

Lesson 17
Revelation 13
The Unholy Trio

Memory verse: "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour." (John 12:26 NKJV)

In the ancient Babylonian legend of creation, a totally pagan legend, a story that went like this. The Babylonians believed that once there was a primeval sea monster name Tiamut. Tiamut was the bad personality. The good guy was an individual named Marduke and Marduke was a very powerful individual who went into battle with Tiamut, the sea dragon. And by the way, Marduke prevailed and put Tiamut into a coma. Didn't kill him. Just put him in a coma. And the Babylonians taught that history would end when Tiamut came out of the coma and started the battle all over again with Marduke.

In the Old Testament, it's apparent that Isaiah even refers to this legend. In Isaiah 27:1, it says, "In that day," and that's the day of the Lord, the final day of history, "In that day, the Lord with his great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan, the crooked serpent, and shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." In other words, Isaiah talks to them on their own terms. He said, you know that final battle that you believe is going to happen? I just want you to know that the Lord is going to win that.

In Isaiah 51:9 it says, "Was it not thou that hath cut Raba and wounded the sea monster?" In other words in the very beginning God put a blow on Satan, limiting his power. And in the end, says Isaiah, He'll destroy him altogether.

The point in the Babylonian legend was that in the end they hoped God would defeat Antigod and Isaiah says that, in fact, is exactly what will happen.

Again, not only do we see such a God and Antigod conflict in Babylonian legend but we even see something of it in history. There have been individuals in history who are perfect prototypes for the final Antichrist. One of them was Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a Greek ruler in the land of Israel in around 168 B.C., 168 or so years before Christ. His name was Antiochus. He called himself Epiphanes, which means the great one. The people called him Epimines, which means the maniac.

But Antiochus is a very interesting man. In fact, Daniel speaks of him almost synonymously with Antichrist. Daniel talks about a little horn and sometimes he means the Antichrist and sometimes he means Antiochus and you have to be careful in interpreting Daniel to know which is which because Antiochus is such a vivid picture, he wants Antiochus to be a sort of a signpost along the path to verify that this kind of an individual could really exist. And so he speaks about Antiochus and Antichrist in the future. And when Antiochus came, the people could take note of one who would be similar.

He was the king of Syria. He resolved to eliminate Judaism from the Earth. He, like so many others, was going to wipe out all the Jews so that there wouldn't be any Messiah. He was Satan's pawn. He made it a crime, for example, to circumcise a child. He made it a crime to own a copy of the law, both of them punishable by death. He went into the Temple Court, the temple to the living God, and erected an altar to Zeus. He slaughtered a pig on the altar and then forced the pork down the throats of the priests. He turned the temple chambers into a prostitution brothel and he did everything he could to wipe out and exterminate Israel. It was a deliberate, cold-blooded attempt to destroy Israel and it was only because God's grace was given unto a family under the leadership of a man named Judas Maccabeus that the Maccabean revolution happened before the time of Christ and overthrew the power of this individual.

But whether you're talking about legend or history or all of the false Christs that have come and gone in human history, it ultimately will consummate in this one incredible individual that you meet in the Revelation 13.

Things to learn: 1) the Anti Christ 2) the False Christ 3) The Unholy Trio

Discussion questions:

1) What do we know about "the beast out of the sea" Revelation chapter 13?

Q2. In the same chapter, is the "beast out of the earth" same as that "of the sea"? Explain.

Q3 In chapter 13, identify the "Unholy Trio" and how would they function during the Tribulation as a group?