

The Servants of Satan (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] So what is today? Ooh, Reformation Day. It's not just Reformation Sunday, which we remember every year, but today is the actual day that Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses, which he meant for an intellectual discussion, not for wide distribution, because he wrote it in Latin.

Martin nailed it to the Wittenberg door, and his students translated it and sent it everywhere. And it kicked off a Reformation, a recovery of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of salvation that is by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone, based on the Scriptures alone, the five souls of the Reformation.

Faith, grace, Christ, God's glory, and God's Word. So there's a little explanation of that in the bulletin if you are curious about that.

This is not a day of... Of course, the enemy takes days of God and turns them into other things. This really is a great day of celebration.

[1 : 38] The gospel that was recovered. And so we celebrate that today. To that end, take out your Bibles with me and turn to Revelation chapter 13.

It is right after chapter 12. And for good reason. It truly is connected. The very last verse of chapter 12 ends with the dragon standing on the sand of the sea, which then leads into chapter 13, the very beast that comes from that sea.

So, I would like to read Revelation beginning in chapter 12, 13. Pick up that part of the story and then through 13.

We're only going to be able to cover the first 10 verses of Revelation 13. As much as I wanted to cover the whole chapter, I got to verse 4 this week, about Wednesday, and said, I don't even know if I can get through 10.

So, but here we go. So, if you're able, please stand as I read from Revelation chapter beginning at 12, 13. And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

[3 : 13] But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness to the place where she is to be nourished for a time and times and time and a half.

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring. On those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he, the dragon, stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads and ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard. Its feet were like a bear's. Its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and his great authority.

[4 : 40] One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound. But its mortal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.

Excuse me. And they worshipped the dragon for he had given the authority to the beast. And they worshipped the beast saying, Who is like the beast?

And who can fight against it? And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words. And it was allowed to exercise authority for 42 months.

It opens its mouth to utter blasphemies against God. Blaspheming his name and his dwelling. That is, those who dwell in heaven.

And it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and every people and every language and every nation.

[5 : 48] And all who dwell on the earth worship it. Everyone whose name is not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes. If anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword he must be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and the faith of the saints. Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed.

It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people. And by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on the earth.

[7 : 00] Telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

Also, it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark that is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

This calls for wisdom. Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast for it is the number of a man and his number is 666.

So it reads. Let us pray. Father, grant us your grace. Give us minds that can begin to grasp and connect dots and put together.

Father, not every detail but the thrust of this passage that we are to hear and we are to endure. And Father, we pray that you would block every attempt of the evil one to distract, to deceive, to hide.

[8 : 48] May this revelation expose, Father, as you intend, his schemes. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated.

Amen. Notes, notes, notes.

That would be important. My secret might only last ten minutes otherwise. Now I know there are people scheming to get the notes.

Okay, so, Revelation 13 kind of turns it up a notch for me. It's like I've already seen in Revelation there is this unveiling, there's this showing of the work of the evil one, this spiritual battle, but we've known that.

As I was thinking through processing and digging and working through this passage this week, it's like it's turned up another notch.

[9 : 54] Like, oh my, this is going on. We know that, but it's like now there's things to hang those thoughts on. So let me ask a question just kind of starting general.

What in the world is going on in our world? What is going on in our world? Governments push deceptive political agendas.

Is that not obvious? Anybody here trust politicians? It's kind of a joke, right? We expect them to lie. false religion is pushed into prominence and true religion is marginalized, made irrelevant.

We've seen this happening. Economic agendas drive much of what is advocated. even major media outlets have become the major voice for false reporting.

[11 : 14] We know it. We talk about it. All this falseness, all these lies, all these twists, false agendas.

What is it that is behind all these false agendas? No, the book of Revelation is not shy about telling us what's behind this.

It is the dragon. He is identified in chapter 12, 9 as that ancient serpent from the garden. The devil, Satan, the deceiver of the whole world, not just one part of it.

That's who's behind it. And now we see as he is standing on the sand of the sea at the end of chapter 12 and now bringing forth one beast and then he will bring forth another beast that are his servants.

Earthly servants to put into place his schemes. This is what we see in Revelation 13. We see the very nature of his attack.

[12:44] We see his methods. Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 6? Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against what? Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against what?

The schemes. The methods. The methods. The schemes of the devil. And he goes on and he says, why?

Because we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. It's not a physical battle. But we wrestle against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness against the spiritual forces of evil.

We are in a spiritual battle with the demonic world. This morning as we're singing a mighty fortress, the words of Martin Luther, I'm just thinking, oh, he took that one from Revelation 13, he took that one from Revelation, well, he probably took it from a lot of places, but it was echoed in his hymn. Prince of darkness, grim, tremble not for him. His rage we can't endure. So, what is the devil's scheme?

[14:11] What are his methods? What does he do? So, we see here in chapter 12 and 13 his attack on the church.

It left off at the end of chapter 12 with, okay, he went after the child of the woman. He was foiled with that. Yeah, he killed the child, but the child overcame him and rose up to heaven.

As a result of that child rising up to heaven, he's kicked out of heaven. Because that child took his throne and there's no longer a place for the devil, the dragon, to accuse the brethren before the father anymore.

Because he has no accusation to make. They're cleansed, they're justified, they're saved. So, he's kicked out and kicked down to earth.

So, then what does he do? Well, he loses the war against the child, then he loses the war in heaven against the other angels. Now, he comes to earth and he's going to attack the woman.

[15:15] That woman that is, right, both Jew and Gentile, that woman that started with Eve, came all through the patriarchs, came all through Ruth and others, all the way down to Mary.

That woman that includes all of them. And then becomes not only Jewish saved believers, but Jesus adds Gentiles to become one with them.

And so the church becomes that Jew Gentile community of faith. So he attacks that woman. And then the woman's protected. So then he goes after what?

He goes after the offspring of the woman who are Jew and Gentile. Those who keep the commandments and those who hold to the testimony of Jesus. So how does he continue his battle? he's going to work through two agents. Here we see in chapter 13, 1 through 10, the first beast. And then we will see in verses 11 to 18, a second beast.

[16:24] Kind of an unholy trinity. You have the dragon who works through the first beast, first beast who works through the second beast. First beast is kind of crucial.

Right? Just like Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Mark brought up in Sunday school that Satan has no original ideas.

He copies everything. He's a counterfeit. Even in the garden, right? He takes the truth of God and he just twists it. He doesn't come up with a new idea.

He simply questions what God says. Has he really said? And that's what he's doing today. He just takes truth and he twists, just twerk it just a little bit.

So now it's a new narrative. Hmm? Heard that term today? So the first servant, I would summarize verses 1 through 10 as this.

[17:31] Satan is attacking the saints through earthly authorities. Whatever this beast is, it is earthly authorities. The second beast we'll see in verses 11 and 18 will be what is later called in Revelation the false prophet, the voice of the first beast.

The sign maker, the one that makes people worship the first beast, the one that deceives to get the worship to happen to the first beast, the worship, the allegiance to the first beast.

So we're just going to look at the first beast today. How does the dragon continue his war? The nature of his persecution is that he uses earthly agents, earthly authorities against the saints.

So we have two questions today. First of all, in verses 1 through 5, what is this beast? And then secondly, verses 6 to 10, how does this beast particularly serve the dragon?

How does this earthly beast serve Satan? Okay, so first of all, what is the identity of this beast? It is earthly agencies.

[18:47] What I would describe, kind of making it without getting too specific, earthly agencies, whether there's rulers or authorities, and through them, Satan shapes his agenda, shapes his message, shapes his deception.

So, we have three revelations here in verses 1 through 5. One, the appearance we see in verses 1 and 2, the awakening, this mysterious awakening in verse 3 and 4 where he's got a mortal head wound and then is healed, and then verse 5, the attack.

So let's look at these in order. The appearance we see in verse 1 and 2, he's got 10 horns and 7 heads with 10 diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

So, numbers, 10 horns upon which are 10 diadems, crowns, right? So 10 and 10, and 7 heads. So it's a mysterious looking monster, a 7 headed monster, right? And then somehow don't know where the horns are attached. 10 horns. Okay?

[20:06] Very much like the dragon was described, the dragon had 7 heads and 7 crowns and 10 horns. This one has 10 horns and 10 crowns and 7 heads.

So a little different. Okay? So what are horns? Well, horns, in chapter 5, when the lamb that was slain was described symbolically as having 7 horns.

Right? So Jesus has 7 horns. Not physically, but symbolically. He's got rule. Horn is power. Rule. Okay?

And then he's got heads. This beast has 10 horns, 10 rule, you know, crown obviously pictures that, a ruler, and then a head.

What's a head? Well, in chapter 17, we get a clue into what these things mean because in chapter 17, we have this beast again that is ridden by this woman and we're told that the beast in 17.9 has these seven heads.

[21:18] The seven heads are, it's interpreted for us, the seven heads are seven mountains and then the seven heads are also kings or kingdoms.

So heads are kings and kingdoms. So rulers and authorities. Now the seven, remember the seven in the Bible means what?

Perfection, fullness, completeness, right? So God begins creation with how many days? Seven. Seven makes a full week.

Seven is complete. Okay? We see it in the seven churches, right? We see seven eyes, we see seven other things.

Sorry. Seven's all over, right? We got seven seals and trumpets, right? So seven, idea of completeness. With the seven churches, right? He's right in the seven churches.

[22:16] We know that he's not saying there's only seven churches because we know there's a ton of churches, but these seven are representative. They kind of are the full.

What we have to those seven churches is the message to the whole church because we fit in there somewhere. One of those churches or several of those churches. So seven heads most likely here has the same idea as completeness.

So the seven heads of this beast are kind of a perhaps a representative picture of all earthly rulers of all time. Or at least from the time that this head was wounded as a result of Christ's work for centuria.

It's also possible that the seven could be successive. successive. Okay? Because we read in Daniel 7 they're successive heads and kingdoms.

Okay? So it could go either way. I think it's more likely that it's representative. But who am I? Ten.

[23:28] So ten. What's ten mean? Where do we have ten in the Old Testament? Ten commandments. You know, it took me a while to figure that out. I'm sitting in my gazebo doing my study.

And I'm like, ten? What's ten? Ten. So I Google ten. Not Google. In my Bible program, ten, it's like commands. Oh, duh. Why did God give ten?

Why not nine? Why not eleven? Why not fifteen? Why ten? Maybe that was enough. Maybe that's complete. And then ten shows up all over in the Torah.

It shows that the tabernacle has ten of everything. There's ten curtains. There's ten pillars. There's ten bases. Everything's divided by ten in the tabernacle.

Even the Holy of Holies is ten by ten by ten cubits. Ten. Ten cubits is the measure of the wingspan of the cherubim over the ark.

[24 : 35] Ten. Why ten? Ten. idea of completeness, fullness. So in other words seven and ten probably are suggesting symbolically that same thing, fullness.

So what do we have? We have a beast with seven heads, which are either successive kingdoms or a representative, and we have ten horns, kingdoms, which both can speak to rulership, but probably the seven heads refer to a worldwide earthly power, earthly authority, earthly kingdom, which was easier to identify back in the first century.

It was Rome. Before that, it was Greece. Before that, it was Persia. Before that, it was Babylon. Much easier to identify kingdoms back then. After Rome, who's the next major world kingdom? Attila the Hun? Because he conquered the Roman Empire in the fourth century. Is he? No, yeah. World kingdom?

Was England? Was, you know, who? See, it gets a little foggier after that. So, who is this beast?

[26 : 05] I think it's safer to look at it as the world wide authorities and rulers that are more of a world wide network or working through network.

The idea of seven and ten, seven seeming to be, at the time, the head that Satan is working through in the world, the earthly rulers, the ten perhaps meaning more of, because in chapter 17, both heads and horns refer to kings.

But in 17, the main king is the head and then the auxiliary authorities are these ten. So, does the ten mean, does it mean ten other nations within which Satan is working, although he's working through one worldwide network?

Or, does it mean different ways and authorities that Satan works through within that worldwide kingdom at the time? So, is it political? So, the ten may be political, economic, religion, media.

I don't know. Sounds attractive to me. Because he's certainly working through all those kind of things. And ten, remember ten, it doesn't mean, oh, I have to define ten.

[27 : 26] It probably means it's representative of all kinds of ways that he works. So, it says that this beast comes from the sea.

In chapter 11 of Revelation, where it talks about the beast that comes up and makes war against the two witnesses and kills them, there it says the beast comes from the abyss.

So, the sea and the abyss are probably the same kind of thing, a source of evil. In the Old Testament and the New Testament, sea always is representative of rebellion and evil.

Jesus walks on top of the sea, not the water, the sea. He is sovereign over above it. So, sea, so this is where it comes from.

He has blasphemous names on its head. Blaspheme means to slander, abuse, be abusive speech. Basically, he is anti-God. So, whatever this worldwide government, this worldwide authority through which the dragon works is anti-God.

[28 : 32] Have you seen that in our society? Yeah. See, so I don't know that we can identify a specific king or kingdom, but we can identify the effects.

Anti-God. This beast is Satan driven. We're told in verse two, right? He's like a, he's given some descriptions. He's animal like, he's like a leopard, he's like a bear, he's like a lion.

But more importantly, the end of verse two, the dragon gave his power and his throne and his great authority to this earthly servant.

Satan is clearly working through an earthly beast, an earthly authority. who do we want to identify? Oh, is that China? Is that Russia? Is that United States? Who is that? Well, I think we see it worldwide effect. However you want to define that.

[29 : 39] So the awakening. Now here's a mysterious thing. Verse three, one of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound. That shouldn't read like it seemed like, but it wasn't really a mortal wound. it's this very exact phrase we have in chapter five that talks about he saw a lamb as slain.

So now he's seeing a beast as slain. Once again, copying Jesus. And healed.

Once again, copying Jesus. Counterfeit resurrection. resurrection. So what is that? When did that happen?

When did one of the, so one of the heads, so you've got seven heads, one of them, right? If it's successive, is it number four? You know, is it during the time of Rome?

Because in Daniel 7, it was at the fourth beast that was then destroyed by this rock, right? that comes from heaven and not physically destroys Rome, but disarms its power.

[30 : 55] So what is this? What had, think biblically now, way back, what had was slain? The serpent.

Genesis 3. Because of Adam and Eve's sin, here's the curse upon the dragon. He was a dragon, not a snake.

He was cursed, right? Loses legs and he now becomes a snake-like. And what? The offspring of the serpent will bruise the heel of the child, but that child, the male child of the woman, would crush the head of the serpent, right?

When did he do that? First century. His cross and resurrection. And we saw in chapter 12, then he's thrown down, he's defeated, right?

It says, but okay, but he's healed. He's healed. How is he healed? Well, when Jesus destroyed the works of the devil, when he crushed the head of the serpent, right?

[32 : 20] Was Satan then annihilated? Was he terminated? No. Was he destroyed? Yes. Was he disarmed? Yes. Was he defeated?

Yes. Is he gone? No. Defeated, not terminated. He's still here. He is much limited.

He is much harmed. He cannot do all that he used to do, not to God's people. Right?

They're protected. Yeah, he can harm them. Yes. He can ultimately even kill them. But he can't hurt them. Really. What does Luther say?

Yeah, let's die. That's fine. We're good. It's temporary. Okay? So I think that's what it's referring to.

[33 : 22] So does it mean it refers to the kingdom of Rome? There was a lot of rumors in the first century, and still today are bought, that in 68 AD, that's during the time of Nero, Nero, what did he do?

He's already nuts. He's already crazy. He's already blaming the Christians on the fire that he set in Rome, et cetera, et cetera. So he flees out of Rome, emperorless, emperorless, kills himself. for the next two years leading up to 70 AD, it's civil war. The empire's unrest.

There's no Pax Romana. There's no peace. It's war. What's going to happen to Rome? 70 AD, Vespasian, his emperor, sends his son, who will be the next emperor, Titus, into Jerusalem to quash the rebellion and destroy Jerusalem.

And set up his standard in the Holy of Holies. Abomination of desolation, right? Suddenly, Rome's back to glory.

[34 : 35] So some say, that was it. Emperor cut off. Another one takes his place. So not referring necessarily to a single man who is dead and comes back to life, but the office of the man.

So in Rome, you have all you don't have one emperor. You have Julius, Augustus, you know, all these guys. Tons of them.

So, more likely it's to the effect on the devil and how he works. Okay, the result is we find out verse 3 and 4, the whole world follows him, they worship him, they give him his allegiance, though it doesn't seem that this, I don't think this allegiance is really voluntary or willing or sincere.

It seems that this, who is like the beast, who can fight against it, who can resist him, if we want to buy and sell, if we want to exist in this world, we've got to comply.

Are we hearing any messages like that today? if you don't comply, you can lose your job. And if you lose your job, you can't buy and sell.

[35 : 56] The form of it, a form of it. Our government's starting to sound like that. Thought this was America. So, we're not used to that.

Right? Boy, seems like this might be happening. And then we see the attack. How does he attack? What's his weapon?

Verse 5, he's given a mouth. Just like the dragon. He's given a mouth, uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for 42 months.

So, it's given a mouth. It boasts and blasphemes. It's through the speech, this beast, this world ruler, it's through the message, it's through the speech, it's through the twisting of truth, it's the new narrative through which this beast attacks.

Let's spin this. And that's what Satan has always done. He spins. Just enough truth to get him to bite and then twist a little bit.

[37 : 10] Oh, there's not one way to heaven, there's many. Who would be so arrogant to say there's only one way to heaven? Come on, we're smarter than that.

Heaven? We're all for heaven. We can go a lot of different ways. Right? He just twists everything. 42 months, that's the same time that we saw in chapter 11 too, that the holy city is trampled, the holy city is the symbolic name of the church, those who are in chapter 21, part of the new Jerusalem, holy cities trampled.

It's also the time of the two witnesses. And remember, we saw last chapter that same time, that 1260, 42 months, three and a half times.

Remember, we saw that the times weren't, were not chronos time, they're kairos time, the kairos time, is undefined. I can't say that that's three and a half years.

A season can be, right? How long's the season? Well, around here falls about two weeks. Other places, seasons go on and on and on and on.

[38 : 30] How long's the seasons? However long God decides. A season can be 40 years. A season can be a thousand years.

Okay, so, we're talking about symbolic time. So, John's vision of this beast echoes what we read in Daniel's vision of the four beasts.

Just listen to how Daniel describes his vision. This is Daniel 7, 3 through 8, and then a couple other verses I'm adding on. Daniel says, there are four great beasts, four great beasts came up out of the sea.

There we go, out of the sea. Different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. Then as I looked, its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man.

So, beast becomes a man. And like a man, the mind of a man was given to it. So, it's human, it's beast-like and human-like.

[39 : 34] And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, had three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth, and it was told, arise, devour, much flesh.

After this, I looked at another beast like a leopard. Get that, get that, hear the echoes? Leopard, bear, lion, all were in Revelation 13. With four wings on its back, this beast, this third beast, had four heads.

Okay, that's weird. So you've got the four beasts that have one head, and then this one has an extra three, that's seven. So Daniel 7 actually talks about seven heads.

Okay, whatever. Weird, and dominion was giving to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast. It's not just animal-like, it's just, can't even describe it.

It's terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. Stomped, I guess.

[40 : 39] Stomped, I don't know. It was different from all the beasts that were before it. It had ten horns. There's your ten horns. I considered the horns and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one.

Watch out for the little guys. Before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things.

Same phrase in Revelation 13. Mouth speaking great things. These four great beasts, a little later in Daniel 7, these are interpreted. He asked, who are these?

The angel told him, these four great beasts are four kings. The beasts are kings. Who shall rise out of the earth? And then another commentary later in the chapter, as I look, the horn, this little horn, made war with the saints and prevailed over them.

Again, the same phrase as Revelation 13. He made war with the saints and conquered them, prevailed over them. So most likely what we're seeing in Revelation 13 is a combination of these four beasts from Daniel, mostly composed of this fourth, terrifying fourth beast.

[42 : 07] That's the one with the mouth. That's the one with the ten horns. Okay? So, a lot of similarity. Okay?

So we can, what things are translated or interpreted in Daniel helps us to kind of put pieces together in Revelation 13. Okay? It's almost impossible to understand Revelation without understanding all this kind of background from the Old Testament.

Okay? So that helps us. What we have in Daniel 7 are four beasts that represent four successive kingdoms. Babylon was the first beast. Persia was the second beast.

Greece was the third beast. Rome was the fourth beast. And it happened, Daniel 7 goes on and talks about, it's during this fourth kingdom, that the eternal kingdom of the Son of Man was established.

that Christ received his kingdom and the saints rule not physically.

[43 : 18] But the kingdom started in the fourth kingdom, in this fourth beast, which was the time of Rome, which was the time of Jesus. Connect that dot easy. So, Revelation 13, seven heads, are

they seven successive kingdoms?

Are we picking up from the four and then going on? Possible. Or is it more likely that they're just representative at this point? What is clear is that Satan works in this world.

He uses earthly authorities and rulers, earthly agencies to spread his message, to attack God and his church.

We see that. that's clear. We see God attacked. We see church, the dwelling of God, his people attacked.

Not necessarily physically, but by slander, twisting of words, a narrative of irrelevance.

[44 : 24] Okay? So, the next part we see the intentions of this beast. So, the identity of the beast is these earthly rulers and authorities.

What are the intentions of this beast? We see from 6 through 8. It is clearly to attack God and his church by its mouth, by lie, by deception, by messages, by false narratives.

Verse 6, we see these two targets. So, it's got the mouth that's blasphemous. Verse 6, it opens the mouth. Here's how it attacks.

Here's the assault. It comes through words. It opens its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling.

So, it's all against God, but it's against God's name, his nature, his character, who he stands for, and against his dwelling, his people, the ones in whom he lives.

[45 : 28] So, we're just in the way. When we get attacked, we're just in the way. It's attacking God in us. All that God stands for, and the slander of God's name happens in all kinds of ways.

It's the message that the world sends out, that God is not just. If he were just, he wouldn't let evil go on. God does not care. If he cared, he would not let you go through suffering.

If God was powerful enough, he could fix it, but he doesn't, therefore, he's not powerful enough. Better just to go with the idea that there is no God.

Those are Satan's lies. And you've seen them in many different forms of that. Slanders God's people. Verse seven, that comes across as a war.

He is allowed, not allowed, but literally given to make war on the saints and to conquer them. He is given. Where does that authority come from to speak the way he does against God and his church for 42 months, to attack God's people and kill them?

[46 : 45] Where does he get that authority? Who gave that to him? Well, the dragon. Well, who gives the dragon the authority to give that authority?

God. This is God's plan. It's God's plan. Do you remember my servant Job? Right?

Who started that conversation? So, it's a war on the saints. We do physically die.

we become conquered. But, Revelation 11 taught us that the two witnesses, right? In Revelation 11, the beast attacks the two witnesses.

He wars against the two witnesses and conquers them. Now, we have that same language of what happened to the two witnesses is happening to the saints. All the saints.

[47 : 44] So, in other words, it confirms in my mind that the two witnesses is a symbolic picture of the whole church. Two meaning priest and king.

We are priestly kings. So, the dragon attacks the two witnesses. He attacks the saints. The same way. But, remember in 11, while the two witnesses were on earth, what could they do?

What couldn't they do? They were invincible. Absolutely unstoppable until they were called home. And so are we. We are those witnesses. We are invincible. Which doesn't mean I test God with that. But we are invincible until God says, okay, you are done.

I am past the torch. That should give us some courage. His authority, notice at the end of verse 7, his authority is worldwide. It is not just local.

[48 : 56] He is given authority over every tribe, every people, every language, every nation, worldwide. Okay? These are world rulers, not just one nation.

It is world rulers serving Satan. It is spread across nation, tribe, language, everywhere. It's not as prevalent in more, shall we say, quieter countries, smaller countries.

Satan's going to put his throne where the big stuff happens. But he's going to have outposts. Maybe that's what the ten refer to.

He's going to have outposts all over. This is his method. This is his scheme. This is how he has learned to work.

And then notice in verse 8, everyone follows him. Everyone worships him. Right? All who dwell on the earth will worship this beast.

[50 : 05] everyone whose name Oh, wait a minute, not everybody. There are some that don't. Everyone whose name is not written in the book of life.

So that means people whose name is written in the book of life don't follow him. So there's two groups on earth. There are those that follow him because it serves their benefit to follow him and then there are those who recognize what is going on and won't follow.

They don't all follow or give allegiance to the beast because for these saints there's only one king. There's only one king we can trust. There's only one king that gives what he promises. There's only one king that gives a message that is true. That is our shelter.

That is our food. that sustains us. So notice in verse 9 and 10 now if this is all future if he's saying something about this beast that's some long distance future that's the very end of the world.

[51 : 22] Why does he include verses 9 and 10 to the first century church and to every church following that? He who has an ear let him hear. Pay attention now. There's an application.

He who has an ear let him hear. That's what he said seven times through Revelation 2 and 3. He said it to every single one of the seven churches.

He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes I will give. Right?

A promise. New life. A new name. Etc. Etc. Etc. Here it is again. This is applicable to now.

To the one who has an ear let him hear. And then he's got this little what do you call this? These words. To captivity. To captivity.

[52 : 22] Slain with a sword. Slain with a sword. Now English smooths it out a little bit more. If anyone. So in Greek it's if anyone captive captive go.

If anyone slain with sword slain with sword eagle. Sounds like Cherokee speaking English or something. Yeah. So what does that mean?

What is this proverb or parable Yoda talk. What? Yoda talk. Yoda talk. Yeah. Good you shall be.

Well at the very end he says so here is the word call isn't in the text here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

What is the endurance and faith of the saints? Here it is. If you're to be taken captive you will be taken captive. If you are to be slain with a sword you will be slain with a sword.

[53 : 34] God's will. This is the endurance and the faith of the saints. Revelation 2 told one of the churches some of you Satan will put in prison.

Oh wait a minute they're the church they shouldn't be. No. Some of you will go to prison. Some of you will be killed. Slain with a sword. By the way biblically who holds the sword besides Jesus? Who holds the sword? Well yeah okay yeah thank you okay besides Jesus and the spirit. What bad guy or potential bad guy holds the sword?

Submit to ruling authorities for they carry the sword. Government. So Caesar Nero used the sword over and over Paul Peter right John God authorizes the government to use the sword.

The original reason is to right punish evil doers praise good doers. Somehow in man's hand that gets a little murky.

[55 : 03] Right? So there you go. Recognize that we are called to suffer. Jesus calls us to lay down our lives.

Deny yourself. He said it from the get go. No surprise. This is not your best life now. Jesus said from the beginning if you will follow me deny yourself take up your cross and follow me.

I got nowhere to lay my head. follow me to your death. Diedrich Bonhoeffer said right the call of Jesus is a call to die.

Bonhoeffer knew all about this. He lived at a time when right evil was prevalent. and he recognized it.

He recognized and he was willing to die for it. And he did. Now he did take up a sword try to you know tally ho gotta try but if you're gonna go to captivity you're gonna go to captivity if you're gonna be killed with a sword you're gonna be killed with a sword.

[56 : 28] He had both. So what does all this mean for us? Let me gel it into Hebrews 12. What is our focus?

How do we endure by faith? It's fine to say here's the endurance and the faith of the saints. Okay I gotta go to captivity or I gotta go to die. Okay how do I live? How do I do that?

Okay here's what Hebrews 12 says. Listen to this. Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses all those before us who have endured and have run the race and have died have suffered since we have such a great cloud of witnesses let us also lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance there's that word run with endurance the race that is set before us oh but I'm tired I'm weary I'm ready to give up running a race are you kidding me?

at my age my body my storm my loss how do I do that?

Let us run the race with endurance that is set before us how? Looking to Jesus that's it looking to Jesus who is he?

[58 : 00] he's the founder and perfecter of our faith he gave us our faith he will perfect our faith as we run who for the joy set before him he doesn't just call us to run he ran who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself why?

why look to him? why consider him? so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted how do I overcome spiritual weariness?

how do I overcome the want to quit? it because we all get that we all get tired we all get weird we all just I lose heart it's too much the only way I overcome that is I look to Jesus I think about I consider him I focus on him that's where I get the new life he goes on he says in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood because if you shed your blood by this point you'd be okay so you haven't died yet I think this is humorous and have you forgotten have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons my son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor be weary when reproved by him why for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastens every son he receives it is for discipline that you have to endure

God is treating you as sons for what son is there whom his father does not discipline if you are left without discipline in which we have all participated then you are illegitimate children and not sons but if you're disciplined!

that's a mark of being a child of God besides this we have earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live for they are earthly fathers disciplined!

[60 : 41] us for a short time as seemed best to them we parents we make mistakes but we're trying to do what we're supposed to do that seemed best to them but he he doesn't make mistakes he disciplines us always for our good that we may share his holiness he's purifying us for the moment I love this statement for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant understatement isn't it I mean it just says right in the moment it seems painful not pleasant yeah we get it but later later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it who have endured through it who have grown in their faith through it so I'm going to end just saying are you weary!

are you weary? weary some of you I know are weary it's been a lot you've gone through a season huh? God is pruning God is where's God?

look to Jesus look to Jesus look to Jesus who endured for you are some of you ready to lose heart ready to quit ready to throw in the towel it's the race is too long focus on him focus on him God is treating you as his child and this battle this fight this war is for our good we've been looking at it how it comes at us from the dragon's point of view that's for our learning and our awareness we look at it from the father's point of view okay devil's not winning he's not winning but he can hurt us on the outside only temporarily God has it in desert and in the desert is where we meet

God in the desert is where we get the we relearn where the real water comes from we learn where the real bread from heaven comes from in the desert that's where we learn to deal with scorpions and serpents and we learn that all through those 40 years in the desert our shoes never wear out right we've always got food he's always taken care of us and it's in the desert where we see some of those miracles happen where when we're all out he provides water so it's good it's good we have one king we can trust his name is Jesus he is our shepherd who guides us feeds us protects us and gives us his armor for the battle as Paul said put on the full armor of God God's armor not yours the belt is his belt what's the belt truth start with truth not lie belt of truth put on that's his truth not my truth not your truth his truth

I put on a breastplate righteousness whose righteousness his righteousness because it's his armor right I put on shoes of the gospel I need to hear the gospel all the time I put on shoes of the gospel

readiness of peace right and I take up shield of faith what protects me faith what do I trust in the battle when the darts are firing at me what has God promised I will never leave you forsake you everything you go through will be for your good in that weary battle in that long run what am I thinking I want to quit I want to quit I want to quit he's saying I'm with you you can do you don't have to run so fast slow down a little bit shield then it gives us helmet salvation I remember

[65 : 13] I'm his whatever happens in this battle I'm his and then it gives me a weapon just one what is it sort of the spirit which is the word of God everything else defends me this one as he comes with it what did Jesus teach us to do when he was tempted he says it is written it is written it is written have you done that when you're tempted with something if you're tempted with lust guys all you gotta say out loud is it is written flee immorality something powerful happens struggling with anger it is written be angry but do not sin struggle with worry anxiety

Jesus said don't worry but pray on and on have you done that have you used your sword it's the sword is meant to be spoken the sword is meant to be used have you used it see how you overcome if you haven't do that especially if there's one thing that gets you you know there's one thing I man fighting with that all the time take a simple verse doesn't have to be all the Deuteronomy Jesus took one verse from different parts of Deuteronomy right man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God so take a verse for the last one I like the really short one it is written flee immorality I could go to Matthew and go okay Jesus said you have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery with a woman but

I say to you even look at a woman with lust is adultery so that's a lot longer in the moment I want something short quick I want it works folks the word is powerful use it there is a battle coming the battle is already here now that you know!

recognize the battle more clearly I said I was going to be quick didn't I sorry let's pray Father we thank you for your word oh my we see this today we see the lies we see the deceit we see the falseness we see this progression of what we adore about our country being demolished we see evil behind it and so Father help us to see it clearly help us to recognize what we do how we stand with faith and endurance in the battle we pray in Jesus name amen amen