

THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Revelation 13:1-18

Topic

The Revelation introduces the two men associated with the notorious number 666.

Title

“666 is the Manliest Number that You’ll Ever Do”

007’s villains employed henchmen to do their bidding.

- Goldfinger had Oddjob. His signature weapon was a razor-edged bowler hat, which he wore at all times and could throw with deadly accuracy.
- Two of James Bond’s villains employed Jaws. He was a skilled killer relying on brute strength and steel teeth to dispatch his victims.

Satan will employ two henchmen to do his bidding in the future Great Tribulation.

“I saw a **Beast rising up out of the sea**... Then I saw **another Beast coming up out of ‘the earth’**” (v1&11).

The dragon empowers the **Beastie Boys** to convince those who inhabit Earth to worship him.

It serves to remind us that Satan hates *us* and has a terrible plan for *our* lives.

I'll organize my comments around two questions: #1 What Are You Being Offered To Worship Satan?, and #2 How Are You Being Oppressed To Worship Satan?

#1 - What Are You Being Offered To Worship Satan? (v1-10)

Hexakosioihexekontahexaphobia.

(Hek - suh - kow - see - oy - hek - suh - kaan - tuh - hek - suh phobia)

It is the fear of the number 666.

The number of the Beast isn't the most crucial thing in this chapter. It is something in the Bible that piques our curiosity. Let's break with expository protocol and start in verse eighteen.

Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

The number '6' in the Bible is associated with mankind:

- Man was created on the sixth day.
- In Israel, men were to work six out of every seven days.
- A Hebrew could only be held in servitude for a maximum of six years.
- After six consecutive years of sowing a field, it was required to lay fallow.

In the Bible, men establish 6 empires that are prominent in relation to national Israel. They are, in succession, (1)Egypt, (2) Assyria, (3) Babylon, (4) Medo-Persia, (5)Greece, and (6)Rome.

The Roman Empire is going to repeat two more times in the future:

- There will be a Revived Roman Empire.
- The Revived Roman Empire will be taken over by Satan's Agent 666.

(6) Rome; (6) Revived Rome; (6) Revived Rome ruled by the Beast, **is 6 repeating two more times - 666.**

666 is the number of "man" attempting to establish a godless kingdom on Earth. It will be the number of "a" man, the Beast, in a final desperate attempt to rule the world.

666 is as far as mankind can go. The true 7th kingdom will be established by Jesus at His Second Coming.

Rev 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a Beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

A better translation is, "The **dragon** stood on the shore of the sea." Satan was expelled from Heaven in chapter twelve and cast down to Earth.

A Beast rises up "out of the sea." Or does he??

- In Revelation 11:7, we were told that the Beast "ascends out of **the bottomless pit.**"
- In chapter seventeen, we will read, "the Beast that you saw... will ascend out of **the bottomless pit**" (v8).

The bottomless pit is the Abyss. The Abyss is a place of confinement for evil beings.

Which is it - the bottomless pit or the sea? Since the Bible uses them interchangeably, we conclude that the "sea" in these passages represents the Abyss.

In chapter seventeen we'll read, "[An] angel said to me... "I will tell you the mystery... of the Beast... which has the seven heads and the ten horns" (v7).

If we are not raptured, we will talk about heads and horns when we get to chapter seventeen. For now, it's enough to say this is the description of mankind's attempts to establish a kingdom without God.

Rev 13:2 Now the Beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Daniel described the flow of history using these animals associated with Babylon, then Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God's Word tells one story throughout.

Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads...

Does this guy have more than one head? No. That would be weird even for the Revelation.

At first the Beast is identified with other national leaders in a coalition government. He is one "head" among them.

Something happens to his "head" that elevates him to be "head" over all the "heads."

Rev 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the Beast.

The Beast will be killed but return to life.

Revelation 17:8 makes it clear he dies when you read, "The Beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition." He was alive, he died, he was sent to the Abyss, he returned from the Abyss, and in the end he will be cast into "perdition," another name for the Lake of Fire we commonly refer to as Hell.

Something to ponder. We know from the teaching of Jesus that when nonbelievers die, they go to Hades to await resurrection and judgment. All nonbelievers from all human existence will afterward be raised, given an immortal body, and judged at the Great White Throne. They will be consigned to eternal conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire.

No Hades for you, Beast. He goes to the Abyss and returns from there to the wonder of the world.

A mortal human body cannot survive in the Abyss. It suggests that when the Beast returns he will have an immortal body.

At the Second Coming of Jesus, both Beasts become the first occupants of the Lake of Fire, *which demands that they have immortal bodies (19:20).*

The ascended Beast will have supernatural abilities. No wonder "all the world marveled and followed the Beast."

Rev 13:4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the Beast; and they worshiped the Beast, saying, "Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

Rev 13:5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

"Forty-two months" are 1260 days, or a time times and half a time. They are the last half of the Great Tribulation. The malevolent, blaspheming Beast will be the champion for all those who refuse to repent and believe the testimony of the Gospel. Nonbelievers will have false hope that the dragon who is credited with this miracle can contend with, and defeat, Jesus.

Rev 13:6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

Daniel and Jesus predict that the Beast will defile the Holy of Holies in the Tribulation Temple. They label the incident, "The Abomination of Desolation." The Beast demands worship which is, in fact, worship of his boss, Satan.

Rev 13:7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

"Granted," "given to him," reminds us that God remains in charge. The outcome of the Great Tribulation is never in question.

Martyrdom is never a defeat. It is a testimony.

Rev 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Jesus' sacrificial death on the Cross is understood to have occurred "from the foundation of the world." He is, "The Savior of all men, especially of those who believe" (First Timothy 4:10).

"Have not been written" can be worded, "the name does not *remain* written." We argue that everyone's name is written in the Book from eternity past. The names of those who never believe in Jesus will not "remain" in the Book. Their names will not be found when they are raised to face judgment.

Rev 13:9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

Sound familiar? Seven times in chapters two & three, to the seven churches of Asia, we read, "He who has an ear, *let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*"

There is no mention of the Spirit & the churches because the church was resurrected and raptured before the Great Tribulation.

Rev 13:10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Sometimes a condemned person will be asked, "Do you have any last words?" The first part of verse ten may be the last words of the Tribulation saints before their martyrdom. They testify with their lives by "faith," with "patience."

You might have noticed that I haven't at all used the title "antichrist." *The Revelation never uses it.*

This first Beast is **the** antichrist. He has over forty names in the Bible. A few of them: The Man of Sin, The Lawless One, The Bloody & Deceitful Man, The Wicked One, The Man of the Earth, The Mighty Man, The Violent Man, The Assyrian, The Spoiler, The Little Horn, The Prince that Shall Come, The Willful King, and The Idol Shepherd (A.W. Pink, *The Antichrist*).

When Jesus was on Earth, Satan offered Him all the kingdoms of the world if the Lord would worship him. Jesus did not dispute Satan's temporary rulership.

We can expect the devil to make us offers.

What worldly "kingdom" has Satan offered you to weaken your walk with Jesus? Is it the kingdom of happiness, if you will break your marriage vows?

It isn't a rebuke. It is a reminder. Be ready.

#2 - How Are You Being Oppressed To Worship Satan? (v11-18)

Beast One won't be working alone. He will have the help of Beast Two.

Rev 13:11 Then I saw another Beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

The second Beast comes from "Earth," meaning he *doesn't* spend time in the Abyss. At some point, however, he, too, will need an immortal body before being cast into the Lake of Fire. We are not told when he receives it.

Beast Two's description as having "two horns like a lamb" is interesting in that everywhere else the word "lamb" is used in the Revelation it refers to Jesus.

Beast Two is a Jesus impersonator.

He will speak "like a dragon." Why is the world's best selling dictation software called Dragon?

Rev 13:12 And he exercises all the authority of the first Beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

"In his presence" means *on his behalf*. He has authority and makes things happen in this evil administration.

One thing that he makes happen is to cause "the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first Beast whose deadly wound was healed." We are told how he does it in verse thirteen:

Rev 13:13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

"Performs" is in a tense that indicates repeated activity. He does sign after sign. The "signs" are designed to persuade mankind to worship the first Beast.

Commentators get all wound up trying to prove that Satan and his minions are incapable of doing anything truly miraculous. The Great Tribulation, especially the last half of it, will be a very unusual time, unlike any other that the world has ever or will ever know. It's likely that God will allow Satan to perform limited miracles.

One of the "signs" is "he... makes fire come down from Heaven in the sight of men." God's two witnesses, who we met in a previous study, can kill with fire. In the Old Testament, Moses performed various signs that were mimicked by the magicians of Egypt. This could be something similar, as if to say, "Anything God can do, I can do."

Rev 13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth - by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the Beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

"Deceives" means *to lead astray*. Miracles, signs, and wonders can validate God's Word; or they can lead you astray. God's Word must be used to judge their source by the message associated with them.

The people on earth will be led "to make an image to the Beast who was wounded by the sword and lived." *They will help "make" it.*

Remember the Golden Calf? Early in the Exodus from Egypt, Aaron, Moses' brother, had the Israelites bring their gold and jewelry in order to use them for making the idol they would worship. *They helped "make" it.*

Could this be Artificial Intelligence? In one of our Prophecy Updates, we reported on Xian'er, the robotic monk. He was developed by a team of monks, volunteers and AI experts from Longquan Monastery in Beijing, China. He can follow human instructions to make body movements, read scriptures, and play Buddhist music. He can chat and respond to people's emotional and spiritual questions with Buddhist wisdom.

Insofar as helping make it, one article noted, "firms achieve the most significant performance improvements *when humans and machines work together*. Through such *collaborative intelligence*, humans and AI actively enhance each other's complementary strengths."

Rev 13:15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the Beast to be killed.

Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest translates "give breath" as *animate*. It won't be sentient life as we know it but something akin to AI.

Those who refuse to worship the Beast are killed. Notice that it is the image itself which causes the non-worshippers to be killed. How???

Rev 13:16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

"Causes," not *forces*. A contemporary example would be our governor's mask mandates.

You aren't being *forced* to wear a mask, but the mandates *cause* you to wear one if you want to do anything.

It's "The Mask of the Beast."

In the Great Tribulation people will already be utilizing some sort of technology to conduct contactless, cashless business. Mid-way into the Great Tribulation, people will make a decision to worship the Beast or be excluded from all participation in society.

It'll be a choice. No one ever takes the mark accidentally, or without knowing what they are doing (14:9-10).

How might the image kill people? Referring again to a recent Prophecy Update, we reported on Slaughterbots. They are weaponized drones that can find and kill their targets *using only facial recognition*.

"All" in verse sixteen means all types and classes of people. They are described in contrasting pairs:

- "Small and great." It won't matter if you are educated or uneducated, white collar or blue collar or no collar. Those distinctions will still exist but being "great" will not exempt you, nor will being "small" exclude you.
- "Rich and poor." There will always be disparity of wealth. Wealth will be useless unless you are participating in the system.
- "Free and slave." A little later we'll read that men trafficked in "the souls of men" (18:13). Human trafficking is a malignant problem in the world. It will worsen. If you're "free," you're not free to refuse the mark.

John specifically mentions the "right hand" and the "forehead." I see no reason this should not be taken literally. Whether it is some sort of visible branding, or one of the modern technologies, it will involve the head and the hand.

Rev 13:17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name.

Micro-chipping... RFID... Fingerprints... Facial recognition... Palm scans... Retinal scans.

Those are a sampling of technologies that would, in our estimation, fit the bill.

A person will not be able to conduct any business or utilize any services unless they worship the Beast.

Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

It's true that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are assigned a numerical value. It is why we see so many attempts to determine if any current world leader's name might add-up to 666.

Will the name of Beast One need to add-up to 666 in order for future believers to recognize him? I think that his coming back from the dead from the Abyss with supernatural powers might give him away.

Believers in the Great Tribulation will be oppressed to worship the Beast and through him, the dragon.

In the Church Age, we can expect to be *pressed*.

The apostle Paul captures our pressures:

2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2Co 4:8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

2Co 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed -

2Co 4:10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2Co 4:11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

You will be under pressure from the dragon to disobey God. The devil is certain you will fail if he can turn up the heat:

- He tried it with Job, saying to God, "Stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face! (1:11).
- He asked for permission to "sift Peter like wheat" (Luke 22:31).

The Lord kept them. **He will keep you.**