... **The whole world!**... [one world system...government...economy...] the impossible utopia has *apparently* become a reality?![next week we will speculate a little to see how this is so possible today]

Read verse 4

They worshipped the dragon... Satan... they worshipped the beast...So easily convinced and bought into... “*this is the answer to all our problems...nobody is like this man!*”...complete order in the world... no economic crises... no racial strife... no reason to war between nations... the world is ONE!... this thing... this individual has brought peace and stability to the world...

Is it peace?... is it stability?... what we will see here in the last three and a half years of the tribulation is the most horrifying time the world has ever seen... a holocaust of terror NEVER seen before...one half of the world’s population will be killed...plagues and disasters greater than anything ever seen or experienced so far....**peace and prosperity was all deception!**

This very day Satan is sowing his greatest deceptions...today!... it is going to greatly only going to intensify until Jesus returns!

The Bible doesn’t describe this horrible time as a day caused by this new world order... but rather a day in God’s vengeance... God is going to pour out His wrath on all the world’s systems that has refused Him throughout these years...

2. Arrogance...Not only do we see the adoration displayed but we also see incredible arrogance displayed...verse 5

There was given to him a mouth... who gave this antichrist his babbling mouth?...God did!...God will allow antichrist to blaspheme Him to reveal his full satanic wickedness...

Read verse 5

I don't see how you can help but connect this to Daniel 7... 11...2 Thessalonians 2:4...that speak of the arrogance of this beast... blasphemes... **4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the sanctuary of God, exhibiting himself as being God.**

3. Power is limited Notice this doesn't go on and on and on... This beast **has been given** authority for a specific limited period of time...[if you are a Christian indulging in some sin, God may give you enough rope to hang yourself...He's in it!... but even then it is for a God defined period of time!].

This beast may be the most powerful being on earth...He's empowered by Satan himself...So this beast is Satanically powerful... but somebody is in control over him... he can only do what he has been authorized to do.... **And for a very specified period of time**... 42 months...3 ½ years.

Is this Satan putting down these parameters?... absolutely not... it is God Himself... something we need to know... as shown here... *All power given to ALL evil men is limited by God... All power given to Satan himself is limited by God...*

This should bring us all great comfort... there is not one leader, ruler, boss, any authority of any kind... dog catcher whose authority and power is not limited by God... God allows all this to happen... it is a part of His plan... and He has a glorious climax to where everything is headed...

[You want to be on His program!]

God is going to bring in His judgement...a judgement like never before on this planet.....this is where it pays to be a pretribulationalist! You will sleep better at night...right before took a break in Revelation... I asked "*how many of you do not believe in a rapture?*"... specifically a pretribulation rapture...several raised their hands.

One of you who had raised your hand came up to me after the service and said to me...*You have a 'escapist theology'*...suggesting that my theology conveniently allows me to escape God's horrific judgement described in Revelation 20...the accusation.... Basically I just want to get out of here...

I didn't answer or say anything really at the time...I respect the comment... But I would like to now take the time to comment and clarify... four words... YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!...I do not want to be here during the tribulation... especially the last three and a half years...

4. Anger towards God...verse 6

Read verse 6

I think this beast will start out very devoutly religious... with the help from the second beast ... the false prophet who is a great emissary of this beast... initially I believe the world will see this individual as a great religious....maybe even godly man... but he is really a blasphemer against God...

But people will be greatly deceived... this beast imitating the dragon as the great angel of light...

5. The attack he makes on the saints verse 7

Read verse 7

Who are the saints?....all believers... all Christians...THESE ARE THOSE WHO CAME TO CHRIST DURING THE TRIBULATION... it says he will “**overcome**” them... what does it mean to “**overcome**”?...

When we began Revelation and looked at the seven churches... we saw the word “overcomer” repeated... in the positive sense... Overcomers would be rewarded by God... but here is a different use of overcome.

Go back to chapter 11:7... talking about the two witnesses... who were believers... **the beast comes up out of the abyss and makes war with them**... then what did he do?... **he overcame them and killed them.**

What does it mean here then in chapter 13 when it says the beast will **overcome the saints**?...does that mean the beast will overcome their faith?...no.it means he's going to kill them!...scripture interprets scripture.

The beast will slaughter God's people on an unprecedented scale as he rules the earth during this horrific time...

Look down at verse 15

Read verse 15

Who DOESN'T worship the image of the beast?... ALL BELIEVERS!...Who receives the mark of the beast?... ALL UNBELIEVERS... who refuses to take the mark of the beast?... ALL BELIEVERS.

ALL BELIEVERS ARE KILLED!...there is no reason to believe any Christians... any GENTILE believers survive the tribulation...BUT... the 144 thousand Jews who are protected by God [if you remember ch.7] the believing remnant of Israel that will turn to the Lord at the end of the Tribulation... they are spared [we will see all that later]...

BUT GENTILE BELIEVERS ARE KILLED!

(20:4) John sees and says **and I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their witness of Jesus and because of the word of God and who also had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand...** they are ALL killed!

If it is true that all gentile Christians are killed... if this is true... then how are any gentile believers alive and remain at the coming of the Lord if the rapture doesn't happen BEFORE the tribulation?...the rapture... the church taken up to Jesus...just a thought.

If there was no rapture of the church... all believers prior to the tribulation... AND ALL CHRISTIANS ARE KILLED DURING THE TRIBULATION... how could there be a post-tribulation rapture... How could there be anyone to join Jesus in the air as He returns to earth as we are told.

This is one of those times I'm just giving you these little jewels... the tribulation was not for the church... it was for the nations of the world AND for Israel... The church is promised to be delivered from the wrath of God to come.

Those who come to Christ during the tribulation is not the church...they are saved Christians...

1 Thessalonians 5... speaking of this great coming wrath of God... **The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night...** the day of the Lord is the wrath of God... verse 9 says **for God has not appointed us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...**

I believe...We are NOT going to go through the tribulation... *what if you're wrong?... I'll change my view... If it becomes apparent that I'm still here as the tribulation period begins... I will shift my belief to the mid-tribulation view...if I'm still here during mid-tribulation... I'll keep pushing it along until I'm out of here!*

God said we are not appointed to His wrath... I'm hanging on to that!

6. The affiliation of all those who worship him. Verse 8

Read verse 8

No unbeliever has nor will ever have his name in the book of life UNLESS he comes to Christ...

There is nothing more important to me... and I hope for you... to have my name in the book of life... Revelation 20: 12 doesn't mince words... **if anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

How do we get into the book of life?...

Revelation 2:17...going back to the first use of "overcome"...

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

An "overcomer" is someone who has put their faith in Jesus Christ and, as a result, overcomes the world through that faith.... According to 1 John 5:4-5, it is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God who overcomes the world.

Here in Revelation 2:17 to "overcome" means to remain faithful to Christ, despite the challenges and temptations of the world, and to ultimately receive the promises of God, such as having one's name written in the book of life and receiving a new name from God.

1 John 5:4 - 5:5

4 For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the overcoming that has overcome the world—our faith.5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The one who is an overcomer is one who has overcome himself and instead embraces Jesus Christ... this is whose name will be found in the book of life.

Read verses 9-10

Three things:

1. Our responsibility—**if you have an ear let him hear**...the unfortunate thing is that many of us who have ears given to us from God are not listening...back in Chapters 2 and 3... John writes seven times...**to hear what the Spirit says**... to the churches...

Today there are so many voices vying for your ears... more than any other time in history... Satan uses distraction to deceive... my how we can be distracted today!... do you listen to what the Spirit says... do you search and devour God's word?

2. God's retribution—**If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed.**

There is going to be such chaos and tragedy in the tribulation people are going to be wondering *who's getting away with what?*...he tells us right here... called the **Law of Retribution** Genesis 9:6

Retribution = God's righteous payback... *you sin against me I'll give you back what you deserve.* Genesis 9:6... **Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed,**

What God is saying to all of us... *I'm in charge, don't worry, nobody is getting away with anything!*

Remember 2 Corinthians 11:15... What we began with? ?

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

3. Our rewards as believers Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints... no matter how you suffer for Jesus Christ... no mater how you are persecuted... no matter how terribly you've been treated...

I'll take care of the retribution... you just have faith and persevere...this will all be over soon... you will be home soon... you will be with Me in eternity.

Next week we will see some of the greatest possibilities of deception the world may have ever seen in the addition of the beast of the land... the great false prophet...

I know I'm taking a long time to get through this passage... some of you are saying in your minds... no...go deeper!... others of you are squirming in your seats *when are we going to get out of here?*

But here's the thing... here's what I think we need to get this morning...Satan is deceiving us now... he is working overtime because he...like us...he doesn't don't know God's specific timeline...

He knows the time is short... or not....he doesn't know... so he is not wasting time.

What we need to have... strive to get... prepare ourselves for... is his relentless... mission to deceive us... and there is one thing we MUST do...one thing we must have... to endure to the end... we must seek discernment....the antidote to deception.

To counter deception... you must have ***discernment***

The Greek word translated discernment is most often is from the root *crino* which means to cut...to separate...it's the idea of cutting through all the "stuff" to get what is really the issue...when you have discernment... you see what others do not see...

The only way you can understand what is really going on in the world today... and where it is headed... is through discernment...**understanding scripture...** put it simply... "**discernment detects deception.**"

If your antennas are up... you know the truth...GOD'S WORD...only then will you be able to "cut" through deception.... *"Discernment is the ability to see what is not evident to the average mind"*

Let me leave you with a verse... next week we will take this further:

Hebrews 5:12 The writer of Hebrews is concerned about his readers... they should be further along in their understanding of truth...God's truth... His word.

Hebrews 5:12

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern both good and evil.

Of practice...

Discipline
application
repetition
study
determination
seeing reality
seeing the truth...learning the truth.