Revelation 13: 1-5 (Part 3); "The Beast's Deceptive Authority", Sermon # 91 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on August 3rd, 2008, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

In my last 2 sermons to you from this book, we looked at 2 of the 3 triple descriptions of the Beast rising up out of the Sea which are given to us in the first 3 verses of Chapter 13. Each of these triple descriptions is important to identifying the Beast which would ravage the true Church during this 3rd time period of Church History; that being from 756 A.D. to the present. The first description was of his having seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns. The second description of him was his likeness to a leopard, a bear, and a lion. And the third description, which we will look at this afternoon, is that of his power, his throne, and his great authority. We have seen, thus far, that the Beast rising up out of the Sea is the political persecuting side of the authority of the Western Antichristian powers. This beast is related directly to the 10 kingdoms which emerged out of the fallen Roman Empire and eventually became countries, each having their own sovereignty and their own authority, but agreeing to yield to the ecclesiastical-political power of the Pope. And this unholy union of church and state then persecuted true Christians, those who held to Christ as the only true head of the Church. A true Christian's submission is to the Word of God, the Bible; placing it over all authority of church and state where those authorities deviate from the Word of God. We saw in the last sermon that this beast was as a leopard, swift and subtle to take over the authority of the throne of a country like the Franks, where Pepin asked the Pope this question. I quoted to you from Miller's History of the Church"— *"Whether the divine law did not permit a valiant and warlike people to dethrone an imbecile and indolent monarch, who was incapable of discharging any of the functions of royalty, and to substitute in his place one more worthy of rule, and one who had already rendered most important service to the state?"* The laconic answer of the pope — already in possession of all the secrets — was prompt and favorable. *"He who lawfully possesses the royal power may also lawfully assume the royal title."* In other words, the Pope was stating that not only was it lawful for Pepin to depose his own monarch, because he was doing much of the work of the government, but also that the Pope himself must be consulted about who should rule in that kingdom. It was all right to substitute his own authority for the legitimate and lawful authority. This is one of the major characteristics of Antichrist. To substitute a false spiritual or political authority for a true one. This incident of Pope Zachary and Pepin, we saw, set a precedent for how the Popes would view their own authority and how wherever anyone in political power would submit to Papal authority, they would together attempt to establish their own rule among the various nations of Europe and call it Christian in character.

We further saw that this beast was like a bear; massive and destructive and dangerous. We saw how Charlemagne, Pepin's son exercised his political rule in connection with the political and spiritual interests of the Papacy and committed crimes against neighboring nations in his wars against them. He waged these wars

in the name of the Christian religion and engaged many priests to do many forced baptisms; conversions at the end of his sword, and as such, he is a good example of the Beast being like a bear. Now today we have come to open up more of the concept of the Beast as a lion; that is, that the Beast has had in the past, and still does have today, a mouth like a lion. The mouth like the mouth of the lion is directly related to the Beast's power, his throne, and his great authority. We are told in verse 4 that the dragon gave the beast these three things. And the dragon is Satan himself. So what we want to establish this afternoon is this proposition; that-- it is Satan Himself who is attempting to speak powerfully through the words and the actions of the beast, during this whole time period of the 1260 years, so that he might force everyone he can to submission and worship of himself instead of the true and living God and His Son Jesus Christ. We want to look first at his power to make men marvel and follow after the beast. We want to look, 2nd, at his throne; his deceiving of men to accept his rule and to worship him as this beast. And then 3rd, we want to look at his great authority which he gives to the beast to speak great things and to blaspheme. Surely Christ will be glorified if we are able to stand against such wickedness even in our own day.

<u>1st of all - Satan's power to make men marvel and follow after the beast.</u>
(Verse 3)

"And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and the deadly wound was healed." "And all the world marveled and followed the beast." We saw before that the heads that are spoken of in this passage, the seven heads, are seven forms of government which the Pagan Roman government passed through in her history. The sixth of those heads was the emperors or the Caesars. This came to an end in 476 A.D. when the Roman Empire was overwhelmed by forces from the north and the power of the Emperor taken away. Then, as we come to the seventh head of Roman government, we found that it was a dukedom which was set up for a short time, in comparison to that of the 1260 years which follows. It existed until 727, and what followed was the establishment of the Papacy as the government not only over Rome, but also because of Rome's being the center of Christianity in the West, it came to have great political power and influence over the 10 kingdoms of what we now know as Europe. This one head of the Emperors, the one under which Christians were so viciously persecuted, was mortally wounded when Constantine came to power. But when the Papacy became established as a temporal power, the deadly wound was healed. And all the world, the Western world of the Roman Empire, the center of the advances of the gospel since the days of the Apostles, would be affected by it. "All the world marveled and followed after the Beast."

What does this mean? What was the world of that day marveling after? I believe that the world was marveling over the fact that here, combined in the Papacy, was the old Roman Pagan worship of Emperor, images and statues in a new garb of the saints and angels. There in the city of Rome, once again, was the splendor and the grandeur of ancient Rome being developed once again. There was the Pope ruling there, not only in spiritual splendor, but in political power once again; very much like

a Christian emperor. His empire is the 10 kingdoms of Europe, not directly in political power, but by a power much greater; the power of the Christian religion. His power over men's minds, their political loyalties and their spiritual hopes and dreams, were all combined in Him as the false head of the church. This new development was something to marvel after and follow after, from an earthly worldly point of view. A Christianity with pagan practices and a worship which is not by faith, but visible in images and sacraments. A Christianity which can use the sword to conquer and Papal edicts to redefine Biblical doctrine to suit the fallen tastes and sinful hearts of men. A Christianity which will force men to pay attention to its false doctrines and false claims upon whole societies and individual men. This was, and is, a Christianity which suppresses true Christian liberty to live according to personal conscience in relation to the truth of the Bible, and which substitutes a false authority in its place, to rule over men.

This is what was established in those days, and which in a modified form continues to this very day. This is nothing other than the power of the Devil which has been given to the Beast, that men might follow after the Beast and marvel after it. The Beast rising out of the Sea can be defined in terms of the vast social, political, and religious influence that the Papacy came to exert over the 10 developing kingdoms of Europe, whose people's highest loyalties were reserved for the cause of Christ which they thought was to be vested in the Pope and in the church. They were looking in a general religious sense for God's blessings. But those blessings could only come through their own religious works and efforts and a carnal kind of spiritual warfare. In the time period we are studying from 800 A.D. on to the Reformation, church and state were beginning to be welded together into an unholy alliance. Those of the 10 kingdoms which were loyal to Rome and considered themselves states which were submissive to the Pope's control should go out to conquer the kingdoms which would not submit to His control. They were to do this to further their religion. Thus many unholy wars and crusades were fought. To the masses of the people it was a matter of basic loyalties and their basic loyalties were to church and state. But the majority of the churches preached a gospel which the Popes defined and held them to. The priests preached a gospel of baptism and sacraments as the way of salvation. Their gospel was not Christ conquering the hearts of people through the preached Word of God. It was not the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It was the gospel of a works-righteousness that began by obeying the teachings of the Popes which were added to, generation by generation. It was the Pope's orders that were being obeyed by many of the heads of these 10 kingdoms, and often many innocent people died in the wars instigated by the Papal power. People were willing to worship God and Christ in accordance with the edicts of the Popes who worked hard to influence the laws and governments of those nations in the name of Christ.

The Papacy still works hard to do this same thing today; to convince all the world that this view of Christianity is the only true one, as it relates to both church and state. In their view, when the Pope is speaking, He is speaking infallibly to

influence and affect not only the decisions of individual Roman Catholics, but He is speaking to influence the decisions of kings, and governments of the nations, that they would accept what he and other Popes have put forward as true Christian ideas and principles. Their hope is to implement these false ideas and principles into the laws and policies of many nations so that men might think that they are promoting good things for mankind. This is the bane of the progress of all true Christianity. Why? Because power belongs unto God and unto our Christ. Not unto the Pope and all the governments and their laws that he influences. It is the Devil's scheme which is behind the Pope. He gives his power to the Beast. Christ does not receive glory from the adoration of Popes and the paganization of His worship. Christ does not receive glory when people in political authority use the Christian religion to further their own schemes for personal power, and glory, and riches. And what is even worse, when the Beast is followed, the gospel becomes very political and social in its orientation rather than truly spiritual. People marvel over the beast because the Pope's agenda has always been man-centered. They truly believe that great things and good things come from a sacramental religion which can be promoted by the various states and nations of the world. But no one is ever saved from their sins in this way. Individuals and governments are never made morally strong by this false system; this beast coming out of the sea. Why? Because it is Jesus Christ and His grace which changes hearts which is being ignored.

2ndly- Let's look at Satan's giving the beast his throne; his deceiving of men to accept his rule and to worship him as this beast. (Verse 4)

"So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast?" 'Who can wage war with him?" The question that immediately should come to our minds as we read this verse is this. Why would professed Christians worship Satan who was giving his authority to beast? And the answer is that Satan through this strategy of playing upon men's ignorance of the Bible has deceived multitudes of people to believe a lie about how God is to be worshipped. God is not a God to be worshiped by use of images, and through means of prayer to the departed saints and the Virgin Mary as other mediators besides Christ who can give personal help in time of trouble to individuals and nations. God is not a God who is to be worshiped according to the doctrines made up by Popes. But those who are deceived by these things think that there is no one comparable to the beast; that theirs is the best religious system among all in the world because it has political influence and the strength of many countries and their military might to stand behind it. These words are meant to apply to the truth of the Antichristian beast during the whole of the 1260 days prophecy. And if we were to take the time to trace the history of this through every generation since the rise of this Antichristian power, we would see that it has been most literally fulfilled. This is why the beast is worshiped. It is not because professed Christians who are a part of this Roman Catholic system want to directly worship the Devil. They have been deceived into worshiping him through their accepting the false teaching of the Popes in regard to how God is to be worshiped. When images are worshiped, the second

commandment is broken. When Mary and the saints are worshiped and prayed to, then God is blasphemed. When the Pope stands on the balcony to the adulation of multitudes who have gathered in Vatican square, the multitudes believe that the blessings of God are coming to them because of the Vicar of Christ who is ministering blessing to them. They do not realize that the Devil Himself is behind these deceptions giving his power to them. They feel strong when they have their crucifix and their beads in their hands. They believe that they are really praying when looking at the image of Mary or the saints or Jesus. They fail to recognize that God is against all these things, that Christ is risen from the dead as the only Mediator between God and men, and that success in battle is not to those who have the right saint on their side. But a comparison is made between what the beast can give and what simple Biblical Protestant worship brings to a person, and the Roman Catholic thinks that He has more. He has more saints on his side, more mediators to hear his prayers, more substance to his sacraments, more merit in his works than any Protestant heretic. This is something that will only change if saving grace comes to the heart of a Roman Catholic. They must hear the simple declaration that sacramental religion will not save. They must hear that the doctrine of Popes, if believed in, will not only not save, but it will damn; and it is delusive to believe in those lies. I like what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11: 1-3. "Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly--and indeed you do bear with me." "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy." "for I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ." There is, my brethren, a purity and simplicity that comes from simply reading and believing the Bible and listening to the pure words of the Bible over and over again. It leads to a pure and simple worship and to clarity concerning what are our duties and responsibilities are, as a Christian. This, the Popish doctrine cannot bring, and the beast will only warp and twist the gospel and the word of God, deceiving some of them into thinking that if they kill you who are being faithful to God in your worship and witness, they are offering service to God. I will have examples of this to give you from church history in the sermons to come.

3rd- we want to look at Satan's great authority which he gives to the beast to speak great things and to blaspheme. (Verse 4b and 5)

"Who is like the beast?" "Who is able to make war with the beast?" "And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months." Who is able to make war with the beast? Our Lord Jesus Christ shall and He will overcome the beast in Revelation chapter 19. But until that time, the time of the end of the 1260 years, true Christians will continue to be disturbed by men who profess to be Christian, living their lives according to a different rule than the Word of God. Turn with me to Daniel 11 for a moment as we close. Many men who have exposited this text have thought to apply verses 36-39 to Antiochus Epiphanies, his persecution of the Jews and the distress he would bring

upon them. Certainly it would apply to them in that sense. But we need to see that Antiochus was a type of the greater beast that would come in the New Testament times. These verses here speak of someone who goes beyond Antiochus in his spiritual wickedness. "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done." "He shall regard neither the god of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all." "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses (or forces); and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things." "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain." This is a good description of the Antichristian beast that we are studying. He shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods. And who is the God of gods? It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. I will attempt to open up this passage further in the next sermon which I bring to you in this series.