The Sea and the Land Beast  
Revelation 13

Psalm 20:7-8

Revelation 12 -14 are closely connected.  
Ch. 12 - Introduces the dragon and the beginning of the war.  
Ch. 13 - The Dragon recruits two beasts to lead the fight.  
Ch. 14 - The Lamb’s army in war against the dragon.

I. The Sea Beast v. 1-10  
A. This is a clear allusion to an OT prophecy as well -  
   1) Daniel 7:1-7, 15-19 -- Dan. 2  
   2) A lion - 1 head - Babylonian Empire  
   3) A Bear - 1 head - Medo-Persian Empire  
   4) A Leopard - 4 heads - Greek Empire - split into 4 parts  
   5) A Terrifying Beast - 1 head 10 horns - Roman Empire  
      1) A leader is directly connected with their gov’t.  
      2) This is the empire that John will discuss in Rev. 13.

B. The Beast of John in Rev. 13 is a composite of Daniel’s four beasts  
   1) A lion, bear, leopard, Terrifying beast - 7 heads - 10 horns  
   2) Roman was a composite of all of the preceding empires.  
   3) This beast is the Roman Empire.  
      1. This is clear from Daniel and from ch. 13  
      2. As well as ch. 17:3, 7 - “great harlot” rides the beast  
      3. The woman is identified as the city of Rome - 17:9, 18

4) The Beast represents Political / Imperial Power and Corruption  
   5) The sea probably symbolizes the masses of humanity of which evil empires rise.

C. Notice the text: v. 1-4  
   1) Blasphemous names on its heads - Beginning w/ Julius Ceasar  
      emperors took divine names. For example: Titles on coins -  
      Divus (Divine) Theos (God), Kurios (Lord) Domitian demanded  
      to be addressed as Dominus et Deus (Lord and God).
2) Mortal wound - likely refers to Nero (60s)
3) Healed mortal wound - likely refers to Domitian (90s)
4) Ultimately people in worshipping the Beast were worshipping the Dragon. v. 4
5) The beast was thought to be all powerful - you cannot fight against it. - Rome was so powerful that you did not go against them.

D. The Beast Makes War with the Church
   1. v. 5 - connects well with 12:16
   2. the worship of the true God was blasphemed
   3. They make war with the saints and have authority over the world. God allowed or granted them this power - v. 7 - Rom. 13
      God is sovereign. He allows evil empires to exist.
   4. Clear choice between Ceasar and Lord must be made - v. 8
   5. God had a plan of redemption from the beginning of time.
      1. Eph. 1:4-11, 1 Pet. 1:20
   6. v. 9 - All should hear this message.

E. Christians must not resort to physical revolt and conflict, but must trust in their Commander - v. 10
   1. Christians were not to resist the civil power, but were to fight with spiritual weapons. 2 Cor. 10:3-5, Eph. 6:10-18
   2. They were not to fear the Beast, but fear God.
   3. In loosely quoting Jer. 15:2, John is saying if you follow the world’s method of warfare, you will die by it. You are to accept captivity or the sword, and by so doing you clearly demonstrate patience of the saints and their faith in God to give victory.
   4. Christians must know what to expect so they will not be surprised into cowardice!
   5. The Roman leaders who persecuted Christians could not understand their obstinacy (stubbornness). Why would they be so determined to believe in Christ and face death, when all they had to do is pledge loyalty and worship the emperor?
   6. “Killing the opposition is the sea beast’s way of solving its problems. It is not ours. Ours is endurance and faith.” Eugene Peterson - p. 125
II. The Land Beast - v. 11-18

A. This beast comes from the earth. This beast appear gentle and docile. - “like a lamb”

B. It is an agent of the first beast. It makes the people worship the first beast.
   1. it performs great signs and wonders v. 13
   2. it deceives people v. 14
   3. It encourages people to make images of the Emperors
   4. it gives breathe o or life/form to the Beast - v. 15
   5. It makes a distinction of whose people are a part of the religion. v. 16-17 - this mark involves boycotts, segregation, economic persecution.

C. This land beast is the False Worship of Rome.
   1. System of paganism. -- pagan priesthood; Caesar cult / false worship
   2. He functions as an agent of the sea beast and the dragon in that he allows state worship and emperor worship.
   3. Paganism often involved signs and deception (tricks)
      1. Like Magicians in ancient Egypt
      2. Pagan religions had ornate shows to deceive
   4. Commune or Concilia - Official body in Asia minor set up to enforce the state religion and had as its duty to force all to do homage to the image of the emperor.
   5. It was an easy jump from idol worship to emperor worship.
   6. Pliny the younger’s letter - 112

Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. . . . . They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

7. There were also economic factors.
   a. It is opposite of God’s people who are sealed unto God. 7:3-4
   b. There were forms of such used. Papers affirming you had offered sacrifices and these authorized you to buy and sell. Connected with trade guilds and patriotism.
D. Some Quotes from Richard Bauckham

The coming of God's kingdom on earth must therefore be the replacement of Rome's pretended divine sovereignty by the true divine sovereignty of the One who sits on the heavenly throne. Significantly, this conflict of sovereignties is often portrayed in the rest of Revelation by references to worship. Rome's usurpation of divine rule is indicated by the universal worship of the beast (e.g. 13:4, 8, 12), whereas the coming of God's kingdom is indicated by universal worship of God (15:4; 19:5-6). In the conflict of sovereignties the lines are drawn between those who worship the beast and those who worship God. Every stage of God's victory - through chapters 7-19 - is accompanied by worship in heaven. The issue of true and false worship is fundamental to John's prophetic insight into the power-structures of the world his readers lived in. In the end, the book is about the incompatibility of the exclusive monotheistic worship portrayed in chapter 4 with every kind of idolatry - the political, social and economic idolatries from which more narrowly religious idolatry is inseparable.

The Theology of Revelation - Kindle Location 456-460

The message of the book is that if Christians are faithful to their calling to bear witness to the truth against the claims of the beast, they will provoke a conflict with the beast so critical as to be a struggle to the death.

The Theology of Revelation - Kindle Location 1174

E. The Mark of the Beast - v. 18

1. This has been one of the most controversial and debated concepts in Revelation. Very famous, but grossly misused.
2. Of course premillennialist don’t even try to figure it out now, they say that it is still a future man that will arise and we will know one day.
3. A popular and oft cited view is the interpretation that 666 like other numbers and words in Revelation is symbolic.
   a. There are three triads in the book -- Holy, Holy, Holy - 4:8 - “woe, woe, woe” - 8:13 - and now six,six,six. A Triad is used to indicate completeness and perfection.
      a. Thus the nature of the beast is a perfect imperfection.
b. 7 is the number for God - the beast tries to be God, but he falls woefully short.
c. The entire false worship system and all the efforts of the beast were doomed for failure.
d. No matter how much 6 might want to be 7 - it will always be six. He may look like a lamb, but he is not the LAMB.

4. Thoughts from Richard Oster Jr -
   a. Some early manuscript and Church father evidence that it could actually be 616 instead of 666.
   b. He suggests that the force of the word “ψηφιστάω” (psephizo) is to “calculate, add up” and John is referencing the ancient practice and custom of gematria. Where alphabet letters have a numeric equivalent and names have a total. See his blog posts his site:


   c. He suggests that it could be Nero Caesar if Hebrew is the assumed language. In Greek you would have to use the name Neron Caesar to get 666 or Nero Caesar for 616.

III. Summary Observations

A. Both of these beasts are continuous in their activity. They took the form of Rome and false pagan religion in John’s day, but they take other forms today. They are both counterfeits! They are both political, idolatrous and operate upon fear, deceit, coercion, and popularity.
   1. Imperial Power
   2. False Worship
   3. What agents (beasts) is Satan using today in his war against Christians?
B. How do you reconcile Romans 13 (Governments are an agent of God) with Revelation 13 (Governments are an agent of Satan)?

C. The systems of the world and false worship and religions of the world will always fail.

D. Like so much of the rest of Revelation. This chapter is saying - Whose side are you on? God gives it to us straight. In real terms Do we ever get to thinking God owes us something? v. 10

The Lamb’s Army and Harvest
“Voices of Victory”
Revelation 14

Rev. 14 is God’s answer to the war begun to be waged by the Dragon in ch. 12 and his two agents in fighting this war; the sea and land beasts of ch. 13.

Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6:15-17
“Do not fear, for those who are with use are more than those who are with them.”

Which mark is on your forehead?
13:16 - Mark of the Beast
14:1 (7:3) - Father’s Name written on their forehead
Mat. 6:24

“This enables us to conclude that everyone in the world today bears a mark in their foreheads. Christians have their Father’s name written in their foreheads, and everyone else bears the mark of the beast. . . It is figurative and defines whom we serve.” Lonnie Woodruff, p. 240
I. Voices of Praise v. 1-5

A. Mount Zion - This phrase is packed with meaning. Literally a the Temple mount of Jerusalem. Connected with David and the place of Worship. It is referred to as being a place that the Messiah would come unto and the place wherein the church will get it’s start (Isai. 2)

Heb. 12:22-24
In the NT it comes to represent the church, the fortress of God. The heavenly Jerusalem. God’s dwelling with men.

B. 144,000 - must be connected with the 144,000 back in ch. 7
1) These are the saved upon earth and redeemed in heaven.
2) These are the ones sealed unto God. God’s people. The church, the saints. Once again not literal, but symbolic for completeness and wholeness. 12 x 12 x 1000
3) This is the Messianic army here and in Ch. 7. They are described as also as innumerable multitude (7:9).
4) This is the Lamb and His army who stand ready to oppose the dragon and his two beasts.

C. These redeemed on earth are in close communion with God. Notice how you have the blending of heaven and earth here together. As we also learned back in ch. 4-5. There is a thin veil between the spiritual and physical world. These are the ones whom God uses in this war against the dragon. They are learning the song and only they can understand and know it.

1) See 1 Cor. 1:18

D. Notice five characteristics of God’s People
1) Redeemed - Purchased by the blood of Christ. Not sold to sin and the beast, but sold to God.
2) Pure - “not defiled themselves with women”- virgins (pure)
   i. idolatry is often connected with sexual immorality
   ii. 1 Samuel 21:4-5 - David and his fighting men
   iii. This likely involves the image of an army. Men fighting in Israel’s holy wars were not allowed to be engaged in sexual intercourse (Deut. 23:9-14, 1 Sam. 21:5, 2 Sam. 11:9-13)
3) Faithful
i. “who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.”

4) First-fruits to God
   i. In the OT the first of the harvest was to be dedicated to God. They were the best and finest. Lev. 23:9-14 This first sheaf was taken from the harvest and offered to God in sacrifice. These martyrs are the first fruits of the harvest depicted later in the chapter (14:14-16).
   ii. Jesus was the first-fruit of the resurrection. The first with the idea that more was to come.
   iii. These early saints were the first in the church, they were dedicated to the Lord, but many more will follow.

5) Honest and Blameless
   i. They do not tell lies. They hold to and keep the truth. There is no falsehood in their mouths.
   ii. They are blameless. This does not mean perfect, but implies that they are above reproach and strive to be the best we can.
   iii. Echoes - Zephaniah 3:13, Isaiah 53:7
   iv. Often today there is this idea that Christians can’t be perfect, so why try, just accept our sinfulness and give each other grace and mercy. This is a false teaching. (Rom. 6) -- we are to seek holiness and perfection.

E. These 144,000 - God’s people are the voice of praise.
   1) They praise God with their lives and voices. They do this both on earth and in heaven. They are loved and known by God.
   2) God is proud of them. He loves them and knows their deeds.

II. Voices of Warning v. 6-13

A. This section contains three warnings of impending judgements. This is like God saying to the people of the earth who are listening to the dragon here are some warnings because judgement is coming.

B. The First Angel -- “Fear God” v. 6-7
1) He is proclaiming the eternal gospel
   1) The gospel has both good news and bad news for the lost
   2) Judgement is apart of the gospel. It is retribution, God setting everything right.
2) In contrast to the message being heard in the world - which is fear Rome and the Emperor. This Angel says remember who you should fear! Worship the creator not the created!
3) Mat. 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

C. The Second Angel -- “Babylon has fallen” v. 8
   1) God prophesied that great Babylon lead by Nebuchadnezzar would fall at least 50 years before it did. Jer. 51:8, Is. 21:9
   2) So the demise of Babylon; the great city of Rome and the empire is foretold in prophetic past tense; indicating it is certain.
   3) Rome is the losing team!! The dragon and beasts will be defeated.

D. The Third Angel -- “Beast worshippers will be Punished” v. 9-11
   1) The people who have followed the beast have drunk into their influence. Wine was also connected to paganism and influence; intoxication. He is saying God’s wrath and vengeance will be poured out upon those who followed the beast.
   2) It is going to be an eternal punishment in hell.
   3) This is not sub-Christian or unlike Christ -- Christ taught this often and regularly. Mat. 25:46 - “And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

E. God’s Reassurance to His Faithful - v. 12-13
   1) This is the call for Christians to endure and to be faithful.
   2) Those who die - “in the Lord” are blessed. - Gal. 3:26-27
   3) “rest” - literally - ‘shall be refreshed.’ - not that they will not do work or service in heaven, but that they will be renewed and
restored. Able to rest from the discouragement, trials, and problems from the beast.

4) The deeds of the Christians will follow them.
   i. Proud of the services rendered
   ii. Proud of rejecting the world and the beasts.

F. God is saying, “Make a decision--Who’s side are you on?”
   1) This section is a warning primarily to Christians to persevere and remain faithful.
   2) To persevere means . .
      i. Remember salvation is conditioned upon being faithful.
      ii. If we do not fear God we will have to be afraid of God
      iii. There will one day be a day of reckoning.
   3) “It is not simply because Rome persecutes Christians that Christians must oppose Rome. Rather it is because Christians must dissociate themselves from the evil of the Roman system that they are likely to suffer persecution” Bauckham; Loc. 503

III. Voices of Judgment v. 14-20

A. This next section definitely describes the Lord’s judgements in typical symbolic language like as used elsewhere in the OT and NT. B. It seems this is a part of recapitulation in Revelation. This is a picture of the final judgment, but also can be seen as with-in time judgment on Rome (and other evil empires).

C. “So in 14:14-20 John depicts the outcome of history in two contrasting images = the positive `harvest of the earth' and the negative `vintage of the earth'.” Richard Bauckham - location 1235

D. This language is similar to Jesus’ descriptions.
   1) Jesus is depicted here like he is in the gospels as coming on the clouds of heaven.
   2) Mat. 24:30 (judgment on Jerusalem); Mat. 26:64
   3) Daniel 7:13-14 “son of man”

D. Jesus is described as the “Lord of Harvests” Mat. 9:38, Luke 10:2
   1) Parable of the Tares - Mat. 13:24-30, 37-43
E. This text is clearly saying that God is going to judge the ones who follow the beast. He is saying Rome and their entire religious system will fall. Ultimately all who oppose God will fall and be judged.

F. A difficult verse is the last - v. 20
   1) “And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia.”
   2) This verse cannot be taken literally. If like premillenialist what to assert this has to do with the battle of Armageddon. It would take the death of about 120 billion people to get this much blood. Literally you are saying blood was as high as 4 or 5 feet and almost 200 miles across
   3) Some say it is a reference to 4 - the number for world multiplied by itself x 1000 to indicate completeness.
   4) So the idea is that God’s judgment is complete and full.
   5) I think it is a graphic picture of God’s judgement, just like the lake of fire and many other images of judgment it is meant to convey the horrible nature of God’s wrath poured out upon sin.

Conclusion:
Voices of Praise
Voices of Warning
Voices of Judgment
We need to still hear these Voices:
We have a responsibility to be and announce Voices!
Revelation is overwhelmingly concerned with the truth of God. . . It reminds us that the church’s witness to the world is authentic only as primarily a witness to truth -- to the one true God and the truth of his righteousness and grace. In western societies today this witness to the truth does not confront a totalitarian ideology which claims sole truth and seeks to suppress the Gospel. Instead it faces a relativistic despair of the possibility of truth and even more, a consumerist neglect of the relevance of truth. The church's witness will be of value only if it knows truth worth dying for.

The alternative vision of the world which Revelation claims to be orientated to the truth is strongly theocentric.

In its conception of the church's prophetic witness as standing for the true God and his righteousness against the political and economic idolatries of Rome it is faithful to the prophetic tradition's conviction that the true worship of the true God is inseparable from justice and truth in all aspects of life. It is in the public, political world that Christians are to witness for the sake of God's kingdom.