

## Study 7 - Revelation 13 and 14

# The Devil's Decoys

Revelation 13 and 14 is a passage full of parallels. The devil has set a trap for an unsuspecting world. Remember, the Christians John has addressed his letter to live under the persecution of the Roman Empire. If they don't worship the Emperor and sacrifice before idols, they are considered traitors to the Empire, and put to death.

John's vision reveals the reality. Satan, who has already been defeated in heaven by the "blood of the lamb," is the power behind the Roman government and the false religion of Emperor worship. The warning is simple - bow down and worship the emperor and you're worshipping the devil himself.

As we will see, the passage sets out a number of comparisons between "true and false religion." True religion is simply this - "Fear **God** and give **Him** the glory ..." False religion is to fear and worship anyone else - like Caesar. But when that's a decision that could cost you your life, the stakes are high! In plain language, John's message is simple ... we need to patiently endure, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.

That's what the devil wants to stop. The beasts are designed to lead people away from this "true worship" to the worship of the Roman Emperor - man, rather than God. The beasts are the devil's "decoy" designed to lead the world into a deadly trap, so John's readers are to beware!

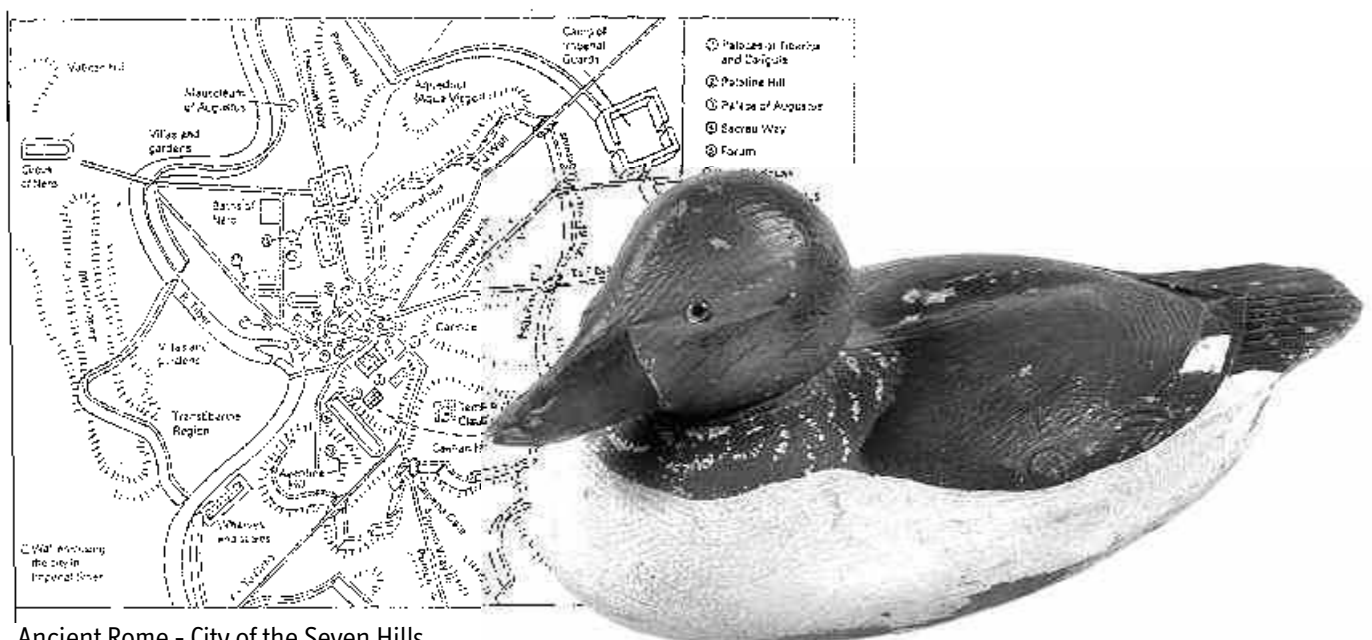
### Who are the Beasts?

1. Compare the description of the beast in 13:1 with the description of Satan, the Dragon, in 12:3. What does this similarity show us?

2. John says the beast looked like a "leopard ... a bear ... and a lion" (v2). Compare this description with Daniel's vision in Daniel 7: 17-18. In general terms, what do the animals in Daniel's vision represent?

Does this help us understand the meaning of this "combined" animal in Revelation?

3. Revelation 17:9 explains the identity of the first beast. Look at the map of Ancient Rome. In simple terms, what does the beast stand for?



Ancient Rome - City of the Seven Hills

4. Look at 13:4-9. How does our definition of the beast help us make sense of these verses?

5. Revelation 19:20 speaks of the destruction of the two beasts. Look at the description and title of the SECOND BEAST given there. What does his title indicate?

It has been suggested that the "second beast" represents the false religion of Roman Emperor worship... the second beast represents the "religion" that forces people to bow down to Caesar as if he was God. Roman religion was impressive, and powerful... but ultimately, is doing the work of the Devil.

6. Perhaps these two beasts have popped their heads up time and time again through history. Why? Can you think of any more recent examples of the beasts at work?

#### The Devil's Imitation

7. The Devil presents the world with a dangerous imitation of true religion. List the "fake" alongside the reality below. Compare the following:

13:3	with 5:6, 13:8
13:11	with 14:1
13:16	with 14:1
13:8	with 14:7

8. Who exactly is it that worships the beast? Compare 13:8 with 6:10 and 8:13.

9. In John's time worshipping the beast meant worshipping idols and statues of the Emperor. What would worshipping the beast involve today?

10. What does the future hold for those who worship the things of this world? What is the contrast between 14:11 and 14:12.

11. The words "This calls for ..." are used three times in the passage. What exactly is called for? What does this mean to us?

#### Think About it

Does the fact that God is in control mean things won't ever go wrong for us in this world? (See 13:7, 9-10)

What attitude should we have when we face suffering and persecution?

What do we need to be wary of as 21st Century Christians?