

97-13

Duped!

The Dangers of Being Gullible

13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2 The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. 4 Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

9 He who has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

11 Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. 14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

18 This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. (NIV)

1. Seductive Politics (vv.1-10)

A. Offering _____ (vv.1-2)

B. With an Amazing _____ (vv.3-4)

C. Delivering Great _____ (vv.5-10)

2. Alluring Religion (vv.11-18)

A. Offering _____ (vv.11-12)

B. Claims of _____ (vv.13-15)

C. Intolerant of _____ (vv.16-18)

Discussion Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message and to prepare you for participation in one of our small group studies. If you need more information about when and where CARE groups are meeting this week see the display in the lobby

1. The price tag for being deceived during the Tribulation will be high (to say the least), but even today being duped can be costly. What is at stake for the Christian in being deceived by the world and by our enemy? Give some examples from your own life.
2. Peace is good, but "peace at any price" is obviously unacceptable for the Christian. In what ways have you been lured into a compromising situation just to maintain peace?
3. "The Beast", as he is called in the book of Revelation, will impress many people. His amazing background and negotiating abilities will be attractive to millions. People like a winner. The coming world leader will certainly be that. How have you fallen into the trap of following after the pattern of someone—someone who is not a godly example to follow—simply because there were some superficial things about that person that impressed you?
4. The world leader depicted in Revelation 13 is described here and in many other places throughout the Bible as being one who speaks boastfully about himself. This doesn't seem to be so offensive in our day of self-promoting sports figures and celebrities. Have you noticed a trend of increasing acceptance toward those who speak boldly about themselves? Site an example or two of an overtly self-promoting individual who is viewed as attractive by our culture.
5. The religious leader and the religious system (which we will learn more about in Revelation 17) is also attractive to the people in the Tribulation. In light of our world's increasing interest in spiritual things it is not hard to imagine a shrinking "secular" crowd. What aspects of religion do you think must be abandoned to increase its appeal to the general population?

Do you see this happening in our day?

6. Though many would argue that "if it is miraculous, it must be from God", Revelation 13 reads to the contrary. See also Matthew 24:24. Discernment may sound like a subjective endeavor but in reality it is not difficult to determine truth from error if we are looking for the right things. If miracles are not the acid test, what is? What is "the ruler" in Bible (see Ac.17:11; 2 Tim.3:15-16)?

How well is the biblical "ruler" accepted these days when it contradicts one's experience, especially a miraculous experience? What can we learn from this?