

REVEALED SS- Two Beasts

One Beast represents empire/political power, the other false religion.

This statement refers to the **two beasts** described in **Revelation 13**:

1. **The first beast (from the sea) → represents empire and political power** (Rev 13:1-10).
2. **The second beast (from the earth) → represents false religion and ideological manipulation** (Rev 13:11-18).

These **two beasts work together** under the authority of **the Dragon (Satan)**, forming a **counterfeit trinity** that seeks to deceive, control, and oppose the Lamb and His followers.

1. The First Beast: Political and Military Power (Revelation 13:1-10)

John describes the **first beast** as follows:

“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.” (Revelation 13:1, ESV)

A. The Old Testament Background of the First Beast

The imagery of this beast is **heavily drawn from Daniel 7**, where Daniel sees **four great beasts rising out of the sea**, representing successive world empires:

- **Lion (Babylon)**
- **Bear (Medo-Persia)**
- **Leopard (Greece)**
- **A terrifying beast with ten horns (Rome and future oppressive powers)**

These beasts **symbolized the oppressive, violent nature of empires** that oppose God's people.

John **combines all these into a single beast** in Revelation 13, showing that:

- **This beast is not just one empire** (Rome in John's time)—it represents **all oppressive political powers that oppose God's kingdom**.
- **The “sea” represents chaos and evil** (Psalm 74:13-14, Isaiah 27:1), a place of rebellion against God.

B. The Symbolism of the First Beast

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- **"Rising out of the sea"** → Just like in **Daniel 7**, the sea represents **chaos, evil, and nations opposed to God**.
- **"Ten horns and seven heads"** → Symbolizes **great power, dominion, and influence** (similar to the fourth beast in Daniel 7).
- **"Blasphemous names"** → This beast **claims divine status**, demanding worship.
- **"The Dragon gave him his power"** → This political power is empowered by **Satan himself**.

C. The First Beast as a Symbol of Empire

- In John's time, this beast clearly symbolized the **Roman Empire**, which:
 - Exercised **military dominance over the known world**.
 - Persecuted Christians for refusing to worship the emperor.
 - Used **propaganda to portray its rule as divine** (Emperor worship).
- But **this beast is not limited to Rome**—it represents **all oppressive political systems that demand total allegiance**.

Michael Gorman: The Beast as a Representation of Corrupt Political Power

"The first beast is **the institutionalized power of empire, which demands ultimate loyalty** and enforces it through **military might and persecution**. It is the ultimate counterfeit of the reign of the Lamb." (*Reading Revelation Responsibly*, p. 146)

D. How the First Beast Operates Today

The first beast is **not just an ancient empire**—it is **any political or governmental power that demands allegiance above Christ**.

- When **nations or leaders claim divine authority**, they act as the **Beast**.
- When **governments use violence, coercion, or fear to control people**, they reflect **Beast-like tendencies**.
- When **political power replaces trust in God**, it becomes a **false god that rivals the Lamb**.

N.T. Wright: The Beast's Ongoing Presence in History

"Every generation must be aware that **the beast is not just Rome—it is any empire, any system of power that claims absolute allegiance** and denies the sovereignty of Christ." (*Revelation for Everyone*, p. 121)

2. The Second Beast: False Religion and Ideological Manipulation (Revelation 13:11-18)

John then sees a **second beast**, described as follows:

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“Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.” (Revelation 13:11, ESV)

A. The Old Testament Background of the Second Beast

The second beast is connected to **Deuteronomy 13**, where Moses warns of **false prophets** who lead people to worship other gods.

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet.” (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, ESV)

The **second beast functions as a false prophet**, deceiving people into worshiping the first beast.

B. The Symbolism of the Second Beast

- **"Rising out of the earth"** → Unlike the first beast, this one **operates more subtly**, influencing through deception rather than outright force.
- **"Two horns like a lamb"** → It appears **gentle, even Christ-like**, but it is a **counterfeit of the true Lamb** (Jesus).
- **"Speaks like a dragon"** → Despite its **harmless appearance**, its **message comes from Satan**—it is deception disguised as truth.

C. The Second Beast as a Symbol of False Religion

This **beast represents religious, ideological, or cultural systems** that:

- **Support the first beast (political power).**
- **Deceive people into worshiping false gods or the state itself.**
- **Use religious language to justify oppressive systems.**

In John's time, this beast likely represented:

- **The imperial cult in Rome**, where people were pressured to **worship the emperor**.
- **False prophets and religious leaders** who compromised with Rome for political gain.

David deSilva: The Second Beast as Religious Propaganda

“The second beast is the voice of religious and ideological deception, working to sustain the empire's power by persuading people to give their worship and allegiance to the first beast.” (Discovering Revelation, p. 229)

D. How the Second Beast Operates Today

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The second beast represents **any system that distorts truth to keep people loyal to worldly power instead of Christ:**

- **Religious leaders who endorse corrupt governments for power and wealth.**
- **False teachings that make faith about nationalism, prosperity, or fear rather than Christ.**
- **Cultural ideologies that pressure people to conform instead of following Jesus.**

Scot McKnight: The Beast's Strategy of Religious Manipulation

"The second beast shows us that the most dangerous lies are not blatant denials of God but subtle distortions that mix truth with deception—giving the empire religious legitimacy." (*Revelation: A Kingdom Vision*, p. 144)

Final Thought:

The two beasts—political power and false religion—still exist today. But the Lamb has already overcome, and His followers are called to faithful endurance, refusing to bow to the systems of the world.