



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....6:30 p.m.

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BIBLE "BAD GUYS": THE BEAST

Brian R. Kenyon

While studying the Book of Revelation, it is very noticeable that commentators will use the terms "man of sin," "the Antichrist," and "the beast" as if they were all referring to the same "bad guy." However, they are each different, although they do have common characteristics (such as arrogance, deception, use of violence, etc.). In this article, we will examine what the Bible teaches about "the beast," which is the only one of the three "bad guys" we have studied in these bulletin articles that actually belongs in the Book of Revelation.

THE FIRST BEAST

Two beasts are actually introduced in Revelation 13. John wrote of the first:

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. (Rev. 13:1-2)

One truth we note from the start is that this beast gets his "power" from the "dragon," who was described earlier as "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). Furthermore, this beast rose from the "sea." John used "sea" a few different ways in Revelation. It can be a literal part of creation; it can indicate God's transcendence (Rev. 4:6; 15:2); or it can signify humanity given over to Satan (Rev. 10:2, 8; 12:12; 13:1; 21:1). This latter use best describes the place from which this beast arose. This beast symbolized the relentless persecuting force of John's day, which would have been one at the head of the Roman Empire. This beast was Satan's agent in persecuting Christians (Rev. 12:17-13:1). He was linked to the beast in Daniel 7:1-7 (cf. Dan. 2:44), which connects the contemporary ruling world empire as the enemy to God's people. This beast blasphemed God's "name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven [i.e., God's people]" (Rev. 13:6). He was allowed by God to "war with the saints and to overcome them" (Rev. 13:7a). His authority was "over every tribe, tongue, and nation" of those who belong to him (Rev. 13:7b). Furthermore, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him" (Rev. 13:8a). One major key to understanding much of Revelation is to realize that "earth dwellers" was symbolic for those who belonged to Satan (cf. Rev. 11:9; 17:15), not the whole planet's population as some of these premillennial, highly imaginative, false doctrines purport. This meaning of "earth dwellers" is also supported by the rest of the verse, "whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8b).

Put on the whole armor of God . . . to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11)

THE SECOND BEAST

John wrote about the second beast:

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹²And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. (Rev. 13:11-14)

This beast came up from the “earth.” Again, “earth” is in contrast to heaven and refers to those who are submissive to the devil (cf. Rev. 11:10; 12:12; 14:6-7, 15-19). The second beast, later called “the false prophet” (Rev. 19:20), symbolized the false system of emperor worship, including those under the emperor who enforced it. This beast’s deception was in the fake “signs” he was allowed to perform (cf. Mt. 24:24; 2 Thes. 2:9). Christians refusing to participate in this idolatry were persecuted. John wrote of this second beast, “He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (Rev. 13:15). He was the one who made emperor worship come alive. Thus, this beast existed congruently with the first beast (Rev. 13:11-18). This beast exercised authority of the first beast in the first beast’s presence (Rev. 13:12a). This beast was presented as having only one mission: to make sure people worship the first beast (Rev. 13:12b).

BOTH BEASTS DESTINED FOR DESTRUCTION

As mentioned above, both of these beasts worked together. However, just as they both came up together, so they both would fall together. Although God allowed Satan to have some victories in overcoming His people (Rev. 6:9-11; 11:1-2, 7-8), Satan can never defeat God. The devil was a three time loser in the previous chapter: (1) he sought to destroy the “male Child” but failed (Rev. 12:4-6); he fought against “Michael and his angels” but lost (Rev. 12:7-9); and (3) he persecuted and tried to flush out the “woman who gave birth to the male Child” but was stopped (Rev. 12:13-17). John wrote of the eventual demise of these two beasts, “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). There is no escaping the judgment of God (Rev. 15:3-4 cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-11; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Heb. 10:26-27; 12:29), unless people repent (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9-11 cf. 2 Pet. 3:9)!

CONCLUSION

As long as this world stands, there will be “bad guys” through whom Satan will work to keep us away from our victory-crown (Eph. 6:12 cf. Col. 2:4, 8, 18; Heb. 3:13). We must, however, “submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jas. 4:7). There are at least three lessons we can learn from these Bible “bad guys.” First, we must know that God is in control. Whether it be the man of sin, an antichrist, the beasts in Revelation, or “bad guys” today, God is still in control (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Lk. 22:31-32) and with His people (Mt. 28:20). Let us wait on Him (Isa. 40:31). Second, we must know the truth (2 Thes. 1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7). The truth sets us free (Jn. 8:31-32). We must use our Bibles to “test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 Jn. 4:1). Third, we must love the truth (2 Thes. 2:10-12). No spiritual or secular weapon can separate those who truly love Jesus by knowing and keeping His word (cf. Isa. 54:17; Jn. 14:15; Rom. 8:31-39).

Upcoming Events
February
23-25 — YES Weekend (Valdosta)
March
29-31 — Lads to Leaders (Orlando)
The shepherds would like to meet with you and your family on the 3rd Sunday of each month (4:00-5:30 pm) to learn your ideas, concerns, and answer any questions. Call the office to let us know when it works best for you.

PRAYER LIST

Current: Stacey Paulin was unable to get an injection for his Trigeminal Neuralgia pain due to insurance referral at this time still waiting. Pray for patience and strength while he is in great pain.

Continual: Debbie Bush (struggles); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Linda Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Ronnie Lynn is recovering from neck surgery. Jim Turner (health)

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.

Melissa Craft wishes to thank everyone for the cards, call, prayers, etc. on her behalf. She recently got good news from the doctors that her tumors have shrunk and her numbers are looking good! We praise God for this! Please continue to pray for her that she will continue to improve!



THE SEBRING PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST
invites you to attend a

GOSPEL MEETING



with
DON BLACKWELL
of
**Cookeville,
Tennessee**

"QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED"

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00 a.m. "Is Technology Killing God's People?"	THE SEBRING PARKWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETS AT 3800 SEBRING PARKWAY IN SEBRING, FLORIDA. *** For more information, please call (863) 385-7443, or e-mail us at sebringparkway@sebringcoc.com.
Sunday Morning Worship Assembly - 10:00 a.m. "What is Your Life but a Vapor?"	
Sunday Morning Third Hour - 11:15 a.m. "Is Your Heart Right with God?"	
Monday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m. "What is True Repentance?"	
Tuesday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m. "What will the Day of Judgment be Like?"	
Wednesday Evening Worship Assembly - 7:00 p.m. "Do I Need to be Rebaptized?"	
(LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 1:00 P.M. ON SUNDAY.)	

FEBRUARY 18-21, 2024

The Elders would like to meet with each SFA family to hear your ideas, concerns and questions.

They will be at the building on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Please call the office of set up a time and day that works best for your family.

"Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
Hebrews 13:17

WWCC Spring Ladies Retreat
Feb. 15-17, 2024
"Spill the Tea"
Register by February 4, 2024



Please join us for an uplifting weekend in the Word and in fellowship with our Christian sisters!

Scheduled to Serve in February	
Designated Elder	David Anderson
Wednesday, February 7, 2024	
Announcements	Rick Kenyon
Song Leader / Prayer	Landon Willcutt
Devotional / Invitation	Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer	David Deal
Sunday, February 11, 2024	
10:30 am Sermon	Brian Kenyon
6:00 pm Sermon	Joseph Faulk
Those to Serve 10:30 am	
Greeters	Brunson's
Song/Pray before class	Stacey Paulin
Announcements (both)	Frank Hamby
Song Leader (both)	Kyle Faneuf
Prayer / Bible reading	Josh Potvin
Lord's Table (both)	Nigel St Bernard
Closing Prayer	David Williams
Open/Close Building	David Deal
Attendance Cards	Klark/Declan
Sound Booth (both)	Derrick Williams
Those to Serve 6:00 pm	
Greeters	Nona/Janis
Announcements	Frank Hamby
Song Leader	Kyle Faneuf
Prayer / Bible reading	Andre Medley
Closing Prayer	Steve Tydings
Wednesday, February 14, 2024	
Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Tucker Sweeney
Devotional / Invitation	
Closing Prayer	Jeff Stewart
How We Are Giving	
January 21	\$6,594.00
January 28	\$5,947.63
February 4	\$10,077.00
Contribution Average	\$8,053.00
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Our First Two Chapters

In Job chapters one and two the devil presents himself to God and accuses God that the only reason Job serves Him is because everything is going pretty good for him. God allows the devil to put Job through the works. All through the trials and loss of his wealth and health, Job didn't have the first two chapters of the book of Job. He didn't know why this was happening to him. Neither do I. I do not know why my relationships keep failing. I do not know why God had Sophia come back to Him so soon (at least in my eyes). One thing I do know is that I trust God. I trust His plan for me (even though I don't know and may never know what that truly is). I trust that He is working in me and for me to glorify Him in this world (Phil. 2:13). I try to look at my trials in a way that, as more are coming my way, the more the devil is threatened by my faith in God. Let us not lose our faith in God as we go through the trenches of our trials. (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Faith, Hope, Love (1 Cor. 13:13)



Questions??

This section of the bulletin is going to be used for answering **Bible** related questions at this time. We would love to have our youth submit questions that will be answered here. However, anyone who has a **Bible** related question is welcome to submit one as well. These can be left anonymously if you prefer. Email questions to SFA office of give to one of the elders.

So Phillip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me? ..."

Acts 8:30-31

YESWeekend Youth Enrichment Seminar



February 23-25, 2024

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com
Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

**"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good,
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"**

Psalm 34:8



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.