

Sermon Discussion Guide:

The Two Beasts

Sunday, July 4, 2021

Scripture: **Revelation 13:1-18**

Series: **Revelation**

OVERVIEW

Common grace, temporary periods of light persecution, and Satan's deceptions may have desensitized God's people to the imminent danger that has surrounded them throughout history. But Revelation 12:12 and 12:17 make clear that Satan's certain defeat has made him furious and is causing him to target believers in wrath. The popular mythologies of horror films may be effective at scaring us because they echo a very real cosmic battle. This week, we see the work of a dragon and two beasts in apocalyptic language. These monsters inflict terror and earthly death on their prey. **But Christians are called to live victoriously in the shadows of monsters.**

CORROBORATING TEXTS

Daniel 7:1-28; Revelation 3:5, 7:3, 12:6, 12:14, 12:17, 14:1, 17:15; Genesis 3:15

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do the dragon and the two beasts likely describe?
2. From whom does the beast receive his power? [see Revelation 13:2b & 13:4]
3. The beast is allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months (v5), to make war on the saints, to conquer them, and is given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation (v7). Who has ultimately given the beast this time-bound authority on earth during the church age? [God, as illuminated in His predetermined plan prophesied in Daniel 7] How is God's sovereignty here both potentially disturbing and assuring?
4. Why and how can you live victoriously in the shadows of very real, spiritual monsters?
5. Satan's beasts will make war, conquer, hold captive, and slay the saints during the time between Jesus' first and second coming. What is the text's primary instruction as to how we should respond to these attacks? What is notably not included in these instructions?
6. Rather than making speculative connections to specific people in history, Pastor Joe encouraged a more straightforward, symbolic understanding of "666" (v18). In this case "6" refers to imperfection and the judgment of Satan's followers (e.g., sixth seal, sixth trumpet, sixth bowl) repeated three times for completeness to maximum extent. Understood this way, "666" alludes to the gospel since Satan can never be more than a parody of Jesus Christ, will never achieve perfection, and has been defeated by Jesus Christ. Have you been distracted from the gospel by other conspiratorial interpretations of 666? Why?