

Revelation 13 Commentary

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Revelation 13:1

In the previous chapter, we saw a dragon with seven heads and ten horns who attempted to intercept the promised child and subsequently persecuted the woman who gave birth to the child. We saw numerous indicators which pointed to the Jewish context of that chapter and its events, with the woman finally receiving supernatural assistance to reach a place of protection prepared by God (Rev. 12:6+, 14+). Since the dragon could not destroy the woman, he became enraged and “went off to make war with the rest of her offspring” (see commentary on [Revelation 12:17](#)).¹ Now, the scene shifts to describe a beast who also has seven heads and ten horns, who is closely identified with the dragon. He and another beast institute a series of satanically-empowered deceptions which bring the whole world under the sway of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and ultimately Satan. This is the rise of the [Antichrist](#),² whose activities are key to [The 70th Week of Daniel](#). By now, the [Restrainer](#) has been taken out of the way resulting in the departure of the Church in the [Rapture](#). Thus, believers today will not see the rise of the [Beast](#) and the events of this chapter, for they are to watch for the [imminent](#) return of Christ, not the rise of [Antichrist](#). Even so, multitudes will come to faith during this period of intense persecution as the message of the various witnesses which God has specially equipped for the time of the end goes forth (Rev. 7:4-8+; Rev 11:3-12+; Rev 14:6+).³ Prior to studying this chapter, we recommend the study of related topics: [The Beast](#); [Nero](#); and [Beasts, Heads, and Horns](#).

I stood on the sand of the sea

The [NU](#) text has *he stood*, that is, the dragon of the previous chapter.

Some manuscripts read, “he stood,” the change being effected by the dropping of one letter *nu* from the end of the verb *estathē*. If the letter is properly dropped, it indicates that the dragon himself stood upon the sand of the sea. If the letter is added, it means that John stood upon the sand of the sea. . . inasmuch as it is more likely that a letter be dropped than a letter added to the text, some scholars continue to feel that the Authorized Version is correct that John stood upon the sand of the sea.⁴

Hengstenberg remarks, “One cannot decide on *external* grounds between the two [textual] readings.” Authorities are divided. But a careful study of the context shews [*sic*] conclusively that it is the Seer, and not the dragon that “stood upon the sand of the sea.” The apocalyptic prophet always takes his place or stand as a point of observation in keeping with the subject at hand. Thus heaven (Rev. 4:1+); the sand of the sea (Rev. 13:1+); the wilderness (Rev. 17:1+); and a high mountain (Rev. 21:10+), are respective points of view from which he can contemplate the various panoramic visions as they pass before his gaze.⁵

If it is the dragon which stands on the sand, rather than John, then it would intimate his summons of the Beast portrayed next: “The dragon, cast out of Heaven after his final defeat at the hands of Michael and his forces, comes to the earth looking for an instrument through whom he can carry on his warfare against his hated Creator and God.”⁶ Whether it is John or the dragon, the dragon is clearly the malevolent power behind the rise of the Beast: “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders” (2Th. 2:7+). Although elsewhere sand denotes an innumerable company, “The sand of the sea does not mean the seashore in Scriptural language. The sand, always represents an innumerable company, as will be easily seen by a comparison of the passages from the time when God promised Abraham seed as the sand of the sea in multitude. The sea is clearly shown as a symbol of the restless nations of the earth. Further in this prophecy we will see that the ‘many waters’ are ‘peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues’ (Rev. 17:15+).”⁷ Here, it merely describes the position of John on the shore from where he observed the beast’s rise from the water.

I saw a beast

John sees two beasts in this chapter. The first **beast** is closely identified with the dragon—having seven heads and ten horns. He is also the beast whose deadly wound was healed. Moreover, he is the object of worship and aided in this role by the second beast (Rev. 13:11⁺). These characteristics identify the first beast as [Antichrist](#), also called the *Beast*. The second beast which appears later is known as the [False Prophet](#) (Rev. 16:13⁺; Rev 19:20⁺; Rev 20:10⁺). As we mention in our discussion of why [Nero](#) cannot be the Antichrist, the early church which lived much nearer to the time of Nero and the Apostle John, did not see Nero as the Beast. [Irenaeus](#) identifies the first of St John's Wild Beasts with St Paul's **Man of Sin**. See commentary on [Revelation 13:4](#). As we discuss in [Beasts, Heads, and Horns](#), the symbolism of the revelation given to both Daniel and John concerning this time of the end often blurs the distinction between an *individual* and the *government* which he leads:

There can be no kingdom without a king, and no empire without an emperor; neither can there be a king in fact without a kingdom. We cannot consistently speak of imperial power and dominion apart from a personal head which represents and embodies that power.⁸

But it is very clear from what follows in Rev. 13⁺ that there is something more than the Empire here in view. In Rev. 13:3-8⁺ it is a person that is before us. We are satisfied that this same person is also described, symbolically, in the opening verses. As is frequently the case in the prophetic scriptures, the king and his kingdom are here inseparably united. Rev. 13:1⁺, 2⁺ portrays both the Empire and its last Emperor.⁹

Is the beast out of the sea a man or an empire? The answer is both. (a) The beast is a man because his number is that of a man (Rev. 13:18⁺). Also the use of the masculine pronoun $\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ [auton] (Rev. 13:8⁺) to refer to the neuter $\theta\eta\pi\iota\omicron\nu$ [thērion] (Rev. 13:1-2⁺, 4⁺) indicates that he is a human being. In addition, parallels between the beast and the Lamb indicate that he is a person: both have followers on whose foreheads are inscribed their names (Rev. 13:16-17⁺; 14:1⁺), both are conquerors (Rev. 5:5⁺; 13:7⁺), and both receive worship (Rev. 5:8⁺; 13:4⁺). (b) At the same time the beast is an empire over which the man reigns. This fact is demonstrated by the symbolism of the beasts of Daniel 7.¹⁰

See [The Beast](#). See [#16 - Beast](#).

rising up

[ὑψαίνων](#) [Anabainon], present tense participle, *presently arising*. John saw the beast as he was rising.

out of the sea

Daniel's [four beasts](#) also were seen rising from the sea (Dan. 7:2-3). The Beast's ascension from the sea speaks of the origin of his kingdom from the Gentile nations. "Stretch out Your hand from above; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, From the hand of foreigners [lit. *strange children*]" (Ps. 144:7). This beast shares characteristics of the first three of Daniel's beasts (all Gentile kingdoms). See commentary on [Revelation 13:2](#). Leviathan, the twisted serpent, representative of both Satan and the Beast, is in the sea (Isa. 27:1; Ps. 74:13). The Beast is also said to ascend out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7⁺, 17:8⁺). His ascent out of the bottomless pit speaks of his revival from the dead following his fatal wound. See [Supernatural Origin?](#) This **beast** arises from the sea, but the second **beast** arises from the *earth* or *land* (Rev. 13:11⁺). This has caused some to expect the second **beast**, the False Prophet, to be Jewish in origin. See commentary on [Revelation 12:11](#).

These contrasting terms are indicative of the origin of the two beasts. The sea may symbolize the Gentiles (Rev. 17:15⁺; cf. Dan. 7:2-3) and if this is the case here, the opposite term, the earth, symbolizes the Jews. There is precedence for the Gentile origin of Antichrist in the Old Testament allusions, and the Jewish identification may be strengthened if here "the earth" has technical sense of "the land" [of Israel] as it sometimes may in Revelation (Rev. 11:18⁺; cf. Dan. 8:9).¹¹

The land/sea distinction between Gentiles and Jews is seen in the [parables](#) of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price:

Christ's inheritance is not only the Church which is the pearl of great price for which He sold all that He had, but it also includes Israel which is the treasure hidden in the field and which He purchased with His own blood and which He hid again.¹²

The treasure [Mt. 13:45-46] represents the Jews, so it is natural that the pearl [Mat. 13:45-46] would represent the Gentiles. Furthermore, the pearl comes from the sea, and the sea symbolizes the Gentile world (Dan. 7:2-3; Rev. 17:1⁺, Rev 17:15⁺). Finally, the pearl comes from the oyster, which itself was unclean in the Law of Moses but made clean by the Law of Messiah.¹³

Some suggest that the sea indicates his rise from the abyss (Rev. 11:7⁺; 17:8⁺).¹⁴

seven heads

Like the dragon (Rev. 12:3⁺), the Beast has **seven heads**. The heads represent [seven world kingdoms](#) which culminate in the Beast

as the seventh which had “not yet come” in John’s day (Rev. 17:10⁺). This is not a matter of conjecture for this same Beast with seven heads is ridden upon by the [Harlot](#), the “mother of harlots and abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:3⁺). We are told that the **seven heads** are “seven mountains on which the woman sits. They are seven kings” (Rev. 17:9-10⁺).¹⁵ One of the heads of the Beast receives a deadly wound which is healed (Rev. 13:3⁺). This revived head is considered as “the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition” (Rev. 17:11⁺). The terminology describing the Beast indicates he is both a kingdom *and* its representative leader—the king. In Daniel’s night vision, he sees [four beasts](#) which, when taken together, have seven heads:

That we have here in Rev. 13:1⁺, 2⁺ a composite kingdom is clear from the **‘seven heads.’** Now note that in Dan. 7 the first, second and fourth kingdoms are not said to have more than one head, but the third has ‘four heads’ (Dan. 7:6). Thus the beasts of Dan. 7 have, three of them one head each, and the third four heads, or seven in all; which tallies perfectly with Rev. 13:1⁺. . . . the four kingdoms of Dan. 7 are to be restored, and play their final parts immediately before the Millennium. If the reader will turn to Dan. 2, which is parallel with Dan. 7 - the ‘image in its four parts’ (the head, the breast and arms, the belly and thighs, the legs and feet) corresponding with the four beasts - it will be found that when we come to Dan. 2:45, which speaks of Christ (under the figure of ‘the Stone cut out of the mount without hands’ returning to earth to destroy the forces of evil, and then set up His kingdom, we discover that the Stone ‘brake in pieces the iron (Rome), the brass (Greece), the clay (apostate Israel), the silver (Medo-Persia), and the gold (Babylon).’ What we desire the reader to note particularly is that the Stone strikes not only the iron, but the brass, clay, silver, and gold; in fact, Dan. 2:35 tells us, expressly, they shall be ‘broken to pieces together!’ If, then, they are destroyed together, they must all be on the scene at the time of Christ’s return to earth to inaugurate His millennial reign, and if so, each of them must have been revived and restored!!¹⁶

Although it is true that the four beasts Daniel sees are represented in this beast with seven heads, it is unlikely that the seven heads on the beast correspond exactly with the seven heads of Daniel’s four beasts. For a discussion of the problems involved, see [Daniel saw Seven Heads](#). See [#4 - Seven Heads/Kings](#).

ten horns

Like the dragon (Rev. 12:3⁺), the beast has **ten horns**. The **ten horns** are identified for us: “The **ten horns** which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they will receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.” (Rev. 17:12-13⁺). These are the **ten horns** which Daniel saw upon the fourth [terrible beast](#) in his night vision (Da 7:7, 20) which are also said to be ten kings (Dan. 7:24). The Beast ridden by the Harlot also has ten horns (Rev. 17:3⁺). “And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose” (Rev. 17:16⁺-17:17^a) Initially, the beast supports the Harlot and she rides upon, or controls, him. Eventually the ten kings who are allied with the Beast will turn on the Harlot, throw her off and destroy her. See [#22 - Ten Horns/Kings](#). See [The Great Harlot](#). See commentary on [Revelation 17:16](#).

on his horns, ten crowns

Unlike the dragon which wears crowns on its heads (Rev. 12:3⁺), the beast’s crowns are on its horns. The dragon’s crowns are associated with historical *kingdoms* of which this beast is one. The beast has crowns on each of his ten horns, indicating the rule of the ten contemporaneous kings associated with the last head or kingdom. These ten horns are the same as those of the last (terrible beast) of Daniel’s four beasts (Dan. 7:7). See [#22 - Ten Horns/Kings](#). See [Crowns](#).

a blasphemous name

[νόμα βλασφημίας](#) [Onoma blasphēmias], *a name blasphemous*. The [MT](#) and NU texts have, [νόματα βλασφημίας](#) [onomata blasphēmias], *names blasphemous*. The blasphemous name or names are an indication of his character. Daniel described this individual who “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” (Dan. 11:36).¹⁷ He is also noted for his mouth speaking great things against God (Rev 13:5⁺).

Revelation 13:2

like a leopard . . . bear . . . lion

The characteristics of the first three beasts in Daniel’s night vision contribute to this beast of the end (Da 7:4-6).¹⁸ The fourth [terrible beast](#) seen by Daniel is not mentioned because this [Beast](#) is the embodiment of that terrible beast at the time of the end.

It is a composite of the four beasts of Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7) and must be related to them. Daniel wrote from the standpoint of the Jewish people, whose fate under the Gentile empires to come would effect the First Coming of Messiah. Revelation, written under

the fourth and last of these empires, presumably after the Jewish commonwealth had been crushed, takes this picture of Gentile world power from Daniel and combines these four empires onto the picture of the future world-state. The magnificence of Babylon, the vastness of Medo-Persia, the dominating culture of Greek Macedonia, and the organizing might of Rome are united in one state that will aspire to world domination and that will achieve it.¹⁹

The order in which the attributes are listed, leopard then bear then lion, are reversed from what Daniel saw. This reflects John's different vantage point. Daniel, living in the days of the lion beast (Babylon), looked forward in time to see the rise of the bear (Medo-Persia), and then the leopard (Greece). John, writing in the time of the first phase of the terrible beast (Rome), looked backward in time to see them in reverse order. See [#8 - Four Beasts/Kings](#). The mention of the leopard, bear, and lion in connection with the Beast arising from the sea is in concert with what Daniel was shown concerning the *continuation* of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece and their contribution to the final form of world government. "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time" (Dan. 7:12). When the stone representing the Messianic kingdom strikes the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, all the metals of the image are demolished together: "the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together" (Dan. 2:35); "it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold" (Dan. 2:45). Thus, attributes of all the kingdoms are found in this last beast. Many understand this final kingdom to be a "revived Rome." This view is based on continuity expressed in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The ten toes of the image are on its *feet* which are partly of *iron* which symbolizes Rome:

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:41-44)

Adding to this identification is the fact that Daniel is only shown [four beasts](#) prior to the kingdom being given to the Son of Man (Dan. 7:11-14). In some sense, this last kingdom of the end must be a continuation of Rome.

The final world empire will be in some sense a revival of the Roman Empire (the iron legs and ten toes of the statue in Daniel 2), but will far exceed it both in power and extent. It will be much more than a European confederacy; it will cover the entire world.²⁰

It is also clear that all the previous kingdoms contribute to its characteristics. Bullinger notes that when John is told "one [kingdom] is" (Rev. 17:10+), it is Rome which is in view—the next kingdom "has not yet come." He wonders how Rome can be both.²¹ Yet the continuity between Rome of John's day and the form of kingdom represented by the rise of the Beast is strongly inferred by the continuance of Daniel's fourth beast until the time of the end, when it is predicted "to devour the whole earth" (Dan. 7:23). Moreover, in the famous prophecy of [Daniel's seventy weeks](#), Daniel was told that the "people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan. 9:26). This prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 by Rome. Thus, the prince to come has a Roman origin. These passages argue for some form of continuity between Rome and the initial beast kingdom of the end. This should not be overemphasized since attributes of the other three beasts are also found in it. As we progress in this chapter, we will see God sovereignly grant permission for this beastly empire to attain authority by way of empowerment from the dragon. Hosea was shown these beasts and how they would be used to tear Israel to cause her to turn back to God:

When they had pasture, they were filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgot Me. So I will be to them like a **lion**; like a **leopard** by the road I will lurk; I will meet them like a **bear** deprived of *her cubs*; I will tear open their rib cage, and there I will devour them like a lion. **The wild beast shall tear them.** O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help *is* from Me. I will be your King; where *is any other*, that he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? I gave you a king in My anger, and took *him* away in My wrath. (Hos. 13:6-11) [emphasis added]

The lion, bear, leopard, and wild beast . . . correspond to the world empires among which Israel is to be scattered and persecuted (Dan. 7) during the time that she is in Dispersion until she will be regathered by her covenant-keeping LORD (Eze. 37:1-28; Mat. 24:31; Rom. 11:26).²²

the dragon gave him his power

Paul told the church at Thessalonica that the coming of the Beast would be according to the working ([ἐνεργεῖαν](#) [energeian]) of Satan (2Th. 2:9+). The Beast will be *energized* by Satan, which speaks of empowerment by a supernatural being.²³ "In him shall dwell all the fulness of the Devil bodily."²⁴

He will be Satan's parody of the God-Man. He will be an incarnation of the Devil. The world today is talking of and looking for the

Super-man. This is exactly what the Antichrist will be. He will be the Serpent's masterpiece. . . . he will be the culmination and consummation of satanic craft and power. All the evil, malignity, cunning, and power of the Serpent will be embodied in this terrible monster.²⁵

We must not underestimate the connection between the dragon and the Beast. The relationship between the Beast and the dragon must be intimate, for the Beast is allowed to be the recipient of *all worship* (2Th. 2:4). This may indicate that worship toward the Beast finds its ultimate destination in the dragon by way of possession. See commentary on [Revelation 13:4](#).

his throne and great authority

The Beast obtains his **throne** and **authority** from the dragon. During the temptation, the dragon showed Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" and explained, "All this authority I will give You . . . for *this* has been delivered to me and I give it to whomever I wish" (Luke 4:6). Evidently, the Beast accepts an offer similar to that which Jesus refused. "Will not Antichrist's kingdom be the very one which Satan offered in vain to Christ? namely, 'all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them' (Mt. 4:8)."²⁶ Although Scripture does not say, we can infer that the Beast, probably in some private fashion, ultimately gives *his* worship to the dragon. The only alternative would be that Satan so completely indwells the Beast that the result is their near unity. The close association of the Beast with the dragon and Babylon is seen in a passage from Isaiah which begins as a proverb against the king of *Babylon*, but contains elements which go far beyond any mortal man to identify the power behind the king—Satan:

Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon . . . How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, *and* consider you, *saying*: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?' (Isa. 14:4, 12-16)

The shaking of the earth and kingdoms refers to the activities of the ultimate *king of Babylon*, the Beast and his close unity and empowerment with Satan, the dragon. The fifth bowl of God's wrath is poured out "on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom" (Rev. 16:10⁺).

Revelation 13:3

one of his heads

The head which is wounded is the seventh head:

Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. They are seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition." (Rev. 17:10-11⁺)²⁷

The person of the [Beast](#) is the king of the seventh empire (the restored Roman empire equated with Daniel's fourth beast). When he is personally killed, as head of the seventh empire, the empire also meets its demise. Some have taken the wounding of his head and his subsequent revival as describing the original Rome which disintegrated later to be revived.²⁸ This view does not fit the scenario because this individual did not rule at the time of John (the initial phase of Rome). Taking the wound and revival as pertaining to the disintegration of Rome after John's day and its subsequent revival at the time of the end—separated by at least 1900 years—would hardly cause the wonderment of the world which is described here which is fundamental to the ultimate worship of this individual (Rev. 13:4⁺). It would seem that the same populace which sees the demise of his head must also witness his revival.

It is best to identify the restoration to life with an end-time satanically controlled king who will come to the world as a false Christ. This allows for the interchangeability of the head with the whole beast—i.e., the king with his kingdom—as Rev. 13:12⁺, 14⁺ required. It coincides with further details to come in Rev. 17:8⁺. It agrees with the final climactic appearance of the beast in history as a person, in concert with the vision's focus on the future. This means a future sequence that will be a close counterfeiting of Christ's death and resurrection.²⁹

as if it had been mortally wounded

[ς σφαγμένην](#) [hōs esphagmenēn], the identical phrase describes the "Lamb as though it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6⁺).³⁰ As *if* denotes the appearance after having been slain and brought back to life. There is no reason to take this as merely a "wound" here when it describes the "slain" Lamb there.³¹ There are some who struggle with the idea that the beast could *truly die* because this

would require a *literal resurrection* from the dead. Isn't this something that only God is capable of? Our very reluctance to consider this possibility provides evidence of the tremendous influence such an event would have upon those who witness such a miracle! Surely, if the False Prophet is able to give breath to the inanimate [image of the beast](#) (Rev. 13:15+), then couldn't God also allow Satan to exercise the necessary power to raise the dead? Scripture records that saints have raised the dead (1K. 17:21; 2K. 4:34; Acts 9:40; 20:10). If God empowered the saints to do so for His purposes, why couldn't He do the same in allowing Satan to deceive those who had pleasure in unrighteousness at the end (2Th. 2:11-12)? The terms used for the death and revival of the Beast seem to point unavoidably to a *bona fide* miracle, although that which it attests to (the deity of the Beast) is false (2Th. 2:9):

[The] view [that the beast is literally resurrected from the dead] has many more advocates down through history than some might realize. . . . It is interesting to realize that even Augustine believed like [Tim] LaHaye on this matter (The City of God, Book XX, Chapter 19). Another ancient one who held views similar . . . is Lactantius (early 300s) (Divine Institutes, Book VII, Chapter 17; Commentary on the Apocalypses, Chapter 13). More recent individuals include: Lewis Sperry Chafer, J. A. Seiss, Charles C. Ryrie, Leon Morris, Walter K. Price, Robert Govett and Robert Thomas.³²

his deadly wound was healed

[πληγ το θαν του α το θεραπευθη](#) [hē plēgē tou thanatou autou etherapeuthē], *the wound of the death of him was healed* Wound is [πληγ](#) [plēgē], which often denotes a wound "as the result of a blow,"³³ although it can also denote a figurative blow of misfortune. The same word describes the plagues with which the two witnesses strike the earth (Rev. 11:6+). Great emphasis is placed upon his death and revival, indicating its importance in the events which transpire at the end. It is the primary motivator for his worship (Rev. 13:12+, Rev 13:14+; Rev 17:11+). "Man ignores the force of Jesus' resurrection, but will choose to be fooled by the Beast's recovery. Why? Jesus demands righteousness; the Beast will indulge sin."³⁴ See [Supernatural Origin?](#) Zechariah relates the payment of thirty pieces of silver for the value of Messiah at His First Coming when he was betrayed by Judas (Mat. 26:15; 27:3). The passage then describes a "foolish . . . worthless shepherd" who will specialize in consuming the sheep. He is said to exhibit wounds affecting his arm and right eye:

I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. The LORD said to me, "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs. Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! **A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered and his right eye will be blind.**" (Zec. 11:12-17) [emphasis added]

If this speaks of [Antichrist](#), perhaps, like the resurrected Christ who retained the identifying marks of His death, so too the revived Beast will retain the marks of wounds which caused his death. They will serve to authenticate his identity as the leader who was previously slain.³⁵ [Preterist interpreters](#) believe the death and revival mentioned by John is a veiled reference to the [Nero](#) revival myth, but this seems unlikely for it is a pagan notion without factual basis.³⁶ The revival which John records here is *real, fantastic, and miraculous* because it *results in* global worship of the Beast. Here again, we encounter deficiencies with the [Preterist Interpretation](#). If [Nero](#) is the Beast, then any worship he may have received was *prior* to his demise by suicide. He *never rose from the dead* as described here. The worship which is attributed to the Beast results from his prior miraculous restoration. See [Revival Myth](#). See [Nero](#).

Revelation 13:4

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast

So is the conjunction [κα](#) [kai], often translated by *and*. It links that which follows with that which preceded. In this case, it indicates that *worship of the dragon is in response to* the miraculous healing of the [Beast](#). This must not be missed!

- It rules out all consideration of [Nero](#) as the Beast for people would hardly worship a failed legend. Whatever worship [Nero](#) might have received, it came prior to his death by suicide.
- It explains the prominence which Scripture gives to the wounding and revival of the Beast. This is the catalyst which brings an outpouring of worship to both the dragon and the Beast. It is the *coup de grâce* of the miraculous signs empowered by the dragon.
- It recognizes the typological counterfeit of the Beast as pseudo-Christ. Christ died and rose from the dead only to be rejected by His own. The Beast dies and rises from the dead to acclaim.

It is not clear whether they worship the dragon explicitly and directly. This is most certainly possible, as some people today openly worship Satan. But it is also said that they worship the Beast. The text emphasizes the dragon as the source of authority for the Beast. This may indicate in the same way in which idol worship is understood as being worship of the demons *behind* the idols (Deu. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; Rev. 9:20+), so too the worship of the Beast includes that power which is behind him. This seems even more likely because Scripture indicates that the Beast will exalt himself above *every god* and show *himself as God* (Dan. 11:36; 2Th. 2:4). Thus, worship directed to the Beast is equivalent with worship of the dragon who empowers him. At the time of the end, Satan will *almost* achieve one of his most treasured goals: universal worship (Isa. 14:14; Mat. 4:9; Luke 4:7).

they worshiped the beast

This refers to the worship of an *individual*, not an empire.³⁷

Some wish to interpret this as a reference to the revival of the Roman Empire, . . . But a revived Roman Empire would not cause man to worship it as God any more than the revival of Poland or Israel did. . . . It is the resurrection of the man Antichrist which creates this worship.³⁸

This is the first phase of the *abomination of desolation* (Mat. 24:15) when the man of sin himself sits in the temple of God proclaiming himself as God. His initial declaration as God will take place in the [Tribulation Temple](#).

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,³⁹ nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them* all. (Dan. 11:36-37)

Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2Th. 2:3-4)

The early church, having no knowledge of [preterism](#), understood Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians as describing an [Antichrist](#) yet future:

And again, speaking of Antichrist, [Paul] says, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped [2Th. 2:4]." He points out here those who are called gods, by such as know not God, that is, idols. For the Father of all is called God, and is so; and Antichrist shall be lifted up, not above Him, but above those which are indeed called gods, but are not.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iii.vi.2⁴⁰

The Beast, being empowered and possibly indwelt by Satan, shares the same aspirations as his master. He says in his heart:

I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High (Isa. 13:13-14)

Yet, ultimately he is only a *man*:

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying, 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities?' (Isa. 14:15-17)

Worship of the Beast will include worship of his image. See commentary on [Revelation 13:15](#).

Who *is* like the beast?

The adulation of the world for the Beast is a perversion of acclaim which should go to God:

This cry of the world, 'Who is like unto the Beast' is a travesty of the song of Moses. When celebrating Jehovah's overthrow of their enemies at the Red Sea, Israel sang, 'Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods! Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!' (Ex. 15:11 cf. Ps. 89:8).⁴¹

Who is able to make war with him?

Not only is the power of the Beast evident in his revival, but upon his ascension from the abyss he will *make war* with the two powerful witnesses of God which have plagued the [earth dwellers](#) (Rev. 11:7+). Their overthrow further propels his ascent to fame and position. He is Satan's overcomer (see commentary on [Revelation 6:2](#)). Yet in the end, he will make one war too many for he will take on the King of kings to his own demise. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord

of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14^{±a}). His revival from the abyss, the holding pen of demons (Rev. 9:1-2[±]), and his ability to sway the world and overcome God’s prophets all point toward his demonic possession, possibly even by Satan himself (Luke 22:3):

The Antichrist will be a man (2Th. 2:4), but at some point in his life, he will be indwelt by a powerful demon from the abyss. This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intellectual genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power. Added to those natural qualities will be the hellish power of Satan. The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and consummate wickedness.⁴²

Revelation 13:5

he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies

As we have seen throughout this book, the actions and duration of the agents of evil are subject to God’s sovereign permission (Rev. 13:7[±], 14-15[±] cf. Luke 22:31). The *great things* which he speaks are the “pompous words” which Daniel saw the little horn speak (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25). In his exaltation of himself, Daniel saw him “speak blasphemies against the God of gods” (Dan. 11:36). The *great things and blasphemies* likely speak of the same thing. “The figure [of speech] is *Hendiadys*; for the great things are his blasphemies.”⁴³ See [#25 - Little Horn](#).

he was given authority to continue

Continue is [πo σαι](#) [poisai]: “To be active.”⁴⁴ The [MT](#) text has [πολεμον ποισαι](#) [polemon poisai], *to make war*. See commentary on [Revelation 6:2](#).

forty-two months

This period is equivalent to the “time and times and half a time,” a three and one-half year period during which Daniel saw that the saints would be given into the hand of the [little horn](#) (Dan. 7:25).⁴⁵ See [Prophetic Year](#). This period begins at the midpoint of the week, when he violates his covenant with many in Israel (Dan. 9:27) and overcomes the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7[±]) who had prophesied for 1,260 days (the first half of [The 70th Week of Daniel](#)). See [Events of the 70th Week of Daniel](#). This is the time of [Jacob’s trouble](#) which shall be “for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished” (Dan. 12:7). During this time, the holy city is being tread underfoot by the Gentiles (Rev. 11:2[±]) and the woman, the Jewish remnant at the time of the end, is hidden in her place (Rev. 12:6[±], 14[±]). See commentary on [Revelation 11:2](#) and [Revelation 12:6](#). [Irenaeus](#), a disciple of [Polycarp](#) who himself knew the Apostle John, explains the passage in concert with [futurist interpreters](#):

But **when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire**; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that “many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”—[Irenaeus, Against Heresies](#), v.xxx [emphasis added]⁴⁶

Revelation 13:6

he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

The [TR](#) text designates as many as four targets for the blasphemy of the beast: (1) God; (2) His name; (3) His [tabernacle](#); and (4) those who dwell in heaven. The last three could also be taken as an elaboration of the first, *blasphemy against God consisting of...* Unlike the TR text, in the [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts the phrase, *those who dwell in heaven*, is not separated from the rest of the sentence by [κα](#) [kai] (“and”). Thus, *those who dwell in heaven* is taken in apposition to His tabernacle. “And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.”

those who dwell in heaven.

[Το ς ν τ ο παν σκηνο ντας](#) [Tous en tō ouranō skēnountas], present tense participle: *those presently dwelling in heaven*. These are the ones who rejoiced over the casting out of Satan from heaven and the overcoming of Satan by the saints (Rev. 12:11-12[±]). This includes an innumerable company of angels (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11[±]), the church having been taken in the [Rapture](#) (Rev. 5:9[±]), “The catching away of so many people of God must needs leave a deep impression behind it. The slain and abused bodies of the Two Witnesses are visibly revived, and taken up into the sky before the eyes of Antichrist’s minions. This was a grand and most convincing evidence against him and all his infamous pretensions, a manifest token of his devilish falsity and approaching doom.

And he needs above all to break it down, to cast discredit and dishonour upon it, and to root out the very idea if he can. Hence his particular railing and impatience with reference to this divine tent of the glorified ones, and his virulent blaspheming of those who tabernacle in it. . . How blessed are they who through faith and watchfulness have been accounted worthy to escape his power by being caught up to God ere he is revealed!"⁴⁷ the martyrs under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9-11⁺), those out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9⁺), the two witnesses (Rev. 11:12⁺), and others who have died prior to this point (Rev. 12:11⁺; 20:4⁺), many of which resisted the [Beast](#) to attain "victory" (Rev. 15:2⁺). The steadfast faith of believers to the point of death enrages the Beast for the threat of persecution and death is the only device available to him to coerce their worship—a worship which is motivated by the burning jealousy of the dragon who empowers him. The horrible experience of those who come out of the Great Tribulation is ultimately tempered by their intimate dwelling with God (Rev. 7:15-17⁺). See [The Abiding Presence of God](#)

ED ADDENDUM - A. W. Pink says: "So it will be with this daring counterfeiter: he will have a mouth speaking very great things. He will have a perfect command and flow of language. His oratory will not only gain attention but respect. Revelation 13:2 declares that his mouth is "as the mouth of a lion" which is a symbolic expression telling of the majesty and awe-producing effects of his voice. The voice of a lion excels that of any other beast. So the Antichrist will outrival orators ancient and modern. (Quoted by J. Dwight Pentecost, *Will Man Survive?*, page 81)

Revelation 13:7

It was granted to him

Now the [Beast](#) is given permission to overcome the saints. This disturbing reality has been on the prophetic agenda for thousands of years:

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, . . . He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. (Dan. 7:21, 25)

How could it be that God would grant permission for the Beast to overcome the saints? Here is where our grasp of God's sovereignty and His glory must be our sure support. As he used Pharaoh in the days of the Exodus, so too he uses the Beast in the time of the end. He has raised up the Beast for His ultimate glory.

But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. (Ex. 9:16-17)

to make war with the saints

The saints at the time of the end are under tremendous persecution. They are killed by the [little horn](#) (Dan. 7:21, 25), the [Harlot](#) (Rev. 17:6⁺), the Beast (Rev. 13:7⁺), and even the [image of the Beast](#) (Rev. 13:15⁺). See [#20 - Saints](#). The saints are martyred during this period because they are unwilling to worship the Beast and his image (Rev. 13:15⁺). True believers of our age will not see this war:⁴⁸

2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 predicts that the rapture of the church must occur before the appearance of the Antichrist, and in Revelation 13:1-10⁺ (cf. Rev. 6:2⁺; 11:7⁺) he will have appeared. This negates the possibility that the church is in view in Revelation 13:7⁺, for it will have already been raptured.⁴⁹

and to overcome them

See comments concerning the overcomer of [Revelation 6:2](#).

authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation

This speaks of his global control—something which was never achieved by Rome in the days of [Nero](#):

Daniel 7:23 clearly states that at some point the Fourth Empire *devours the whole earth*. This is something Rome never did. Some attempt to make the expression mean the "then-known world," but it cannot be said that Rome even conquered the then-known world. . . . Rome did not even extend as far east as the empire of Alexander the Great. The Greeks went as far as the Indus River in India . . . Rome did not even extend that far. Furthermore, Rome never fully conquered the Parthian Empire, and that, too, was part of the known world. The area of Scotland was also part of the known world that Rome did not conquer. Rome had to build the Hadrian Wall in order to keep the nomads of northern Scotland from overrunning that part of Britain controlled by Rome.⁵⁰

This speaks of the ultimate manifestation of Gentile power of the end as seen in [Nebuchadnezzar's dream](#). Remember that it is

Satan who has authority over the kingdoms of the world prior to [The Arrival of God's Kingdom](#) (see commentary on [Revelation 13:2](#)). Since [Nero's](#) Rome has long passed and Christ has not yet come, it is evident that this final kingdom of Satan is yet to appear upon the stage of world history.

A totalitarian system of unbelievable scope and power is also predicted. Every new invention of man gives him one more tool by which he can control others and enforce his will upon them. These inventions under the power of an able leader could make him the undisputed tyrant of the earth. Such a rule is foreshadowed by the beast. . . The concentration of evil in one vast system ruled by an antichrist who will be the most powerful potentate the human race has ever produced.⁵¹

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth

The ones who not only *physically* dwell on the earth, but whose affections and complete allegiance are entirely upon the earth (Isa. 26:21; Luke 21:35; Rev. 3:10⁺; 6:10⁺; 11:10⁺; 12:12⁺; 13:8⁺, 12⁺, 14⁺; 14:6⁺; 17:8⁺). They are to be contrasted with those whose citizenship is in heaven (John 15:19; 17:14-16; Php. 3:20; Heb. 11:13; 1Pe. 2:11). These are they whom the martyrs of the fifth seal cried out for God to avenge their deaths upon (Rev. 6:10⁺). See [Earth Dwellers](#).

will worship him

This is a defining moment for the [earth dwellers](#), much like the unpardonable sin of Jesus' day:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (Rev. 14:9-11⁺)

Those who choose to worship the beast and take his mark are *forever lost*. Even though they have not yet died, they are *irredeemable*. See commentary on [Revelation 13:15](#).

whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb

Whose names have not been written is [ο γεγραπται τ νομα ο το](#) [ou gegraptai to onoma outou], perfect tense: *it has not been written, the name of him*. Unlike those who lacked faith in Sardis and would be blotted out of the [Book of Life](#) (Rev. 3:5⁺), these were never written in the book to begin with. Therefore, their destiny in the Lake of Fire is guaranteed (Rev. 20:15⁺) since their names are not written in the Book of Life:

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, **whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world**, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev. 17:8⁺) [emphasis added]

Some understand the phrase *of the Lamb* to denote a *different* book than the *Book of Life* mentioned elsewhere (Php. 4:3; Rev. 3:5⁺; 20:12⁺), but such a view is exegetically precarious. In their view, the *Book of Life* initially contains the names of all the living. Names are then blotted out as people die having never come to faith. The *Book of Life of the Lamb* is seen as a separate book which only contains the names of the elect and whose contents are never altered. We believe the two-book view is problematic:

- Too much emphasis is placed upon minor differences in phrasing when referring to the same book.
- The two books serve the same purpose—differentiating between the redeemed and the unredeemed. So why have two books?
- The book which the names of the [Beast](#) worshipers have not been written in is referred to as both *the Book of Life of the lamb* (Rev. 13:8⁺) and *the Book of Life* (Rev. 17:8⁺). It is one and the same book.

We believe it is better to understand all references to the Book of Life as denoting *a single book* which records three categories of people:

1. **The Unsaved** - Each person to be born is written in the book. Those who die before coming to faith are blotted out.⁵²
2. **The Saved** - Each person to be born is written in the book. Those who come to faith prior to death have their names retained in the book.
3. **Beast Worshipers** - The beast worshipers are a unique category of people of the time of the end. They are so hardened against God and destined to reject Him in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary that they are *never written* in the

book (Rev. 13:8⁺; 17:8⁺). See [earth dwellers](#). See [Beast Worshipers are Unique](#).

For a more complete discussion of these issues, see [Book of Life](#).

lamb slain from the foundation of the world

Foundation is [καταβολή](#) [katabolēs], a compound word meaning “a throwing or laying down.”⁵³ Christ’s sacrifice was not an afterthought in the mind of God.

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. **He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you. (1Pe. 1:17-20) [emphasis added]

Even before the perfect creation of Adam and Eve, God knew the end of history. This is evidenced in His provision for their first sin, spilling the innocent blood of animals to cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:21). An enormous number of types throughout the [OT](#) predicted the coming of Christ and His sacrifice for the sins of men (see [Abraham Offers Isaac](#) and [Typology and the Rapture](#)). The secrets of God, established from the foundation of the world, were gradually revealed through God’s prophets (Ps. 78:2 cf. Mat. 13:35; Tit. 1:1-3). In what is perhaps the “holy of holies” of the OT—Isaiah 53—God revealed that His lamb would be slain: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7).⁵⁴ John the Baptist understood the implications of Isaiah’s passage, for when he saw Jesus he remarked: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). See commentary on [Revelation 5:6](#).

3.13.8.1 - From the Foundation of the World

In the sovereignty and omniscience of God, many things were determined and accomplished before or from the foundation of the world:

- God existed before the foundation (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 40:21).
- Christ existed before the foundation (Isa. 48:16; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1; 17:5, 24).
- Christ was loved by the Father before the foundation (John 17:24).
- Wisdom was established before the foundation (Pr. 8:23).
- Believers were predestined for salvation before the foundation (Eph. 1:4; 2Ti. 1:9).
- God promised eternal life before time began (Tit. 1:2).
- Christ was foreordained before the foundation (1Pe. 1:20; Rev. 13:8⁺).
- Unrevealed secrets of God existed from the foundation (Mat. 13:35).
- The kingdom was prepared for the faithful from the foundation (Mat. 25:34).
- The blood of all the prophets was shed from the foundation (Luke 11:50).
- The [Beast](#) worshipers were not written in the [Book of Life](#) from the foundation (Rev. 17:8⁺).

3.13.8.2 - A Lamb and a Beast

An intentional contrast is seen between the Lamb and the [Beast](#).

The Lamb versus The Beast

Similarity	Lamb	Beast
Slain	Before history (1Pe. 1:17-20)	At the end of history (Rev. 13:3 ⁺)
Arose from the dead	Rom. 1:4	Rev. 13:3 ⁺ , 14 ⁺ ; 17:8 ⁺ , 11 ⁺
Worshipped	Mat. 2:2; 8:2; 14:33; John 5:23; 20:28 ⁵⁵	2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:4 ⁺ , 8 ⁺ , 12 ⁺ , 14:9 ⁺ ; 16:2 ⁺ ; 19:20 ⁺ ; 20:4 ⁺

These similarities are developed further in our discussion of [Master Imitator](#).

Revelation 13:9

If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

As when Jesus taught, prior to the formation of the church, all people are enjoined to hear (Mat. 11:15). Unlike Revelation 2+ and 3+, there is no mention made of the [seven churches](#) which are [no longer present](#) upon the earth.

A textual clue found in Revelation 13:9+ has led many Bible interpreters to the conclusion that those addressed in Revelation 13:10+ are not the seven churches of Asia Minor but rather, consist of a different group all together. When Christ addressed the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2+-3+, He always used the phrase, "He who has an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit says to the churches**" (Revelation 2:7+, 11+, 17+, 29+; 3:6+, 13+, 22+). . . . Conspicuously missing from this phrase [in Rev. 13:9+] are the words "what the Spirit says to the churches." [emphasis added]⁵⁶

Those who have an ear, but choose not to hear do so because of pride. This is the major sin of the end and of our ownday:

Hear and give ear: Do not be proud, for the LORD has spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death *And* makes it dense darkness. (Jer. 13:15-16)

Revelation 13:10

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword

In a passage whose context is the time of [Jacob's trouble](#), God indicates that He will correct Israel. "Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished." (Jer. 30:11). He promises Israel's preservation and retribution in kind to those who oppress her: "Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall become plunder, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey" (Jer. 30:16). Upon His arrest at the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus stated this principle, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Mat. 26:52b). The basis for such retribution is God's law of capital punishment established after the flood: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:5). The [Beast](#), the False Prophet, and the [Harlot](#) all [persecute the saints](#) and so the Harlot will be ravaged according to God's will (Rev. 17:16-17+) and the Beast and the [False Prophet](#) will be killed to become the first occupants of the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20+; 20:10+). However, variations in the Greek manuscripts at this phrase indicate that retribution by justice may not be the meaning. The [MT](#) text has: [ε τις χει α χμαλωσιαν, παγε ε τις ν μαχαίρ, δε α τ ν ποκτανθ ναι](#) [ei tis echei aichmalōsian, hypagei ei tis en machaira, dei auton apoktanthēnai], *if anyone [is] for captivity, [then] he is going; if anyone [is] for [the] sword, he must be killed*. In the MT text, the subject in each case is the believer—not his enemy. This appears to be a simple statement setting forth the trust which the saints must maintain in God's sovereign appointment of their role in history. If it is a saint's God-appointed role to serve as a martyr, so be it! A similar theme is found in a passage concerning God's judgment of Israel:

And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Such as *are* for death, to death; and such as *are* for the sword, to the sword; and such as *are* for the famine, to the famine; and such as *are* for the captivity, to the captivity.'" ' (Jer. 15:2)

Depending upon which text we follow, this passage may describe retribution by God's sure justice (Rev. 14:9-12+) or the need to cling to His sovereignty in the midst of affliction (Rom. 8:28). Both are taught by Scripture.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints

Patience is [ηυμονο](#). [hypomonē], meaning *to abide under*. It indicates stead-fastness and perseverance while enduring toil and suffering.⁵⁷ It is through faith and patience that the promises of the believer are attained (Heb. 6:12). John was himself a "brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ . . . on the island that is called Patmos" (Rev. 1:9+). Jesus recognizes the patience exhibited by the churches of Asia (Ephesus, Rev. 2:2+; Thyatira, Rev. 2:19+). Patience is a *command* which the Lord gives believers. Because the faithful church of Philadelphia kept this command, Jesus promised to keep them "from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world" (Rev. 3:10+). The patience in this verse is directed to those who find themselves in the midst of the Great Tribulation—perhaps the most dangerous time of all history for believers upon the earth. The *patience and the faith* is found *here*: in the realization of God's sovereignty. Whatever befalls these Tribulation saints, they must rest in the knowledge that it is according to God's will and that they can never perish.⁵⁸

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "**For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.**" Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Rom. 8:35-37 cf. Ps. 44:22) [emphasis added]

God *will* avenge His elect once “*the* number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were* was completed” (Rev. 6:10-11⁺). In the meantime, they were not to love their lives. Instead, they must hold their testimony to the point of martyrdom, knowing their death was but a gateway to a place of intimacy and rest with the Lamb in heaven (Rev. 7:14-17⁺). Although many would die, Jesus assured them, “not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your **patience** possess your souls” [emphasis added] (Luke 21:18). These would be required to lose their lives in order to possess their souls, for to keep their lives meant taking the mark and being doomed for eternity. At all costs, they must not “draw back to perdition” (Heb. 10:36)! Although a remnant of Jews is hidden and protected in a special place in the wilderness (Rev. 12:6⁺, 14⁺), the vast majority of the people of faith will be within the domain of the Beast, the persecuting little horn (Dan. 7:21, 25). Jesus understood the intensity of this time and the resulting rarity of finding people of faith at the end:

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:3)

Their patience accomplishes several things: it witnesses of the reality of their faith and the glory of God; it makes them “perfect and complete” (Jas. 1:4); and it allows the cup of God’s wrath toward their persecutors to fill to the brim (Rev. 14:10⁺; 16:19⁺).

Revelation 13:11

another beast

Another is [λλο](#) [allo]: “Generally *another* person or thing of the same kind (Acts 4:12), as contrasted with [τερος](#) [heteros] (*another* of a different kind or form) (Gal. 1:6-7).”⁵⁹

The Seven-Headed Beast and the Beast with Lamb's Horns

[60](#)

Elsewhere, he is differentiated from the first beast, the [Antichrist](#). He is known as the False Prophet (Rev. 19:20⁺; 20:10⁺). See [#18 - False Prophet](#). Some have taken this beast to describe a system or movement:

The second beast which is described, Rev. 13:11-17⁺, as coming out of the earth, and having two horns like unto a lamb, and speaking as a dragon, and exercising all the authority of the first beast in his sight, is referred to the papacy. The false prophet receives a similar application. So Luther, Vitringa, Bengel, Auberlen, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, and many English divines.⁶¹

The commentators are in the most dire confusion on the identification . . . the Roman church, the Greek church, the French Republic, the Jesuits, the Roman theologians, the earthy carnal wisdom, including the heathen philosophies, false doctrines and the like. . . Still others identify the second beast with the heathen priesthood, the principle of inductive philosophy, witchcraft and soothsaying, divination and magic.⁶²

But his attributes are personal, for salvation and damnation are individual, not institutional.⁶³

The second beast is a **specific individual** rather than a religious institution. . . . it is more likely that the singular phrase “beast” (thērion) or “false prophet” (pseudoprophētēs) refers to an individual rather than a religious institution. Moreover, because he spends eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20⁺; 20:10⁺), the false prophet is characterized as possessing an eternal soul. Such an attribute and eternal fate is descriptive of individuals rather than institutions. [emphasis added]⁶⁴

Together with the first [Beast](#) and the dragon, he forms an evil trinity:

There is a Trinity of Evil. Now it surely needs no argument to prove that these three evil persons are opposed to and are the antithesis of the three Persons in the Godhead. The Devil stands opposed to God the Father - ‘Ye are of your father, the Devil,’ John 8:40, etc. The Antichrist stands opposed to God the Son - his very name shows this. The remaining evil person stands opposed to God the Spirit. If this be the case, then our present task is greatly simplified: it is merely a matter of noting what is separately predicted of the two Beasts in Rev. 13⁺ so as to ascertain which of them stands opposed to Christ and which to the Holy Spirit. . . . Now there are only two arguments of any plausibility which have been advanced to support the view that it is the second Beast of Rev. 13⁺ which is the Antichrist, but so far as we are aware no one has endeavored to show that the first Beast represents the third Person in the Trinity of Evil! Yet he must be so if the second is the Antichrist!⁶⁵

We shall see that a primary function of this second beast is much like that of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ. For he wields

equivalent power to the first beast (Rev. 13:12+), yet retains no glory for himself, but constantly witnesses of the first beast, the Antichrist. And so it is with the Holy Spirit and the Son of God:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. (John 16:13-14)

He is the third person of the Trinity of Evil. As there is to be an Antichrist who will both counterfeit and oppose the Christ of God, so there will be an Anti-spirit who will simulate and oppose the Spirit of God. Just as the great work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, so the one aim of the Anti-spirit will be to magnify the false christ (see Rev. 13:12+). Just as the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was visibly attended by 'cloven tongues like as of fire' (Acts 2:3), so we read of the Anti-spirit that 'he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men' (Rev. 13:13+). And just as it is the Holy Spirit who now quickens dead sinners into newness of life, so of the Anti-spirit we are told, 'He had power to give life unto the image of the Beast' (Rev. 13:15+).⁶⁶

Some point to the religious aspect of the work of the second beast in favor of his identification as the Antichrist, *orpseudo-Christ*. But this cannot be, for it is the first beast which attains all worship, not the second. The refusal of the second beast to participate as the object of worship is fatal to any view that the second beast is the Antichrist. Moreover, the role of the Antichrist is much broader than that of a mere religious figure.⁶⁷

To regard the Antichrist as limited to the religious realm and divorced from the political, seems to us, to leave out entirely an essential and fundamental element of his character and career. The Antichrist will claim to be the true Christ, the Christ of God. Hence, it would seem that he will present himself to the Jews as their long-expected Messiah - the One foretold by the Old Testament prophets - and that before apostate Christendom, given over by God to believe the Lie, he will pose as the returned Christ. Therefore, must we not predict, as an inevitable corollary, that the pseudo christ, will usher in a false millennium, and rule over a mock Messianic Kingdom? Why was it (from the human side) that, when our Lord tabernacled among men, the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah? Was it not because He failed to fulfill their expectations that he would take the government upon His shoulder and wield the royal sceptre as soon as He presented Himself to them? Was it not because they looked for Him to restore the Kingdom to Israel there and then? Is it not therefore reasonable to suppose that when the Antichrist presents himself to them, that he will wield great temporal power, and rule over a vast earthly empire? It would certainly seem so.⁶⁸

coming up

ἄναβαινον [anabainon], present tense participle, *presently coming up*. Like the first beast (Rev. 13:1+), John saw this beast as he was rising from the earth.

up out of the earth

The first beast arose out of the sea, indicating his Gentile origin (see commentary on [Revelation 13:1](#)). This beast arises from the earth, which may indicate his Jewish origin. Although there is ample evidence of the [Gentile origin](#) of the first beast, some suggest that the second beast is Jewish.⁶⁹ They note the lack of mention of the tribe of Dan in the 144,000 sealed of Israel (see commentary on [Revelation 7:4](#)) and the negative prophecy of Jacob concerning Dan: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider shall fall backward" (Gen. 49:17). It is difficult to be dogmatic on the earth-sea distinction because the *Gentile* kingdoms which Daniel saw arise from the *sea* (Dan. 7:3) are also said to be four kings which arise from the *earth* (Dan. 7:17). Fruchtenbaum suggests the mention of earth merely denotes his humanity.⁷⁰ It almost certainly indicates his *earthiness* as opposed to that which is from heaven (John 8:23). Although the bottomless pit is within the *earth*, the origin of this beast does not speak of the abyss.⁷¹ The beast which arises from the bottomless pit is the one which "was, and is not" (Rev. 17:8+), the first beast out of the sea with the deadly wound that was healed (Rev. 13:3+). This second beast causes the [earth dwellers](#) to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed (Rev. 13:12-14+).

two horns

The mention of horns in conjunction with a Lamb points to the vision of the throne room prior to the opening of the first seal where John saw "a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6b+). Horns frequently symbolize power. The Lamb has seven, the number of [completeness](#). This beast has two, the number of [witness](#), for he shall serve as the ultimate witness to the first beast.

The two horns have a pertinent significance, for two is the number of witness and just as Christ declared the Spirit of God should 'testify (lit., bear witness) of Me' (John 15:26), so the third person in the Trinity of Evil bears witness to the first Beast.⁷²

like a lamb

Paul warned of Satan's "ministers," false apostles and deceitful workers which follow Satan's pattern and transform themselves into apostles of Christ (2Cor. 11:13-15). There have been many false apostles and deceitful workers since then and especially toward the time of the end, but none more convincing and containing such contrast as this [False Prophet](#) of the end. His appearance as a lamb masks his true inward nature. Who he is will not be evident from his outward appearance but, like other false prophets, determined by observing the fruit of his labors:

Beware of **false prophets**, who come to you in **sheep's clothing**, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits (Mat. 7:15-16a). [emphasis added]

Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mat. 24:11-14)

spoke like a dragon

Although he looks like a lamb, his verbal instructions are energized by the will of the dragon (Rev. 12:2-4⁺, 17⁺; 13:4⁺). It is he who causes worship of the Beast. He *tells* those who dwell on the earth to make the [image of the Beast](#). He is also the enforcer of the mark required in order to buy or sell. His speech like a dragon is an allusion to the introduction of deception into the human race in the Garden: "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And **he said** to the woman, 'Has God indeed said . . . ?'" [emphasis added] (Gen. 3:1). Like the serpent, his mouth will be employed in opposition to God's Word.

Revelation 13:12

all the authority of the first beast

As the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ, so the False Prophet has the full authority given by the dragon to the [Beast](#) (Rev. 13:2⁺). Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the [False Prophet](#) is his refusal to obtain worship for himself even though he has the full authority of the Beast. Outside of the altruistic example of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ, this is unheard of. The answer lies in the pregnant phrase which follows.

in his presence

The authority of the False Prophet is very closely controlled. He is only granted his power "in the sight of the beast" (Rev. 13:14⁺ cf. Rev. 19:20⁺). He is on a leash, as it were. During the end, it is the dragon's intention that ultimate authority and attention be directed to the Beast. If the dragon enters the Beast, as he did Judas (Luke 22:3), then worship of the Beast becomes the worship of Satan. If the False Prophet's authority were in any way independent of the Beast, then he could potentially direct attention to himself. The dragon is very aware of this possibility since he was the subject of the same corrupting influence of power (Isa. 14:13-14; Eze. 28:17). "It is particularly noteworthy that the second beast will have to exercise the Beast's authority in his presence—there just can be no trust between the forces of evil!"⁷³

The alliance of religion and state has a long and sad record of despotism and suppression, but the ecclesio-political union of these to human beasts will culminate in the worst period of persecution in the history of the world. . . . Each leader assists and supports the other, the king enforcing the religious authority of the prophet and the prophet persuading the world's superstitious masses that the king should be worshiped and obeyed as a god.⁷⁴

causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast

Note that it is the *first* beast which is worshiped (Rev. 13:4⁺) in accordance with the predictions of Daniel (Dan. 11:36) and Paul (2Th. 2:4). The *second* beast directs worship *toward* the first and is dependent upon him for his power (Rev. 13:12⁺). Hence the first beast is the "man of sin . . . the son of perdition," not the second.⁷⁵ Pink notes the relative ease with which a supreme military leader such as the [Antichrist](#) is able to step into the position of assumed deity:

At first sight it appears strange, if not incongruous, that a military despot should be found filling the character of a religious impostor. But history shows that there is a point at which one character readily merges into the other. Political ambition, intoxicated by success, finds it an easy step from self-glorification to self-deification, and the popular infatuation as easily passes from the abject adulation of the tyrant to the adoration of the god.⁷⁶

The False Prophet's main focus is to direct worship to the Beast. This is his key role among the world's religions at the time of the

end, made all the easier by a large reduction in Christians beginning with the disappearance of the true Church in the [Rapture](#) prior to the time of God's wrath (Rev. 3:10⁺):

True children of God are to be found in many varying shades of Christianity, sprinkled throughout Christendom. There are undoubtedly born-again individuals in the midst of all churches. They are saved in spite of the organizations and not because of the organizations. What is going to happen to all of these organizations when the true believers are [removed](#) from the world? Already, in our own day, we see indications that much of the guiding force of these great organizations is in the hands of those who would deny essential truths of Scripture. This tendency will increase, and at the coming of Christ for the believers, the tares in the midst of the wheat will go on functioning as usual, all moving rapidly into one great church union, with one head of all. This religious leader will work together with the political dictator.⁷⁷

Eventually, even a universal ecumenical religion proves to be a threat to the worship of the Beast. The Beast (empowered by the dragon) desires *all* worship personally. This may be a contributing factor in the demise of the [Harlot](#) (Rev. 17:16⁺), for she is the mother of worldwide spiritual idolatry and abomination (Rev. 17:5⁺) and could otherwise compete with the Beast in the area of religion. See [The Great Harlot](#). The prominence of the False Prophet prior to her demise is not revealed, but we do know he is the ultimate religious figure directing worship to the Beast at the end. His role as religious leader may also fulfill Israel's expectation of a prophet (Deu. 18:15-18; John 1:21; Luke 7:19). "The false prophet arises to play the part expected of the prophet who had been announced for so long, and his role will be to tell Israel that their Messiah has come."⁷⁸ Those who worship the Beast are the [earth dwellers](#).

whose deadly wound was healed

Deadly wound is [πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ](#) [Hē plēgē tou thanatou autou], *the wound of his death*. This recovery was not from a serious wound, but from actual death. The connection between the miraculous recovery of the Beast and his worship is emphasized again (Rev. 13:3-4⁺). This rules out [Nero](#) and all previous people of history as candidates for the Antichrist because only *after* his revival and ascent from the abyss does the Beast receive worship as god. The only man prior to Antichrist who arose from the dead to receive worship is Christ, not Antichrist. See commentary on [Revelation 13:3](#). See [Supernatural Origin?](#)

Revelation 13:13

He performs great signs

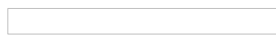
We have just been told that the False Prophet "exercises all the authority of the first beast" (Rev. 13:12⁺). Thus, it is no surprise that he performs wondrous miracles, for he has the authority of the [Beast](#) who himself is empowered directly by Satan:

The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2Th. 2:9-12)

Not only will the [False Prophet](#) perform signs and lying wonders, the subjects of his deception, the [earth dwellers](#), will be sent strong delusion *by God* to believe that which is false. It would appear that the signs themselves are *bona fide*, but what they attest to is false. Even the spirits of demons who collect the kings of the earth to Armageddon—one of whom comes out of the mouth of the False Prophet—convince by the *signs* they perform (Rev. 16:14⁺). Thus can be seen the demonic source of the signs which the False Prophet is able to use in his deception. We are offered a small hint of that which the demonic realm can achieve when Pharaoh's sorcerers and magicians used enchantments to turn rods into serpents (Ex. 7:11), water into blood (Ex. 7:22), and brought frogs up on the land (Ex. 8:7).⁷⁹ Let the reader attend to the importance of the matter before us: *signs are unreliable indicators of a work of God!* "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Mat. 7:22-23)

Christ's miracles, as miracles, were no evidence of His Divine mission. The real evidence was that the miracles which He wrought were the very miracles which the Prophetic Word had declared He should work, and which were *on that account* the sign and seal of His ministry, and formed His credentials from on high. This is clear from Mat. 11:1-6. It was not that they were mere miraculous acts, but that they were what God had foretold, and the essence of their testimony was *to the truth of God's word*, rather than the power of Christ. Hence it is that they are so generally called "signs," and not merely "wonders."⁸⁰

The [earth dwellers](#) of the end, even those who call themselves *Christians*, have fallen prey to that which is already at work in our own day: *an unbiblical reliance upon signs as evidence of God*. They have built their faith upon the wrong foundation!



They are completely open to deception because their faith is based upon *experience* rather than *Scripture*. They validate their religious beliefs based on their own personal experience. They are the ultimate in postmodern thinking⁸¹—they have *their truth* which is real to them. Thus, when they see the truly miraculous signs provided by the False Prophet, they easily succumb to the desired conclusion: the Beast is god. When and if such “people of faith” are confronted with the Scriptures—assuming God’s word is available at the time of the end—they will bend the Scripture and reinterpret it to validate their experience. If God’s written word denies their experience, they will reject it over their personal experience. Thus, their experience will sit in judgment of God’s Word.⁸² Biblical believers are to be just the opposite. Their faith is based upon God’s *inerrant* Scriptures. Each and every experience is *tested* against its adherence to that which God has already revealed in Scripture. When and if an experience fails the test of Scripture, it is *rejected* for we know that the Spirit of God speaks consistently. That which is *of* the Holy Spirit is in agreement with that which is *authored through* the Holy Spirit: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1Jn. 4:1). Thus, the biblical believer evaluates the fruit of his experience against the measure of Scripture and avoids deception: It is *by the signs* that the False Prophet deceives the [earth dwellers](#) to receive the mark of the Beast and worship his image (Rev. 19:20+). Yet the signs are false—not in their miraculous ability, but in *what they attest to*.⁸³ Signs alone are not trustworthy:

But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. (Acts 8:9-11)

If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘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 or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. (Deu. 13:1-4)

makes fire come down from heaven

He has an ability similar to that of God’s two witnesses (Rev. 11:5+). See commentary on [Revelation 11:5](#). Perhaps his power is even more impressive because its source *appears* to be *from heaven*. In the past, fire from heaven was associated with God’s power, consuming both His adversaries (2K. 1:9-12) and His sacrifice (Num. 16:35; 1K. 18:38). The False Prophet shows the Pharisees of the end the very signs they sought as validation of Messiah when Jesus walked the earth (Mat. 16:1). Yet all is not as it appears, for he is a great deceiver. As in the days of Job, fire will fall “from heaven” which will actually be in the service of Satan (Job 1:19). It need hardly be said that [Nero](#) never had an accomplice like this!

Revelation 13:14

And he deceives

Empowered by the great deceiver (Rev. 12:9+), he produces the fruit of deception. The power of this deception will be unique in history. Jesus suggested that only those protected by the Holy Spirit would be able to resist his ability to convince. “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand” (Mat. 24:24-25 cf. Mark 13:22).

those who dwell

Some manuscripts in the [MT](#) text line have [το ς_μο ς_το ς_κατωοικο υτων](#) [tous emous tous kataoikountas], *those [people] of mine who dwell*. This variation in the text may hint at the explicit inclusion of John’s people, the Jews, in this deception. We know from elsewhere in Scripture that the Jews will be among those who are deceived (John 5:43).

make an image to the beast

The [Beast](#) has a problem. He claims to be god, but lacks God’s omnipresence. Therefore, an icon [ε_κ_ονα](#) [eikona]) of the Beast is to be made. While Scripture does not say, it would appear that one purpose of the icon is to occupy the place of worship in the “holy place” (Mat. 24:15) on an ongoing basis as the focal point of worship.⁸⁴ The image serves as the center of worship allowing the Beast to go about his other affairs of state. This probably occurs after the initial declaration of deity made in the person of the Beast

himself (2Th. 2:4).

The term *abomination* refers to an image or an idol. This even is also mentioned in Matthew 24:15-16: . . . The only clue given is that it will be something *standing* (like an image or idol) in the Holy Place. . . . the Abomination of Desolation must include something more than merely the Antichrist's self-proclamation of deity. Furthermore, the Daniel and Matthew passages implied an image or idol that would be erected in the Temple. . . . Thus, the two stages of the Abomination of Desolation, lasting a total of 1,290 days will be the declaration of deity by the Antichrist in the Holy of Holies followed by the setting up of his image in the same place.⁸⁵

The fact that nothing like what is recorded in our text happened in the first century represents no problem for [preterists](#) who find fulfillment in the time of [Nero](#). The details are simply *swept aside*. Typical of preterism's refusal to interpret the text at face value is the example found in Gregg:

The making of *an image to the beast* (v. 14), or an image of the beast (v. 15), the giving breath to the image, and the requirement that all men worship it **are difficult features to correlate with any action known to have occurred in Israel in the first century. This need not be taken literally**, however, and can simply refer to the Jew's general homage to Rome's authority. [emphasis added]⁸⁶

Here we see a first-rate example of the exegetical *gearshift* we mentioned related to the [Preterist Interpretation](#) of this book. Their technique is to search first century documents for an approximate "fulfillment" of the literal text. When the documents cannot produce even an approximate connection, then the gear shifts to non-literal interpretation in order to move over the "speed bump." With such a fluid means of interpretation, the authority of Scripture to specify what constitutes fulfillment is subverted. Worship of the image made to the Beast is a flagrant violation of the second of the Ten Commandments: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them" (Ex. 20:4a). See [#19 - Image of Beast](#).

Revelation 13:15

He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast

The power given to the False Prophet here is perhaps the apex of what God has ever allowed in the hands of the enemy: the power to give life. This power is intrinsic to the Creator, and He is intimately involved with the creation of each creature.⁸⁷ The [False Prophet](#) gives breath (*pneuma*) to that which is initially inanimate, as "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). Unlike all previous lifeless idols which have been the work of men's hands, the [image of the beast](#) is given life. This is probably the capstone of the lying wonders which the False Prophet performs—the grand finale of his deception. Scripture records that men have readily given worship to lifeless creations in the past:

What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, the molded image, a teacher of lies, that the maker of its mold should trust in it, to make mute idols? Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, yet in it there is no breath at all. (Hab. 2:18-19 cf. Ps. 135:17-18; Jer. 10:14; 51:17-19)

They worship all the more so now when they see the fantastic miracle of the beast's image having come to life at the hands of the False Prophet. The image itself must be ultimately compelling because the enormity of the miracle performed by the False Prophet does not draw attention to the prophet, but all attention remains focused on the worship of the image itself and the [Beast](#) to which it attests.⁸⁸ Some oppose the notion that the image could truly be given life. They prefer to understand "breath" as denoting *animation*. Thus, they see the image with breath as a futuristic technological mimic of life. Although this is possible, it doesn't seem to do justice to the text and the way in which *pneuma* (*breath*) denotes life-giving power elsewhere in Scripture (Gen. 2:7; Rev. 11:11+). "The *pneuma* is therefore the equivalent of [πνεῦμα ζωῆς](#) [*pneuma zōēs*] ('the breath of life') so recently encountered in connection with the two witnesses."⁸⁹ Morris suggests another possibility, that the spirit given may be an unclean spirit, or demon:

The word in the Greek is *pneuma*, meaning "spirit" or "wind." The false prophet is enabled (by his own master, Satan) to impart a spirit to the image, but that spirit is one of Satan's unclean spirits, probably a highly placed demon in the satanic hierarchy. This is a striking case of demon possession, with the demon possessing the body of the image rather than that of a man or woman.⁹⁰

Although it is impossible to know precisely what is inferred from the "breath" being given to the image, the results are nothing short of life—for the image exhibits apparent intelligence and speaking abilities. We must remember that the False Prophet "exercises all the authority of the first beast" (Rev. 13:12+) and that the first beast is given "great authority" by the dragon. If the dragon revives the Beast and brings him back from the abyss, as evidenced by the worship of the masses, then why couldn't the False Prophet with the same measure and source of power give life to the image? Certainly this is not beyond the ability that God *could grant* if it were within His purpose to do so. Moreover, we have no examples in Scripture of the animation of inanimate objects by demonic

possession. Spirits seek embodiment in living hosts (Mark 5:12). Either way, the image appears convincingly lifelike. The image probably plays a role in the sequence of events associated with the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by both Daniel (Dan. 11:31; 12:11 cf. Dan. 9:27) and Jesus (Mat. 24:15):

The abomination of desolation, which the reader is to understand, includes the following elements: 1. It occurs in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (Dan. 11:31; 2Th. 2:4). 2. It involves a person setting up a statue in place of the regular sacrifice in the holy of holies (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; Rev. 13:14-15⁺). 3. This results in the cessation of the regular sacrifice (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). 4. There will be a time of about three-and-a-half years between this event . . . and the end of the time period (Dan. 9:27; 12:11). 5. It involves an individual setting up a statue or image of himself so that he may be worshipped in place of God (Dan. 11:31; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15⁺). 6. The image is made to come to life (Rev. 13:14⁺). 7. A worship system to this false god is thus inaugurated (2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15⁺). 8. At the end of this time period the individual who commits the act will himself be cut off (Dan. 9:27)⁹¹

This event occurs in the middle of the final week, after the Beast overcomes the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7⁺). It is the signal for the flight of the Jewish remnant to the mountains and thereafter to the wilderness. See commentary on [Revelation 12:6](#). See [Events of the 70th Week of Daniel](#). See [#19 - Image of Beast](#).

that the image of the beast should . . . speak

This idol is unlike all previous idols which were mute (Ps. 115:5; 135:16; Jer. 10:5). The False Prophet spoke as a dragon (Rev. 13:11⁺) and that which he empowers continues in that same vain, ordering the death of those who refuse to worship.

cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed

This is the point of no return. The entire population of the earth is now divided into those who retain physical life, but forever lose spiritual life versus those who retain spiritual life, but are likely to lose physical life. The former are those who worship the Beast and his image. The latter refuse to worship at the cost of their physical lives. The only exceptions are the believing Jewish remnant which is hidden by God (Rev. 12:6⁺, 14⁺) and those who manage to stay alive underground within the Beast’s system (Rev. 18:4⁺). Many of those which refuse the mark and reside within the Beast’s system will be Gentiles who come to faith during this time of the end. Their survival will be precarious on two counts: (1) the Beast, his image, and the [Harlot](#) all seek their death; and (2) they will be unable to purchase the basic necessities of life. Many of them will achieve victory over the Beast, not by survival, but by persevering in martyrdom (Rev. 7:14-17⁺; 20:4⁺). Those who worship the Beast and his image and take his mark are warned by an angel concerning the seriousness of what they are about to do (Rev. 14:9⁺). This unique global warning indicates the irreversible nature of taking the mark. Taking the mark is akin to the unpardonable sin of Jesus’ day—there is no possibility of redemption once the mark is taken (Rev. 14:9-11⁺). In stark contrast to the people of faith, they are eternally *insecure*. This is a unique situation to the time of the end. For what sin is there today from which the blood of Christ cannot redeem? Could not even the likes of a Hitler be saved if he had *truly and sincerely* repented prior to death? We answer a resounding “yes!” because we understand the priceless value of the blood of the Lamb which provides redemption for *all* sin (Rev. 5:9⁺). For if Christ’s blood cannot atone for some specific sin, then there are *two* requirements for salvation, not one: receiving Christ by faith *and* avoiding this specific sin. May it never be! Here, as at Christ’s First Coming, we have a unique situation where there is a specific act, which once participated in, moves the individual *beyond all possibility of redemption*. The act is the equivalent of eternal, permanent rejection of the Lamb. So blasphemous and foreordained are these that they are never afforded entry into the [Book of Life](#), not even to be written and subsequently blotted out (Rev. 13:8⁺; 17:8⁺). Like those who commit the unpardonable sin, taking the mark is the equivalent of permanently rejecting Christ. See [Beast Worshipers are Unique](#). Those who have victory over the Beast, his image, the mark, and the number of his name are seen in heaven prior to the pouring forth of the bowl judgments (Rev. 15:2⁺ cf. Rev. 16:2⁺). Therefore, this command to take the mark must occur prior to the bowl judgments. Those who refuse to worship the Beast or his image and refuse his mark are “beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God” (Rev. 20:4⁺). These live and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. When the third bowl judgment is poured forth, the remainder of the rivers and springs become blood. An angel explains this righteous judgment of God: “For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due” (Rev. 16:6⁺). The image which requires worship is typified by Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. Those who refused to bow down before it were cast into a furnace (Dan. 3:5). As the three young Hebrew men were preserved *through* the fire, so too will be those saints who live at the time of the end (Rev. 7:14⁺; 15:2⁺; 20:4⁺).

Revelation 13:16

he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave

These are similar categories of persons who fled to the mountains and hid themselves in caves from the wrath of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 6:15⁺). No matter what station or position a person has, they will all be treated absolutely equitably. Even the rich, who might normally expect to bribe their way around the requirement, have no exemption. So manic is the desire of the dragon—and his

empowered [Beast](#)—for all worship that he will treat the most powerful men on a par with the least in their requirement to render worship. In this regard, the dragon emulates the true God: “Yet He is not partial to princes, nor does he regard the rich more than the poor” (Job 34:19). The birds will exhibit similar uniform treatment of the [earth dwellers](#) at their banquet at the second advent (Rev. 19:17+). Here again is evidence against taking [Nero](#) as the Beast, for the requirement of worship is global: “The Neronian persecution was limited to Rome as far as the data tell us, and there is no evidence for it extending to the province of Asia at that time.”⁹²

to receive a mark

The [TR](#) text has [δ ση α το ς](#) [dōsē autois], *he should give* them a mark. The [NU](#) text has [δ σιν α το ς](#) [dōsin autois], *they should give them* a mark. *Mark* is [χάρᾱγμα](#) [charagma]: “From charassō, to engrave . . . denotes a mark or stamp.”⁹³ It differs from [στίγμα](#) [stigma], such as Paul carried in his body (Gal. 6:17) which indicates a mark or scar “without special design, but carrying significance.”⁹⁴ The mark here probably is of a specific design so as to be recognizable. It differs in emphasis from the seal ([σφραγῖδα](#) [sphragida]) placed on the 144,000 of Israel (Rev. 7:2+). The mark emphasizes *loyalty* to the Beast but the seal emphasizes *ownership* by God.⁹⁵ The only other occurrence of this word outside the book of Revelation is by Luke. “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something **shaped** [graven, KJV; formed, NASB] by art and man’s devising” [emphasis added] (Acts 17:29). It is almost certainly visible: “Made by engraving, etching, imprinting, branding,”⁹⁶ whereas the seal of God is probably invisible (Rev. 7:2+). The former is discernible by supernatural powers (Rev. 7:2+; Rev. 9:4+), the latter by the government of the Beast.

[DeMar] equates the mark of Revelation 13+ (Rev. 13:16+) with the mark that is given to the 144,000 by the Lamb. “Will Jesus implant a microchip in the foreheads of the 144,000?” he asks. Here DeMar confuses things that must not be confused. As the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ does not need some kind of a visible mark to help Him watch over the 144,000. The Antichrist and his minions, however, are not divine. . . . Mention of an invisible mark in one place of Scripture need not imply that the mark in all other places is invisible.⁹⁷

A strictly literal translation of “the mark of the beast” might imply “a picture of the beast” or “a mark made by the beast.” A more satisfactory indication of the relationship between “mark” and “beast” would be “a mark showing one’s relationship to the beast” or “a mark of loyalty to the beast” or “a mark of the party of the beast.”⁹⁸

In summary, the mark of the beast would signify to the reader of the time that the recipient: worshipped the beast as divine, acknowledged the beast’s authority, is devoted to the beast, and considers himself to be the beast’s property or slave to command.⁹⁹

In the *Papyri*, [χάρᾱγμα](#) [charagma] is always connected with the Emperor, and sometimes contains his name and effigy, with the year of his reign. It was necessary for buying and selling. It is found on all sorts of documents, making them valid; and there are many on “bills of sale.” Charagma is therefore the *official seal*.¹⁰⁰

The mark which is taken is the *same* for all:

This mark has nothing to do with credit, as is often taught today. In a credit system, everyone must have a different number. In this case, everyone has the *same* number. The purpose of the mark will be to serve as a sign of identification of those who will own the Antichrist as their god. Only those who have this number will be permitted to work, to buy, to sell, or simply to make a living. The verse does not speak of credit cards, banking systems, a cashless society, a one-world money system, or computers, etc.¹⁰¹

It is certainly within the realm of possibility for the mark to serve both as a single identifier of allegiance to the Beast and a globally unique identifier. All that is required is to combine an outward visible mark (indicating shared allegiance) with an invisible digital code (indicating unique identification). The external mark would function to readily cull the obedient from the disobedient while the invisible code would provide the necessary means for digital monetary exchange in the controlled economy of the end. As is typical of Satan’s schemes, the unique identifier would provide numerous *benefits* which would also serve as motivation to take the mark. The cost of refusing the mark is not just the risk of one’s life, but also the inability to participate in the global market. The details of the mark are not revealed by Scripture.

on their right hand

This implies a mark on the surface of the hand. Such a mark has several advantages from the perspective of the Beast.

- It requires the worshiper to permanently deface his body as an act of homage.
- It provides a ready means to identify those without the mark.
- It is immune to the fragility of technical systems—especially given the disruptive nature of the time of the end.

On the other hand, a low-technology implementation has the disadvantage of being subject to ready falsification. Perhaps the answer is found in a combination of both externally visible and internal (implanted) technology:

While I admit that the preposition *epi* is used, this does not consign the futurist interpretation [of an implanted mark] to sudden death. If this mark were purely on the surface of the skin, the resultant loss of skin, as happens regularly with people, would mean the mark would disappear. For this mark to have any degree of permanence it must, in some sense, be “in” the tissue. The use of [επι](#) [epi] doesn’t really deny that. It is simply saying that the mark is visible to someone, or to some device such as a scanner. In fact the word “mark” (*charagma*) comes from the verb *charasso* which means “to cut to a point, then to inscribe.” It is really not farfetched to see the phrase as describing some kind of minor surgery—a “cutting to a point”—for the insertion of a chip that will be “inscribed” with data.¹⁰²

This is a time in which Jesus’ injunction to cut off one’s hand (Mat. 18:8) can be taken literally, for Rev. 14:9-10⁺ and 20:4⁺ make it plain that no one bearing the mark of the Beast will enter eternal life. Indeed, it will be better to enter eternal life maimed than to be cast into hell-fire whole.¹⁰³

or on their foreheads

The high priest wore a plate of pure gold upon his forehead with the engraving, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Ex. 28:36-38). It declared him to be one who was set aside for the purpose and ministry of God (a saint). Ezekiel was shown a vision where those to be spared God’s judgment receive a mark on their foreheads (Eze. 9:4). Harlots wore a mark on their forehead identifying their harlotry (Jer. 3:3; Rev. 17:5⁺). The 144,000 sealed of Israel have the name of the Father and of the Lamb written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1⁺ cf. Rev. 7:3⁺). See commentary on [Revelation 7:3](#). In all of these examples, the mark identifies the category to which the person belongs and serves as an indication of character, as does the mark of the Beast. Those who take it are completely opposed to God and unwilling to repent in the face of overwhelming evidence of His judgment. See [Beast Worshipers are Unique](#). The placement of the mark on the *hand* or *forehead* brings to mind the command God gave through Moses that the children of Israel would faithfully teach His commands to their children.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. **You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.** You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (De 6:6-9 cf. Ex. 13:9, 16) [emphasis added]

In response to these instructions, the Jews developed phylacteries, small scrolls which contained God’s law and which were bound to the hand or head. The phylacteries differ from the mark of the Beast in that they were attached to the *left* hand. “*Tefillin* (phylacteries) are small tightly rolled scrolls that contain passages from Exodus and Deuteronomy. They were placed in boxes that were tied to the head or left arm. The *mezuzot* were placed in ornamental cases that were attached to the doorpost of a house.”¹⁰⁴ Although the mark of the Beast is on the right hand rather than the left, the similarity to the instructions given by God to Israel in remembrance of the law is striking.

Revelation 13:17

no one may buy or sell

In order to enforce worship of the [Beast](#) and his image, the mark is tied to his global economic system. Those who refuse the mark are automatically cut off from the global economy. They are driven underground to rely either upon supernatural provision (as the woman in the wilderness of Revelation 12:6⁺) or the black market. Some manage to survive outside the global economy, including the “sheep” in the Sheep and Goat Judgment at the return of Christ to take up His kingdom (Mat. 25:31-32). The sheep have provided for the dire needs of Jesus’ “brethren” during this time, but they themselves have been without the mark. For it is not possible to take the mark and remain among the redeemed who enter the kingdom (Rev. 14:9-11⁺). There are several aspects of modern technology which will likely contribute to the control of the global economy under the Beast. *First*, the mark itself may be tied into a cashless system of exchange. While Scripture *does not say this*, how effective it would be to do away with all means of value exchange except for that which requires the mark. *Second*, the use of modern identifying marks, such as bar codes, on *items of commerce* facilitates tracking their whereabouts and distribution. With sophisticated inventory systems it becomes much more difficult to supply the black market “off the record.” The degree to which technology plays in the system of the end is pure speculation. It may utilize systems of identification, tracking, and exchange yet unknown to us. Or it may use the oldest of technologies—tattoos or similar. The desire of the Beast to catch every possible violator argues for a high-technology solution which is more difficult to forge. The disruptive conditions on the earth during the time of the end argue for a low-technology solution.

who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name

The [TR](#) text indicates three alternatives: (1) the mark, or (2) the name of the beast, or (3) the number of his name. The [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts indicate just two alternatives: the mark *which is*: (1) the name of the beast, or (2) the number of his name. In any event, the mark embodies information pertaining to the name of the Beast.

the number of his name

Most commentators take *the number of his name* to indicate the practice of [gematria](#), where the individual letters comprising the name are given values which then contribute to a total value which is *the number*:

The *mystic use of numbers* (the rabbinical Ghematria, [γεωμετρία](#) [geōmetria]) was familiar to the Jews in Babylon, and passed from them to the Greeks in Asia. It occurs in the Cabbala, in the Sibylline Books (l. 324-331), in the Epistle of Barnabas, and was very common also among the Gnostic sects . . . It arose from the employment of the letters of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets for the designation of numbers. The Hebrew *Aleph* counts 1, *Beth* 2, etc., *Yodh* 10; but *Kaph* (the eleventh letter) counts 20, *Resh* (the twentieth letter) 200, etc. The Greek letters, with the addition of an acute accent (as [ά](#), [β́](#)), have the same numerical value in their order down to Sigma, which counts 200; except that [σ](#) (*st*, [stigma]) is used for 6, and [ϕ́](#) (an antiquated letter *Koppa* between [π](#) and [ρ](#)) for 90. The Hebrew alphabet ends with *Tav* = 400, the Greek with *Omega* = 800. To express thousands an accent is put beneath the letter, as [α̣](#) [a.] = 1,000; [β̣](#) [b.] = 2,000; [ι̣](#) [i.] = 10,000.¹⁰⁵

Again, there is evidence that the number is the same for all who receive it:

Doubtless, the invention of computers and the introduction of a “cashless society” would aid in the enforcement of an economic boycott against Christians. However, the mark is the “name of the beast or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17[±]) not the name or number that identifies each individual citizen.¹⁰⁶

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom

This phrase indicates that what follows constitutes a riddle of sorts requiring great wisdom to comprehend. A similar statement introduces the riddle of the [seven heads](#) of the beast (Rev. 17:9[±]). “*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter*” (Pr. 25:2). When Daniel was puzzled about the revelation given to him, he was told that “the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:9-10). Although the book of Revelation is not a sealed book (Rev. 22:10[±]), undoubtedly a similar principle attends this passage: those living at the time of the fulfillment will be best positioned to understand the full meaning of what is related. Until that time, history is full of names conjectured to fulfill the riddle of this verse. See [A Lock almost any Key will Turn](#).

the number of a man

[ριθμς ανθρώπου](#) [[arithmos](#) anthrōpou], simply *number of man*. The definite article (“the”) is not found in the Greek text. Wallace sees the missing article as an indication that the number is not of *a man*, but *the number of humankind*.¹⁰⁷ While this may account for the grammar, it fails to account for the previous verse wherein the article appears before both *number* and *man*: [τὸν αριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ](#) [ton arithmon tou onomatos autou], *the number of the name of him* (cf. Rev. 14:11[±]). **Thus, the number seems inextricably tied to the individual.** Some explain *of a man* as designating a number as *men count*.¹⁰⁸

His number *is* six hundred and sixty six

Discussion on the meaning of this value and its association with individuals and movements of history is legend. “The interpretations of this number form a jungle from which escape is apparently hopeless.”¹⁰⁹ The numeric designator for the value 666 found in the [MT](#) and [TR](#) texts employs the Greek character *stigma* which is not generally used today. It occurs between *epsilon* ([ε](#)) and *zeta* ([ζ](#)). Thus it displaces *zeta* as the sixth character, giving *zeta* through *theta* the values 7 through 9, *iota* through *kappa* the values 10 through 90, and *rho* through *omega* the values 100 through 800. An additional character, *sampsi* stands at the end as 900.¹¹⁰ Since our Greek font does not contain *stigma* we will represent it by a *sigma* with an accent: [ς́](#).¹¹¹ In the TR and MT text, the value is given by the three Greek letters [ϞϙϞ́](#).¹¹² Given the Greek alphabet of the time, the values of the three letters are: [Ϟ](#) = 600; [ϙ](#) = 60; [ς́](#) = 6. Their sum is the infamous 666.¹¹³ The [NU](#) text spells out the values using words: [ἑξακοσιοί ἑξήκοντα ἕξ](#) [hexakosioi hexēkonta hex], *six hundred sixty six*. Among all the extant manuscript evidence, only a very few have [δέκα](#) [deka] (10) as the middle value resulting in 616.¹¹⁴ The [Nero](#) advocates make much of the alternative value 616 because two different spellings of [Nero](#) can account for both the value 666 and 616. This may be true. But it is but one small piece of the overall puzzle which contributes to the identity of the [Beast](#). Nero succeeds on this count, *but fails miserably on all others*. Nero is far from the only individual in history who meets the conditions for 666. See [A Lock almost any Key will Turn](#). Metzger suggests that the textual variation indicating 616 is best explained

as an intentional modification of the original text by a scribe who saw Nero in the text.¹¹⁵ See our discussion of the attempts to find fulfillment in [Nero Irenaeus](#), who lived much nearer to the time of Nero than modern [preterists](#) and who was a disciple of [Polycarp](#) who knew our author, supports the reading 666:

Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number [666] being found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it]; while reason also leads us to conclude that the number of the name of the beast, [if reckoned] according to the Greek mode of calculation by the [value of] the letters contained in it, will amount to six hundred and sixty and six; that is, the number of tens shall be equal to that of the hundreds, and the number of hundreds equal to that of the units (for that number which [expresses] the digit six being adhered to throughout . . . I do not know how it is that some have erred following the ordinary mode of speech, and have vitiated the middle number in the name, deducting the amount of fifty from it, so that instead of six decades they will have it that there is but one. (I am inclined to think that this occurred through the fault of the copyists, as is wont to happen, since numbers also are expressed by letters; so that the Greek letter which expresses the number sixty [xi, ξ] was easily expanded into the letter Iota [ι] of the Greeks.) Others then received this reading without examination; some in their simplicity, and upon their own responsibility, making use of this number expressing one decade; while some, in their inexperience, have ventured to seek out a name which should contain the erroneous and spurious number.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxx¹¹⁶

He saw the number connected with the antitype of [Antichrist](#)'s image—Nebuchadnezzar's statue. He also saw the Beast as a person yet future, not Nero:

For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxx¹¹⁷

Adding to the complexity of identifying an individual with the number are various ways in which [gematria](#) can be performed. Harless argues for the simplest, *ragil* method:

There are seven ways of calculating gematria in Jewish tradition. 1) *Ragil*: This method is the basis for all the other methods. Each letter of the alphabet has its own numerical value. The numerical value of a word or phrase is the sum total of the values of its letters. 2) *Katan*: All the tens and hundreds are converted to the single numbers 1 to 9. 3) *K'lali*: In this method, the value of a word is the square of the sum of the *ragil* values of each letter in that word. 4) *Millui*: This method gives a letter the numerical value of the sum of the *ragil* values of the letters that make up the name of the letter. 5) *Kolel*: This method sums the *ragil* values of the letters in a word plus the number of letters. 6) *Hakadmi*: The value of the first letter is *ragil*. The accumulated value of the second letter is its *ragil* value plus the *ragil* value of the first letter. The accumulated value of the third letter is its *ragil* value plus the accumulated value of the second letter, etc. 7) *Haperati*: The value of each letter is the square of its *ragil* value. The value of the word is the sum of all the squares of its letters. It is apparent that the *k'lali*, *millui*, *kolel*, *hakadmi*, and *haperati* methods are unlikely to be intended in this passage, since they would tend to produce numerical values much in excess of 666. These methods also seem to be late additions not in use during the New Testament period. Only the *ragil* and *katan* methods are candidates for this calculation. *Katan* suffers from four shortcomings: 1) It would require a long name to evaluate to 666 (at least 74 letters). 2) The Talmud only uses *ragil*. 3) Therefore, *katan* is a later development and not contemporary with the Revelation. 4+) Only *ragil* has an analogue in Greek and Roman culture, *katan* does not.¹¹⁸

The threefold representation of "6," the number of man, may be connected with the three key players in the kingdom of the Beast of the end: "Possibly the threefold occurrence of the number six is a vague imitation of the trinity formed by [the Beast's] association with the devil and the false prophet."¹¹⁹ As we discussed in [Six: Man's Incompleteness, Human Will](#), the number almost certainly emphasizes how the Beast, the epitome of human achievement and government at the end, falls short.¹²⁰ Others note how the value compares to the sum of the Greek letters making up the name "Christ": "According to the Greek numbering scheme Christ's name, Ἰησοῦς [Iêsous], is represented by Ι=10, Η=8, Σ=200, Ο=70, Υ=400, Σ=200, which add up to 888."¹²¹ Various passages of Scripture hint at the character of the Beast using values which employ six, including the number of fingers and toes on the godless giants of old (2S. 21:20; 1Chr. 20:6); Goliath who had a height of *six* cubits, *six* pieces of armor, and a spear's head weighing *six* hundred shekels of iron (1S. 17:4-7); Nebuchadnezzar, whose "image" was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide (Dan. 3:1); and even Solomon's wages of *six* hundred and *sixty-six* talents of gold (1K. 10:14). See [Six: Man's Incompleteness, Human Will](#). Ultimately, it is fruitless for us to employ this number in speculation as to the identity of the Beast.

1. The value of the number in and of itself is too broad—too many historic names can be made to generate "666." (See [A Lock almost any Key will Turn](#).)

2. The church will not be present when the Beast becomes known to the world, for she will have been taken in the [Rapture](#) (2Th. 2:1-8).
3. The number of his name is perhaps the *least important clue* among many attributes which Scripture set forth concerning the identity and ministry of this individual. Certainly it is the most elastic.
4. While the Restrainer remains (2Th. 2:7), he will not be revealed. No amount of conjecture or analysis will bring him forth prior to God's timing. While there are no preconditions for the removal of the Restrainer, he could continue to restrain for decades or even centuries beyond our present time.¹²²

What we *can* be sure of is that the value given in this passage will enable believers of the end, when combined with the many other Scriptural clues, to positively identify the individual. It may be that gematria is not even involved in the final understanding of the number:

A similar use of *nous* and *sophia* occurs in Rev. 17:9⁺, where John calls attention to the identity of the beast ridden by the harlot. What John seems to be asking for in both cases is divine discernment and not mathematical ingenuity! Believers need to penetrate the deception of the beast. John's reference to his number will help them to recognize his true character and identity.¹²³

The better part of wisdom is to be content that the identification is not yet available, but will be when the future false Christ ascends to his throne. The person to whom 666 applies must have been future to John's time, because John clearly meant the number to be recognizable to someone. If it was not discernible to his generation and those immediately following him—and it was not—the generation to whom it will be discernible must have lain (and still lies) in the future. Past generations have provided many illustrations of this future personage, but all past candidates have proven inadequate as fulfillments. Christians from generation to generation may manifest the same curiosity as the prophets of old regarding their own prophecies (cf. 1Pe. 1:10-11), but their curiosity will remain unsatisfied until the time of fulfillment arrives.¹²⁴

For those who are in the Church Age, the number of the Beast, as fascinating a puzzle as it may be, is of relatively little importance. For the Church will not be present when he is revealed (see [Who is the Restrainer?](#)). This is by *design* for we are to maintain a watch for *Christ*, not Antichrist! We are commanded to look for our bridegroom, not a coming global despot (Php. 3:20).

Notes

¹Some infer from the placement of the material of chapter 13 following upon the plight of the woman in chapter 12 that "the rest of her offspring" (Rev. 12:17⁺) must be those who are subsequently persecuted within chapter 13⁺. If so, then her offspring would include all who refuse to take the mark, both Jew and Gentile. [Alan F. Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 13:1] Yet there are valid reasons to understand her offspring as physical Jews. See commentary on [Revelation 12:1](#).

²We note that the term *Antichrist* is not used by John in the book of Revelation. But neither is the *little horn* or many of the other names which apply throughout Scripture to this individual, here designated as the first beast. See [Man of Many Names](#).

³"Though the Holy Spirit '[will be] taken out of the way' (2Th. 2:7) in the Tribulation, this has to do with His work of restraining sin and not with His indwelling and empowering believers."—Russell L. Penney, "[Pneumatology in the Book of Revelation](#)," in Mal Couch, ed., [A Bible Handbook to Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 119.

⁴John F. Walvoord, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 13:1.

⁵Walter Scott, [Exposition of The Revelation](#) (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 13:1.

⁶Donald Grey Barnhouse, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), Rev. 13:1.

⁷Ibid.

⁸J. A. Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 322.

⁹Arthur Walkington Pink, [The Antichrist](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. "Antichrist in the Apocalypse."

¹⁰Daniel K. Wong, "[The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13](#)," in [Bibliotheca Sacra](#), vol. 160 no. 639 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, July-September 2003), 337.

¹¹Randall Price, "[Antichrist](#)," in Mal Couch, ed., [Dictionary of Premillennial Theology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 46.

¹²Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 103.

¹³Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 676.

¹⁴“To say that the sea stands for the abyss carries on the OT concept of the sea, that is the source of the satanic sea monster (cf. Job 26:12-13; Ps. 74:13-14; 87:4; 89:9-10; Isa. 27:1; 51:9-10) (Johnson). Also, Paul equates the sea with the abyss in his Rom. 10:7 citation of Deu. 30:13.”—Robert L. Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 13:1.

¹⁵Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on [Revelation 17:10](#).

¹⁶Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. “Babylon and the Antichrist.”

¹⁷“Beginning with verse 36, a sharp break in the prophecy may be observed, introduced by the expression *the time of the end* in verse 35. Up to this point, the prophecy dealing with the Persian and Grecian Empires has been fulfilled minutely and with amazing precision. Beginning with verse 36, however, an entirely different situation obtains. No commentator claims to find precise fulfillment in the remainder of this chapter. Although Zöckler and others attempt to relate Daniel 11:36-45 to Antiochus, many students of Scripture have recognized from antiquity that another king must be in view. Ibn-Ezra, for example, identified this king with Constantine the Great; Rashi and Calvin referred him to the Roman Empire as a whole; and Jerome, Theodoret, and Luther, among others, identified him with the New Testament Antichrist.”—John F. Walvoord, [Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 11:36.

¹⁸“Because the leopard, lion, and bear in Revelation 13:2+ are also used in Daniel 7 to depict nations, the interpreter is alerted to the fact that John is employing symbolic language. Thus, the leopard, lion, and bear also represent nations in Revelation 13+ just as they did in Daniel 7.”—Andy Woods, [What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?](#)

¹⁹Merrill C. Tenney, [Interpreting Revelation](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 188.

²⁰John MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 13:1.

²¹“We are at a loss to understand how this can be the Roman Empire revived! For the Beast itself is like *leopard* (Greece) (Dan. 7:6). Its feet are those of the *bear* (Medo-Persia); and its mouth is like a *lion's* mouth (Babylon). Where is the Roman Empire here in any form? If the Beast be the Roman Empire, does he have himself, intact, for one of his own heads? The notion is only a venerable, but vain, imagination. Rome cannot be at the same time one of the heads, and yet the whole Beast himself. ‘One is’ (Rev. 17:10+). That is said to be the Roman Empire. But it is added, ‘the other is not.’ Is this the Roman Empire too? Clearly not! What we have here is the embodiment and personification of the sovereignty of the world under Satanic power.”—E. W. Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 13:2.

²²Merrill F. Unger, [Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Hos. 13:8.

²³Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 265.

²⁴Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. “The Genius and Character of the Antichrist.”

²⁵*Ibid.*, s.v. “The Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition.”

²⁶*Ibid.*, s.v. “The Antichrist in Revelation 13.”

²⁷Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on [Revelation 17:10](#).

²⁸“The ‘healing,’ then, of the head of the beast, speaks of the Roman Empire, which fell in A.D. 476; the empire has a latterday emergence, form, or development.”—Wong, [The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13](#), 346.

²⁹Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 13:3.

³⁰The Greek is identical with the exception of the gender of the participle: the *Lamb* is masculine, the *head* is feminine. A similar phrase appears in Revelation 13:8+.

³¹“Many take the phrase, *as though he had been smitten unto death*, to mean that the Antichrist appeared to be dead but was not really. However, the same idiom is used of Messiah in Revelation 5:6+, and there was no question that Messiah died.”—Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 247.

- ³²Thomas Ice, [“The Death and Resurrection of the Beast, Part 2.”](#) in *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 23 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, May 2005), 5.
- ³³Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 668.
- ³⁴Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 13:3.
- ³⁵“The popular Islamic picture of the Antichrist, or *Dajjal*, graphically portrays him as blind in one eye, with the word *kafir*—unbeliever—written on his forehead; his primary function is to mislead the unbelieving masses by claiming divinity and the power to perform miracles.”—Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 113.
- ³⁶“Some have seen in the healing of the wound a reference to the Nero redivivus belief of the first century . . . It is doubtful . . . that John would have used a false rumor as a basis for this.”—Wong, *The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13*, 346n27.
- ³⁷The preference for an individual to worship is evident from the time of Rome: “The worship of emperors . . . provided a living tangible, audible deity for men who had been accustomed to the formal routine of ritual observance. The gods of Graeco-Roman legend had no reality; and their very existence had been challenged by the philosophers. The [Roman] emperor was the living head of the state and the guardian of its welfare. . . . His abilities and deeds seemed almost superhuman to the ordinary man of the street. Here at last was a real person whose position and powers made him worthy of worship.”—Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 24.
- ³⁸Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 248.
- ³⁹Regarding the phrase, “the desire of women”: “The most plausible explanation, in the light of Daniel’s Jewish background and Antichrist’s prime persecuting energies that will be spent against the Jews, is that the reference is to the natural desire of Hebrew women to become the mother of the promised Messiah (Gen. 3:15), making the expression a symbol of the Messianic hope in general. The ‘desire of women’ would be a subjective genitive: ‘that desired by women.’ Favoring that interpretation is the contextual position of the phrase sandwiched between references to ‘the gods of his fathers’ and ‘any god.’ ”—Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, Dan. 11:37.
- ⁴⁰Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.3.7.”
- ⁴¹Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Antichrist in the Apocalypse.”
- ⁴²MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 13:1.
- ⁴³Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 13:5.
- ⁴⁴Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 682.
- ⁴⁵“Christ’s public ministry was limited to three years and a half; so also will the Antichrist’s final ministry be (Rev. 13:5+).”—Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Comparisons between Christ and the Antichrist.”
- ⁴⁶Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31.”
- ⁴⁷Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 328.
- ⁴⁸Wong also notes that the removal of the Restraint (2Th. 2:6-8), the Holy Spirit, suggests a pretribulational rapture.
- ⁴⁹Wong, *The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13*, 347.
- ⁵⁰Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 35.
- ⁵¹Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 196-197.
- ⁵²We uphold the unlimited atonement of Christ’s blood for all of mankind. He was given for the *world*: John 3:16; 6:51; Rom. 5:18; 2Cor. 5:14-19; 1Ti. 2:4-6; Heb. 2:9; 1Jn. 2:2; 4:14.
- ⁵³James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G2602.
- ⁵⁴A complete scroll of Isaiah was found as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dated prior to Christ, it contains this amazing chapter predicting the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ hundreds of years in advance. It stands as irrefutable evidence of both the inspiration

of the OT and the identity of Jesus Christ as the predicted Messiah of Israel.

⁵⁵Concerning the worship of Jesus: Mat. 2:2; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; 20:20; Mark 5:6; Luke 24:52; John 5:18, 23; 9:38; 20:28; Acts 7:59; Ps. 31:5; Php. 2:9; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:13⁺; 7:10⁺.

⁵⁶Andy Woods, "[Revelation 13 and the First Beast](#)," in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, eds., [The End Times Controversy](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 239.

⁵⁷Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 846.

⁵⁸The importance of God's sovereignty is a teaching which is sadly lacking among many Christians today. This is a side-effect of the drift of Christianity away from a God-centered toward a man-centered frame of reference. God is seen more as a "big buddy in the sky" Whose primary role is to "make my life better." Could it be, having come to faith in Christ, in numerous cases our suffering might actually *increase*?

⁵⁹Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 44.

⁶⁰Albrecht Durer (1471 - 1528). Image courtesy of the [Connecticut College Wetmore Print Collection](#).

⁶¹Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, [History of the Christian Church](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 1.12.101.

⁶²Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 240.

⁶³"Most interpreters view the two Beasts as two aspects of the same thing. All seem to be agreed that they are not individuals; which is the very thing that the ordinary reader would at once take them to be. Little help, therefore, can be expected from such guides."—Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#), Rom. 13:11.

⁶⁴Woods, [Revelation 13 and the First Beast](#), 248.

⁶⁵Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. "The Antichrist in Revelation 13."

⁶⁶Ibid., s.v. "Antichrist in the Apocalypse."

⁶⁷Those who emphasize an exclusively religious role for the Antichrist fail to appreciate the political promises found in Messiah who reigns from the throne of David upon His return. See [The Arrival of God's Kingdom](#).

⁶⁸Ibid., s.v. "Antichrist in Revelation 13."

⁶⁹"It might well be . . . though we would not press the point, that this anti-Spirit would be a Jew, and that he would be used of Satan to deceive Israel if possible."—Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 242. "This individual is evidently a Jew, since he arises out of the earth, or land, that is Palestine (Rev. 13:11⁺)."—J. Dwight Pentecost, [Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 336.

⁷⁰"Whereas earlier the four beasts arose out of the sea, here they arise out of the earth. Coming out of thesea emphasizes their Gentile identity. Arising out of the *earth* emphasizes their humanity."—Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 29.

⁷¹Not all agree: "In contrast to the first beast, who will come up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1⁺), the second beast will come up out of the earth. Like Antichrist, the false prophet will be indwelt by a demon out of the abyss."—MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 13:11. It can also be said that the Witch of Endor "saw a spirit ascending out of the earth" (1S. 28:13). Yet there is no mention elsewhere in Scripture of a source for the False Prophet from the abyss. Moreover, there is great emphasis placed upon such a source for the Beast. The silence of other passages on such a suggestion is weighty.

⁷²Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. "Antichrist in Revelation 13."

⁷³Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) Rev. 13:12.

⁷⁴Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 13:12.

⁷⁵"Just as the Holy Spirit calls all men to worship the resurrected Son, the False Prophet will call men to worship the resurrected counterfeit son."—Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 254.

⁷⁶Pink, [The Antichrist](#), s.v. “The Career of the Antichrist.”

⁷⁷Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 243.

⁷⁸*ibid.*, 244.

⁷⁹This also indicates the level to which occultmagic had developed within early Egypt. However, they were unable to bring forth lice (Ex. 8:18). See 2 Timothy 3:8.

⁸⁰Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#), Rev. 13:13.

⁸¹We do postmodernism a favor here by calling it *thought!*

⁸²They are no better off than the Roman Catholics who are subject to the authority of the Magisterium of Rome over the Scriptures.

⁸³“These miracles are not counterfeit, but are used to establish false claims.”—Jerome Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 13:14.

⁸⁴We have no information as to the *size* of the image. Since Paul informs us that the Beast will “sit as God in the temple of God” (2Th. 2:4), and Jesus tells us that the abomination stands in the “holy place” (Mat. 24:15), it would seem unlikely for the image to be a colossal statue for it would require the removal or modification of the temple in order to stand in the holy place.

⁸⁵Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 257,259,260.

⁸⁶Steve Gregg, [Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 300.

⁸⁷Concerning God’s involvement with the inception and development of life: Ex. 21:22-23; Jdg. 13:5; Job 10:11; 31:15; Ps. 22:9-10; 119:73; 139:13; Ecc. 11:5; Isa. 44:2, 24; 49:5; Jer. 1:5. This is one of numerous reasons why abortion is morally equivalent to murder (Ex. 21:22-23). It is the interrupting by sinful man of that which God has established.

⁸⁸Here again we see the parallel between the False Prophet and the Holy Spirit: both refusing to draw attention to themselves, but dedicated to pointing to whom they serve.

⁸⁹Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 13:15.

⁹⁰Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 13:15.

⁹¹Thomas Ice, “[An Interpretation of Matthew 24-25—Part XIII.](#)” in [Pre-Trib Perspectives](#), vol. 8 no. 1 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, May 2003), 6.

⁹²Grant R. Osborne, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 8.

⁹³W. E. Vine, [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Nashville, IL: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), G5480.

⁹⁴Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains](#) (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989), 1:443.

⁹⁵Yet [χαραγμα](#) [charagma] is used of brands on animals which denotes ownership. [Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#), 876]

⁹⁶Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 406.

⁹⁷Larry Spargimino, “[How Preterists Misuse History to Advance their View of Prophecy.](#)” in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, eds., [The End Times Controversy](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 25.

⁹⁸Louw, [Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains](#) 1:443.

⁹⁹Hal Harless, “[666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13.](#)” in [The Conservative Theological Journal](#), vol. 7 no. 22 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2003), 341.

¹⁰⁰Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#), Rev. 13:16.

¹⁰¹Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 255.

¹⁰²Spargimino, [How Preterists Misuse History to Advance their View of Prophecy](#) 24-25.

¹⁰³Mills, [Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John](#) Rev. 13:11.

¹⁰⁴Randall Price, [The Stones Cry Out: What Archaeology Reveals About the Truth of the Bible](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1997), 279.

¹⁰⁵Schaff, [History of the Christian Church](#), 1.12.101.

¹⁰⁶Harless, [666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13](#), 360-361.

¹⁰⁷“If [ἄνθρωπος](#) [anthrōpou] is generic, then the sense is, ‘It is [the] number of *humankind*.’ It is significant that this construction fits Apollonius’ Canon (i.e., both the head noun and the genitive are anarthrous), suggesting that if one of these nouns is definite, then the other is, too. Grammatically, those who contend that the sense is ‘it is [the] number of a *man*’ have the burden of proof on them (for they treat the head noun, [ἄριθμος](#) [arithmos], as definite and the genitive, [ἄνθρωπου](#) [anthrōpou], as indefinite—the rarest of all possibilities). In light of Johannine usage, we might also add Rev. 16:18⁺, where the Seer *clearly* uses the anarthrous [ἄνθρωπος](#) [anthrōpos] in a generic sense, meaning ‘humankind.’ The implications of this grammatical possibility, exegetically speaking, are simply that the number ‘666’ is the number that represents humankind. Of course, an individual is in view, but his number may be the number representing all of humankind. Thus the Seer might be suggesting here that the antichrist, who is the best representative of humanity without Christ (and the best counterfeit of a perfect man that his master, that old serpent, could muster), is still less than perfection (which would have been represented by the number seven).”—Daniel B. Wallace, [Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1999, 2002), 253.

¹⁰⁸“It is counted as men usually count. Compare Rev. 21:17⁺, and ‘a man’s pen,’ Isa. 8:1.”—M. R. Vincent, [Vincent’s Word Studies](#) (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 13:18.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰E. W. Bullinger, [Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1967), 48-49.

¹¹¹Bullinger explores the relationship between the name of the character *stigma* and the mark of this passage: “The number 6 was stamped on the old mysteries. The great secret symbol consisted of the three letters SSS, because the letter S in the Greek alphabet was the symbol of the figure 6 . . . [α](#) = 1, [β](#) = 2, [γ](#) = 3, [δ](#) = 4, [ε](#) = 5, but when it came to 6, another letter was introduced! Not the next—the sixth letter ([ζ](#), *zeta*)—but a different letter, a peculiar form of S, called “stigma.” Now the word [στίγμα](#) [stigma], means a *mark*, but especially a mark made by a *brand* as burnt upon slaves, cattle, or soldiers, by their owners or masters; or on devotees who thus branded themselves as belonging to their gods. It is from [στίζω](#) [stizō], *to prick, or brand with a hot iron*. Hence it came to be used of *scars* or *wound-prints*, and it is thus used by Paul of his scars, which he regarded as the tokens of his sufferings, the marks which he bore on his body for the sake of his Lord and Master, and marking him as belonging to the one who had bought him (Gal. 6:17).”—Ibid., 283.

¹¹²“The expression of this number, [Χ Ξ Σ´](#) consists of the *initial* and *final* letters of the word [χριστός](#) [christos], christ, viz., [χ](#) and [ς´](#) with the symbol of the serpent between them, [χ-Ξ-ς´](#).”—Ibid., 49.

¹¹³Bullinger mentions several interesting properties associated with this value: “It is remarkable that the Romans did not use all the letters of their alphabet, as did the Hebrews and Greeks. They used only *six* letters, D, C, L, X, V, and I. And it is still more remarkable, and perhaps significant, that the sum of these amounts to 666: 1. D = 500; 2. C = 100; 3. L = 50; 4. X = 10; 5. V = 5; 6. I = 1.”—Ibid., 284. “The number 666 has another remarkable property. It is further marked as the *concentration* and essence of 6 by being the *sum* of all the numbers which make up the *square of six*! The square of six is 36 (6², or 6 x 6), and the sum of the numbers 1 to 36 [36 factorial] = 666, i.e., 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 + 16 + 17 + 18 + 19 + 20 + 21 + 22 + 23 + 24 + 25 + 26 + 27 + 28 + 29 + 30 + 31 + 32 + 33 + 34 + 35 + 36 = 666.”—Ibid., 286.

¹¹⁴“The only textual issue that we are concerned with is the correct reading of Revelation 13:18⁺, [και αριθμ α το εξακοσιοι εξηκοντα ξ](#) [kai ho arithmo autou hexakosioi hexēkonta hex], ‘and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.’ This is the reading of Sinaiticus ([α](#)), Alexandrinus (A), Chester Beatty papyrus (p⁴⁷), many Italic manuscripts (it), the Vulgate (Vg), and most other manuscripts including the Syrian (syr) and Coptic (cop). The Italic manuscript (it) has [τεσσαρακοντα](#) [tesserakonta], ‘forty’ instead of [εξηκοντα](#) [hexēkonta], ‘sixty.’ This is probably due to a scribal error confusing Revelation 14:1⁺ with 13:18⁺. This reading does not appear until the ninth

century. Of more concern is the [δέκα](#) [deka] 'ten' of Ephraemi Rescriptus (ca. fifth century) and the Italic manuscript Harleianus Londiniensis (it^z, eighth century). Irenaeus was aware of this textual variant but roundly condemned it as misleading. This strong testimony from Irenaeus and the late nature of the variant reading lend confidence that 666, not 646 or 616, is the correct reading.”—Harless, [666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13](#), 337.

¹¹⁵“Instead of [ἑξήκοντα](#) [hexēkonta], which is strongly supported by P⁴⁷ [α](#) P 046 051 all extant minuscules it^{gig} gv syr^{ph, h} cop^{sa, bo} arm *al*, [δέκα](#) [deka] is read by C some manuscripts known to Irenaeus . . . and Tyconius^{pt}. According to Tishendorf’s 8th ed., the numeral 616 was also read by two minuscule manuscripts that unfortunately are no longer extant . . . When Greek letters are used as numerals the difference between 666 and 616 is merely a change from [ξ](#) to [ι](#) (666 = [ϠΞϚ](#) and 616 = [ϠΙϚ](#)). Perhaps this change was intentional, seeing that the Greek form Nero Caesar written in Hebrew characters ([נְרוֹן קֶסַר](#) [nrwn qsr]) is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin form of Nero Caesar [in Hebrew] ([נְרוֹן קֶסַר](#) [nrw qsr]) is equivalent to 616.”—Bruce M. Metzger, [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#) (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 13:18.

¹¹⁶Roberts, [Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I](#), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31.”

¹¹⁷Ibid., s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.30.”

¹¹⁸Harless, [666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13](#), 343-344.

¹¹⁹Walvoord, [The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#), s.v. “666 False Trinity.”

¹²⁰“Many . . . take the view that the number 666 represents man’s falling short of perfection. . . . No Greek article appears before the word ‘man,’ so one could render the statement, ‘it is the number of man.’ ”—Wong, [The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13](#), 338n2.

¹²¹Ibid., 337n2.

¹²²We are not suggesting it is *likely* that he will remain for such great periods beyond our day, merely recognizing the Scriptural possibility.

¹²³Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary](#), 138.

¹²⁴Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 13:18.

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