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Series: For the Time is Near  
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**Endurance and Faith**  
**Revelation 13:1-10**

Please turn in your Bibles to Revelation, Chapter 13. This morning, we'll be covering the first ten verses of this chapter. Next week we'll be in the second half. The title of this morning's message is: *Endurance and Faith*.

*Father, we come to You thankful that You still speak to us today. Lord, what sits before us is Your Word, and I pray that we would receive it as such, that we would be given wisdom as we understand that we may apply that which we come to know. I pray that You would stir our hearts, that our endurance would be built up, that we would apply faith to our lives to Your glory, and that this prophecy that we will be learning about this morning would serve us today to be our motivation to live lives that are unto You, whether it be building our trust in You, whether it be a little bit more comfort as we look forward to being reunited with loved ones that have gone home before us; just walking out our faith, Father. Help us to see this for what it is and be strengthened in our spheres as we look to You. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Lord Acton said, "*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*"

Abraham Lincoln said, "*Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.*"

That is so true and the more I experience life, the more I see that to be true in the lives of men and women. Adversity can come and go, but give someone power and that is truly a test of whether they will stay faithful to the Lord and bring Him glory; or glorify self, which is what Satan fell with—pride. "***...I will be like the Most High...***" is what he said in Isaiah, Chapter 14.

There are powers by a certain group of men that will be known during this period, the Tribulation Period, which no group of men have known up to this point. There are two that are going to rise above this group of men, of leaders within the world. One is known as the first beast, and then the second beast, also known as the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

Now last week, we learned of the Dragon that was cast out of heaven, thrown to the earth and as soon as he hit ground he went after the women with the child. Who's the woman with the child? Israel. She was given wings. In other words, she was given a way of escape. Israel will escape and, as we've learned, will be nourished divinely by the Lord for three and a half years.

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Now, Satan turned his attention from the woman to her offspring, which would be Christians. Satan, the Dragon poured all his wrath out on them because he knew, at that point, that his days were short. Now we come to this time to where John saw the Dragon going after the offspring of the woman, and now he sees this beast rising up from the sea.

I've seen people get stuck on prophecy. That's all you want to know; you want to learn it all; you want to look for these people; you want to know who it might be in today's day and age. Hopefully, we don't know, because we're not there yet! So, quit looking! Why are we learning biblical prophecy? One of the songs that we sung is that we're searching for answers. God has the answers. Why are studying biblical prophecy? Why was this written at all? Why couldn't this have been written as a later time? When this was actually happening. Why is it here for us to learn?

Biblical prophecy should impact the Christian today in applied positive ways. Otherwise, if it is only an exercise to accumulate knowledge, it will only serve the individual. It'll puff you up, and not the body of Christ, and thus, not serve to glorify the Lord. We'll have all this knowledge and even get into arguments about it.

We're going to learn what it says through the first ten verses in Chapter 13. So, what does God intend prophecy to do? He intends for prophecy to affect the life of the Christian. As we see here in these first ten verses are two things. Look with me at verse ten. After all is said and done, the second portion of verse ten says this:

***"Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints."***

In other words, *I've just brought this to your attention so that you could be built up in your endurance and your faith.* Those two things.

How many of you have started exercising, then you give it one hard push and you feel like you're just gonna absolutely die? You're like, *Whoa! What happened?* Then you give up, right? When is the right time to give up? Never! You don't give up, you keep going!

I haven't actually brought this up in quite a long time, but I learned a lot in this short six-year span of my life as I enlisted in the Navy. I really enjoyed that time and I learned a lot. I thank God for that time because I think He had a purpose for me. I remember going to a specific school; a dive school in Little Creek, Virginia. They taught me a lot about endurance and about trusting. Not only the guy next to me, but also the guy that I was following, my proctor. We started out with 32-35 men and ended up with the original class being the size of about 10.

One of the things that we would say is, "Mud, sweat, and pain keeps you trained." You don't realize exactly how much your body can endure until you push it. You can go through pain; you can go through anguish; you can go through sleep depravity; you can go through all of that and still function. It's amazing what the body can do, if you truly set your mind to it. You trust and you build it up, you get past the pain, the difficulties, and then all of a sudden you can do things that you never thought was possible.

Listen, that applies to the Christian life as well. It does! We get to the point where it's not Easy Street anymore. The hard part comes and you get tested. *I'm really sore! That really hurt and I don't know if I wanna go through that again!* You need to keep pushing and build endurance.

Why is prophecy in front of us? Why are we learning these things? To build that up! To build our spiritual muscles up. That's what we're here for--to commune with the Lord and allow Him to pour His Spirit out upon us

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so that we would continue to stir each other up for good works. That's what the Bible tells us. That's how we're to encourage each other.

One strengthens the other, endurance and faith. As one exercises their faith, endurance builds and strengthens the inner man. Trust in God grows, your focus on spiritual things sharpen, you will serve the Lord more willingly and you will be comforted for a future reunion with those who have died before you. Thessalonians points that out.

Turn with me to 2 Peter, Chapter One. Now, when Peter says "we", he means him and the other apostles.

***<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," <sup>18</sup> we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

You want to know the purpose of prophecy and fulfilling it? Listen, there is going to be a group of Christians that read this and they're going to go, "Wow! We're going through this right now! Hey, Chuck, stand fast! Jim, c'mon man, you got to keep going. This is what waits for us!"

Do you know that as the apostle Peter is writing that...and I'm getting goose bumps because he's saying, "Hey, listen! We actually saw this come about! This is amazing and we're not making it up! God spoke of this even before we got here. We're telling you what we experienced and we want you to know this: God is faithful; He's amazing; He is trustworthy; His Word is solid and perfect. Listen to Him; incline your ear to Him; pay special attention to what He's telling you, and through it, live it out because your faith and endurance will be built up."

May this morning's message move you to draw closer to the Lord, to trust Him to live a life pleasing to Him, and to move you to serve Him with your life. If you've been sitting on your hands up to this point, it's time to get them out from underneath there, and get them out in front of you and serve Him! It should move you to do that. If we owe Him our lives, what are we doing to prove that? We should be a group of people who are filled with action.

Let's read in Revelation 13, starting in verse one:

***And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. <sup>2</sup> And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"***

We'll stop there. So, who is this? We've seen the Dragon in the last chapter, but who is this? This is the first beast, also known as the Antichrist. Again, John just saw, he was shown exactly what happened with the Dragon, so God turns His attention from the Dragon to the beast rising out of the sea. This is the Beast, not Satan, that was given power, authority, the throne *by* Satan.

I want to just touch on the "*...rising out of the sea...*" For just a moment because we need to understand what that means. If you read commentaries, some will say that the sea is a reference to the Gentile nations, and someone will emerge from one of these nations and be the supreme leader of what perhaps will be known as a ten nation European league.

We know that it's true that the Antichrist will be first a peacemaker, helping usher in an agreement between Israel and the Arab nations for a period of seven years. If you see that contract being signed and actually peace happening, you are entering into the Tribulation Period.

Along with that thought, there is biblical evidence that leads us to understand that this reference of "rising out of the sea" is to that of a turbulent, raging, and chaotic time in the history of the earth.

Psalms 89:8-9 says,

***<sup>8</sup> O LORD God of hosts,  
who is mighty as you are, O LORD,  
with your faithfulness all around you?  
<sup>9</sup> You rule the raging of the sea;  
when its waves rise, you still them.***

Isaiah 57:20 says,

***But the wicked are like the tossing sea;  
for it cannot be quiet,  
and its waters toss up mire and dirt.***

False and blasphemous teachers were described by Jude to be "*...<sup>13</sup> wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame...*"

Some of us can go to the beach and look at the ocean and think, *It's so beautiful!* But yet, it is so powerful! If you've ever been in a storm in the middle of the ocean you understand just how powerful, how turbulent it can become. There are these things called rogue waves that come out of nowhere and can turn over large ships. The sea can be a wonderfully, awful thing. But that's how Scripture describes this scene.

For this reason, I believe that the reference to a "*...a beast rising out of the sea...*" is a reference to the Antichrist rising to power out of an extremely turbulent, raging, and chaotic time on earth, and the people will embrace him, and it may be that he is the supreme leader of a ten-nation European League.

I always warn you that as you read commentaries, look at it with a skeptic's eye. Understand that that is not Scripture. If something causes you to go, "Huh?", with a head-tilt like a dog when he hears a whistle, that's probably the Holy Spirit telling you that you need to go back to the Word and see what it says, and not man's opinion. You need to be very careful, even from the most respected biblical scholars. Sometimes they get puffed up, and in that moment, they write something that they shouldn't have written.

There are many speculations, but we are not told this prophecy in order to focus on finding this man, but to focus on knowing Jesus and persevering this day, today. Yesterday is spent, tomorrow has not come, today is the day of the Lord, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let's redeem the time today! Make the most of it today! Tomorrow is not here yet. Why even worry about it. Prepare, plan; yes, absolutely, I agree with that. In fact, the Lord tells us to do that, but listen, today is the day.

As far as this prophecy is concerned, again I remind you, it's for the purpose of calling us to endurance and faith in the church of the saints, for you and I, today. It's to elevate, or strengthen our faith in the Lord to know that He's trustworthy. As Peter explained, "Can you imagine what's already been spoken about the future? You need to pay attention because it's all going to come to pass."

Again, this is not the Dragon, this is the Beast, but he will be *like* the Dragon. He is a man energized from hell. In fact, Revelation 11:7 says that he **"...rises from the bottomless pit..."**. No ordinary man rises from the bottomless pit. This is no ordinary man. He will rise from the pit of hell and he will have great demonic power.

### **Ten Horns with Ten Diadems (Crowns); Seven Heads with Blasphemous Names (v.1)**

These bands or crowns speak of his sovereignty.

Some commentators say that the seven heads with blasphemous names are referencing seven mountains, and since Rome is built on seven hills that this is a reference to Rome, and that the ten horns represent ten kingdoms of which the Antichrist will be the leader of.

Another commentator said that the greater number of horns means a greater amount of power. If you remember what I had mentioned back when we were looking at the Dragon, which was described in similar fashion, we know that he had great power.

I tell you that because we need to ask the question, "So, which one is it? Is it both? Is it one? Which one?" Those are one of those moments where we need to look to see what Scripture tells us. We always need to go back to Scripture.

Again, I sincerely do not believe we were given this prophecy in order to figure it all out ahead of time. Some of it, we just need to leave to the Lord. I'm not going to stand here and give you all kinds of assumptions and speculations as to what exactly that means, because then that would mean that I have insight that you don't; that means that we can go back to the times to where you guys are really ignorant and the only one that can explain things to you is the priest. We don't want to go there, okay? We just don't.

Let me just tell you this, as I look to and studied these verses, I am in the same place as you are. Perhaps I'm too simple; perhaps the Lord didn't give me the brains to figure this out. I can look at this and be amazed at the awful beast that's coming out--it could be all kinds of things and combinations, but I'm not going to just sit here and try to figure this out. I'm going to leave it for what it is.

What we do know, is that this beast will be very powerful, may have even absolute power on earth; is authoritative, will rule over all; blasphemous, will oppose all that pertains to God; and rise out of the sea, what I believe will be turbulent and chaotic times.

***Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.*** 1 John 2:18

There are many antichrists running around right now. We need to understand that this is the last hour.

### **Like a Leopard, Bear, and a Lion (v.2)**

John writes that the beast looked *like* a leopard, having feet *like* a bear, and having a mouth *like* a lion. Some commentators say that this is a reference to an empire that has a cat-like vigilance, like a leopard; the slow crushing power of a bear; and the authority and ferociousness of a lion.

We can make reference going back and forth to Daniel, Chapter Seven, and Revelation, Chapter 13. Daniel also described such a beast, but it was in reference to an empire. Therefore, because Daniel referred to an empire, then it is concluded that in Revelation 13 that it's not a person, but it's actually an empire. It's a ruling government, and the beast is a picture of a totalitarian government. Here is what I want to bring to your attention: I've never heard of a government being worshiped as a god. Not a government, not a country. It's always been a person.

Joseph A. Seiss says, *"The Beast is worshiped as a god; but people never worship an empire as such; neither do they make a succession of emperors into an object of religious devotion. The paying of diving homage to kings has been a common thing in the world's history, but it has always been rendered to individuals."*

We also know that this man has a number, (the number of man, 666. We'll see that next week at the end of Chapter 13). He is referred to as the son of perdition, and he sat in the place of God and commits the abomination of desolation, and there is a final judgment for this man.

So, it's for those reasons that I believe this to be a man, not an empire, or government, or a cultural system. I'm giving you my argument on it, and I tell you to study it for yourself. Make sure you look through it and understand it. God has laid it out in His Word. You can go back to Daniel; you can go forward to Revelation, and see it for yourself.

### **The Antichrist Will be Given Satan's Power, Throne, and Great Authority (v.2)**

These are the very things that Satan offered to Jesus when He was in the wilderness and fasted for 40 days in Matthew 4:8-10. But the Antichrist will willingly receive these for himself.

If you're jotting down notes, Isaiah 14:12-20 explains Satan's pride and his fall. You'll see how he wanted to be like the Most High, and he said he would be. As you read through those verses, you'll see the victory there as God wins in the end. I've just given you the end—God wins.

### **The Mortal Wound (v.3)**

***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.***

It will be this event that causes the whole world to stand in awe of this man. Not only is he charismatic; not only does he have power and authority; not only does he sit on the throne, but he actually is resurrected. He has this mortal wound, which speaks of a head wound, and somehow the Dragon (Satan) will be given permission to resurrect, or appear to resurrect him from the grave. This is all an imitation. Then we have this false prophet who will cause the whole earth to worship the Antichrist.

This is the unholy trinity. You have an imitation father, who causes the son of perdition to rise from the pit of hell and get to that place of authority on earth, and then you have the false prophet who causes the whole earth to worship the Antichrist.

In the Holy Trinity, you have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit causes everyone who hears His voice to worship the Son; points to the Son. But the unholy trinity steals, kills, and destroys. That's the whole purpose of this unholy trinity. You see it, this is what's happening here in front of our eyes.

As we see here in verse four, the whole world will be worshipping the Dragon and the Beast.

***And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"***

I believe that the world will be held in its sway; as they worship the Beast, they will be worshipping the Dragon, they will be worshipping Satan. But the whole world will say, "We're not worshipping the Dragon! We're not worshipping Satan!"

Well, Jesus said,

***"Whoever is not with me is against me..."***

There's no middle ground. You've heard me say it before, but if you're riding the fence, it is said that Satan owns the fence. There is no fence with the Lord! *You're either with me or you're against Me*, is what the Lord said.

James 4:4 is very clear,

***You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

There's no in-between. You start seeing here, faith and endurance. This is coming. You're either for or against. You need to be on one side or the other. There's no in-between.

At this time the Beast's popularity will grow and the people will agree with him and will freely worship him. But those who don't will suffer severe and grave consequences. He's filled the world with wonder, but now...

### The Beast Given to Words and War (vv. 5-8)

***<sup>5</sup> And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup> and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. <sup>9</sup> If anyone has an ear, let him hear:***

***<sup>10</sup> If anyone is to be taken captive,  
to captivity he goes;  
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,  
with the sword must he be slain.***

*Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*

### **Words (vv.5-6)**

The first thing that I want to bring to your attention is that the Beast was *given* a mouth, and was allowed to exercise authority (he had no original authority). God formed his mouth and for some reason he was also allowed to speak.

There are those who are around us sometimes that make us wonder, "God, I know you formed their mouth, but why do you give them the authority to speak?" But for some reason, He does. That's what happens here.

For three and a half years the Antichrist will speak blasphemies against God, heaven, and those who dwell in heaven. He will have the platform to do such a thing. He will perform things that seem to be the same as what the Christians claim their Messiah did—perform wonders, amazing things. *Oh, your Messiah resurrected from the grave? Where is he? Do you see Him? Make Him appear! I don't see Him, but you see this man right here, he rose from the grave.*

He will mock heaven; he will mock God; he will mock the church, because that's who is in heaven. He will say all those who went up at the rapture really went nowhere. I can just imagine what he'll say, but he'll do this for three and a half years. He'll be saying that the church was all a hoax and the world will believe it.

Is that not what the world is believing even now? Correct me if I'm wrong. Just go to just about any university--in fact, there are certain professors who start out by trying to just rip apart your faith. If you don't believe me, go to college, experience it for yourself.

### **War (vv.7-8)**

*<sup>7</sup> Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.*

These saints will be those who come after the Rapture, because we know that against the church (the bride of Christ), *"...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*, according to Matthew 16:17-19.

There are some who believe that there is a Post-Tribulation Rapture and that this is all part of the church, but if you read, study and go through Scripture and see *"...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*, and compare it to this verse where it says they'll be conquered, it just doesn't go together.

Antichrist will rule over everyone on earth, except for those whose names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slain (before the foundation of the world), Jesus.

We need to understand that God is not taken by surprise regarding any of this and is making it up as He goes. He had perfect knowledge even before the foundation of the world He knew everyone's name that would be written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slain. He knew everything that was going to take place. It was as if time was here, and you could see it all, and He exists outside of time. That's exactly how it is with God. He's beyond and superior to our realm. He saw it all.

The world will somehow worship the Antichrist. We don't know how, but they will.

### **A Warning and Call to Endure (vv.9-10)**

Do you have an ear inclined to those things which are spoken by the Lord? Do you have an ear?



<sup>9</sup> *If anyone has an ear, let him hear:*

<sup>10</sup> *If anyone is to be taken captive,  
to captivity he goes;  
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,  
with the sword must he be slain.*

We don't hear of any rebellion here. We don't hear of any uprising. If anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. If you're going to be executed, you're going to be executed. Go.

He says here's a call for the endurance and faith of the saints. O, how difficult it will be in those times. If you think your moments of testing and temptations and trials are tough, it pales in comparison to what they're going to endure in these days.

Again, as I've said last week, what is taking you away from your walk with the Lord? Is it less than perhaps an imprisonment and being executed? Oftentimes, it's what we allow the world to deceive us with, distract us and takes us away from truly walking with the Lord.

This is a warning, a call to endurance and faith. This is a word to those who are called the saints—Christians, because the world is blind and deaf to the things of God. Remember, they are following and worshiping Antichrist. So, this is the only group of people that the Scripture is making reference to and is saying, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear! This is a call to endurance and faith! Keep going! You're almost there! So close!"

When's the right time to give up? Never. Never give up! We are to bear down even more and hold on even tighter, cling to Jesus Christ, follow Him, glorify Him, and tell others about Him, bring as many people as we can into the kingdom of God with us. Don't quit, don't sit on your hands. All of this should move you to action.

This is a final word for the saints to persevere in their faith, to endure captivity and even death. God is saying that this will take place and to stand fast in their faith. Christians will be viciously attacked, imprisoned, and killed, but their victory lies with Jesus Christ and their names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb who was slain. That's victory! That is conquering sin and death! That's it right there!

Endurance and faith. Today there are too many things that we are worried about, but this should not be added to the list.

Skip Heitzig says in his book *Defying Normal (Soaring Above the Status Quo)*:

*"Knowing prophecy will do four things for you: Motivate you to trust God more completely; help you clean up your life and focus on living a more spiritual life; comfort you with the thought of reunion with loved ones; and, call you to serve God because you'll be rewarded accordingly."*

We already talked about how prophecy should affect your life. I just told you what this knowledge should do to you today. What are we made to do? To glorify the Lord; to not stand down, but to stand up.

Your trust in God grows; your focus on spiritual things sharpen; you will serve the Lord more willingly; you will be comforted with those who have died before you.

2 Peter 3:11-13 says this:

***<sup>11</sup> Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! <sup>13</sup> But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.***

What sort of people ought you to be? It says here, living lives of holiness and godliness. So, I pray that this morning's message moves you to draw closer to the Lord, to trust Him, to live a life pleasing to Him, and that it moves you to serve Him with every fiber of your life.

*Father, we so thank You that You did not take the path of least resistance. We thank You that You teach Your people to have perseverance to stand fast in the faith and to advance. I pray that we would not grow weary of doing good, for we know that one day we will be rewarded as we come face to face with You, for those things that we exercised here on earth in faith and trusting You to Your glory. I pray a blessing upon Your people, anoint them, fill them with Your Spirit to overflowing, and help us to walk with You. In Jesus' name, amen.*