

The Revelation to John
Chapter Thirteen
Satan Mocks with False Trinity
“The Number”

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It is critical to remember that this “chapter” is a continuation of the previous “chapter” and it must be smoothly transitioned from it. Satan is at war with all Christians as a result of his fall from heaven and he will carry out his anger against all of the woman’s offspring as stated in *“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”* (Gen 3:15) It is too simple to think that this beast is some entity such as the Roman empire for there is much more to this beast as he serves Satan and is at war with God and His people. As his end time approaches he will become even bolder in his attacks. So to properly understand this portion of the vision God gave John we must think theologically. The world is against the church and directed by Satan and his followers.

This chapter contains information about the number 666 that has made such a “noise” among the end-times authors and is a very popular concept that has, in my opinion, mostly been used incorrectly. The “end times” has often been associated with an evil person as its leader. As we look at the dragon and his two beasts, let’s carefully look at the mocking Satan is doing with the Trinity. We read of such in writings of Paul and John:

- *1John 2:18 “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.”*
- *1John 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.*
- *1John 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*
- *2John 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.*
- *2Thes 2:1-3 “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, ²that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,”*

The single word “antichrist” only appears in 1 John 2:18, 1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John 1:7. As John told us above, these “antichrists” were there when he lived and many others have come in his spirit. But these are not the real antichrist, but just people who claimed to be such and spoke against Christ. John also tells us that the “last hour” has

been present since the time of the work of Jesus and we have been in the end times since then also. However there will be a time when the end will come to fulfillment and we are studying that prophecy.

Of course God's plan A includes the time table for the end: *"Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ' My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';"* (Isa 46:10)

John here gives us his vision of those times and here we will see some more of that fulfillment. We will look at two beasts and again try to give an interpretation that will not sell many books and surely will not be made into a movie but nevertheless I think is very Biblical. Again, I know that I do not have to remind you that I do not claim to be giving an inspired writing. My writings are based on many years of study, the readings of many different types of authors, and much prayer. I take my role in the kingdom very seriously and I tremble knowing the following: *"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment."* (James 3:1)

The Beast from the Sea

Rev 13:1 "And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

Rev 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority."

The dragon is standing on the sand for he is the one who gives directions to this beast (13.2). The ancients usually associated evil things from the sea for nobody was able to visit the depths of the sea and their imagination, plus sightings of huge sea creatures, gave rise to many stories. This beast has a copied appearance of Satan (12:3) and probably informs us that the evil in the world is a copy of Evil. However this beast has his crowns on his horns whereas Satan's appearance was with the crowns on the heads. The placement of the crowns may show that the beast is subservient to Satan as he will do the bidding of Satan. From the Greek it is not possible to know if each head has a different name or if all the heads have the same name. The main inference is that this beast is in contempt of God.

It is curious that the creature has seven heads and only one mouth. John is not trying to paint a perfect picture of this beast but is giving us an overall view. People have made much speculation concerning this beast. Daniel also gives us some visions of beasts and the interpretation of those visions informs us that they represent earthly kingdoms. The kingdoms may be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the final world kingdom of the antichrist. The "end times" authors also give us some earthly kingdom interpretations for this beast also but such seems unlikely since this is one beast with several different representations. It is possible that John is seeing the one beast as

representative of all those other kingdoms and now is present at the end. We just do not know all the details. It is enough for us to know that Satan is bringing forth a horrible foe to bring havoc to the world in his final attempts at power. As we learn more about the terrible forces of evil, we become more dependent upon God.

Note that the representations are carefully stated that they are “like” something so we should not try to be literal in our interpretation of the appearances. Being like a leopard could be indicative that he was able to quickly react to any situation. That his feet were like those of a bear could be indicative of great strength. Having a mouth like a lion indicates that he had power to inflict severe damage and was not just “all show”. John is interested in symbolism and not trying to describe some individual animal. To make his point John is using a variety of features that together describe this enemy as best as he is capable of doing. The beasts of Daniel 7 are representative of worldly empires and John may be trying to make the same point as he is saying that the dragon gave the beast it power, throne, and great authority. Thus the church is against a formidable foe.

Rev 13:3 “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;

Rev 13:4 and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?””

We do not know the details of the slaying of the one head but John’s point is that the wound seemed fatal and that it had been healed. Perhaps John is showing us another of Satan’s parodies of Christ. A major point missed by many people is that the “it” of verse three is the beast and not the head. Thus the beast was fatally wounded by a head wound and it was the beast that was healed, not the restoration of the head. Such a careful reading dismisses the speculation that this event represented one kingdom ruler who had died and been restored (Nero or Caligula). What we are seeing is that evil can be wounded in the world but not destroyed just with world powers. Note the evil **comparison of this beast with Jesus** in that he was apparently fatally wounded and then restored in comparison with the physical death and physical resurrection of Jesus. Also remember that the Seed had already been prophesied to bruise Satan’s head: “*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.*” (Gen 3:15)

The people of the world were amazed at this restoration of the evil beast. Of course they love the darkness so they are glad to see it revived so they worship the dragon and the beast. They viewed the dragon as the ultimate source of the power but they also worshiped the beast because he was endowed with powers from the dragon. They view the beast as indestructible because it has been granted powers from Satan and it becomes another idol for them to worship: “*And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.*” (John 3:19)

Rev 13:5 “And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

Rev 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.”

It is ultimately God who gives this beast the authority to operate on earth. The church is very encouraged to know that even this terrible evil will not be allowed to continue to function forever but has a very limited time period. To the dispensationalist this time period is the last half of the tribulation time period told by Daniel (Dan 9:24). As I said previously this time could also be the end portion of the >2000 years of tribulation. The blasphemies are hurled against God and all those in whom He dwells as Satan is in his final rebellion. He hates God and blaspheming the name of God is the same as blaspheming God. Through this beast Satan is blasting out his hatred of God for all to hear and many will follow him in this evil. To give the state a supreme role is to blaspheme God and certainly Rome did this with its emperor given divine status as did Japan and other nations. Setting mankind as supreme over God is also blaspheming Him and that is what our society is doing now. Denying that God is the Creator is also blasphemous. Not only was he blaspheming God, he was also doing the same to the people of God in heaven. Satan is blasting out his hatred of God toward God and all of His saints in heaven and on earth since all Christians are spiritually seated in heaven: *“and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”* (Eph 2:6)

Rev 13:7 “And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Rev 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”

Satan cannot do anything unless God allows the action so He gives this beast the ability to make war just as he allowed Gentile nations to war against the Israelites and defeat them on occasions. Here the war is worldwide as he gains authority over all mankind on earth. He even wages war against God’s bondservants and he overcomes them but remember that they are sealed by God. The saints will suffer but their allegiance to God will not waver and their eternal state is fixed. All mankind will worship this beast. Remember that mankind refers to those who are not bondservants of God. The eternal state of all men has been determined before the foundation of the world and those who are truly His people will never worship Satan or any of his representatives.

- Phil 4:3 *“Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”*
- Rev 3:5 *“He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.”*

- Eph 1:3-4 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love”*

Note also that the dependence of Christians is not on their own merit but on the slain Lamb Who defeats the beasts. The emphasis is on people worshipping the beast so the focus is theological. We miss the entire point of this vision if we think only in terms of some political or worldly wars for the point of Satan is to get everyone to worship him rather than God. The focus is also not just regionally for the authority he is given is worldwide. Those who are really Christians will never deny Christ as their Lord. God has selected His people from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Jesus and His work was also planned before the foundation of the world:

1Peter 1:20-21 *“For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you (21) who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”*

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

This last verse is reminiscent of some sayings of Jesus and probably refers to verse ten rather than what preceded: *“He who has ears, let him hear.”* (Matt 13:9). John knows that only those who have Jesus Christ as their Lord have spiritual ears to understand what he was written and is continuing to write: *“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”* (1 Cor 2:14)

Isn't it interesting that both of these verses that say essentially the same thing occur in chapter 13, verse 9 of two different books of the Bible?

Rev 13:10 “If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.”

Here we see the sovereignty of God that gives all Christians peace and joy regardless of the external circumstances. God will mete out true justice. Praise the Lord that He has already removed us from that final judgment! Both of these couplets refer to the persecuted. The first one teaches an acceptance of the realities of life. However the second refers to the fact that the truth of Christ cannot be defended by violence and anyone attempting to do so will just die by the sword rather than bringing Christianity to be accepted. Neither are fatalistic but refer to the sovereignty of God and He will work out His plans for His good and perfect will. We must always remember that our war is against spiritual force: *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Eph 6:12)

The Beast from the Earth

Rev 13:11 “And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.

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

The ancients considered there to be three basic elements: earth, fire, and water. John is seeing all of those involved as the first beast was from the water, the second is from the earth, and in verse 13 we see that this second beast can make fire come down from heaven as a sign. We also see a parody on the creation events as God had the waters teem with swarms of living creatures (Gen 1:20) and the earth bring forth living creatures (Gen 1:24). God also created great sea monsters (Gen 1:21) so Satan seems to model his beasts after the creations of God. As if the first beast was not terrible enough, John now sees a second beast. This one comes from the earth, which would make him somewhat less fearful to the people of that era. This one also only has two horns as does a lamb although he spoke as Satan. Certainly this is another of Satan’s parodies of Christ. This beast is dependent upon the first beast for he only has authority in its presence. He also lifts up the first beast for worship by mankind and this seems a **parody of the Holy Spirit**. Satan continues to mock God as he always wanted to be God. However there is an important difference between his fake trinity and the Trinity. **God is three in one. Satan is three in three!**

Rev 13:13 “And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

Rev 13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.”

Satan can perform signs for he has some powers. This second beast can make fire come from the sky to earth for the amazement of men. There is no destruction from this fire but perhaps just a lightning strike to get the attention of people. He can only do his powers in the presence of the first beast. He even mocks the Holy Spirit when he points to the first beast by telling mankind to make an image to the first beast. The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus. Of course the Bible tells us over and over not to make any idols. This image will be something very different from standard idols as we see below. He can only deceive those who are not Christians (those who dwell on the earth) and he even has them make an image to the first beast. We see that he is making his followers break the first and second commandments (Exodus 20: 1-6).

Rev 13:15 “And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

John continues to let us know that God is the ultimate authority and these beasts can do nothing that He has not allowed them to do. The allusion to giving breath is also a mockery of God who gives breath of life. But this image is allowed to speak and cause people who do not worship him to be killed. So what is this speaking image or idol? I remember a long time ago that some interpreters were saying that this could be a TV image but we have come past such a rudimentary understanding of such an image. Of course I do not know what this image might be but it sure seems like it could be a hologram. Holograms are fascinating and some physicists are learning how to make them very sophisticated. It is not unreasonable that soon we will see speaking holograms and even such that are more involved. Since the origin of the deaths is his speaking, it is likely that he tells the authorities to kill those who do not worship him in much the same way as was done in Roman times and other times in history.

Rev 13:16 “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead,

Rev 13:17 and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.”

This second beast now causes everyone to be marked in such a way that it could not be hidden. The cause may be that he gives an order to the authorities and by including so many types of people John is telling us that nobody is exempt from this order. This marking may be a parody on the Jews who would wear phylacteries on the left hand or forehead. It also may be a mockery of God’s seal on His people (7:3). It is important to remember that God’s people are still protected but now they would not be able to participate in worldly commerce and this would be a severe persecution on them. The mark is allowed to be either the name of the beast or the number of his name (see below for the numerology). Such a mark could indicate either that the person is a slave to the person or is a devoted follower. Soldiers would sometimes have a tattoo of their leader to indicate their unrestricted obedience. At the time of Caesar people had to obtain a certificate stating that they had offered a sacrifice to Caesar. To obtain such a certificate the person had to deny His allegiance to Jesus Christ and a true disciple would not do that and so would not have the needed paper work to participate in commerce.

Rev 13:18 “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”

I know that you have all heard many applications and interpretations of this number, 666. Some translations give the number as 616. John tells us that it is the number of a man and of an angel. An interesting feature of Hebrew and Greek is that in both written languages there are no numeric characters. We have numbers and letters but their languages only have letters. Therefore the letters are also used as numbers in each language. The first nine letters of the Greek alphabet are used for units, the next for the tens, and so forth. An interesting concept then is that every written word has a numeric equivalent. For an

interesting example we can consider the Greek word for Jesus, which is "iasous." Each letter has a numeric equivalent so, if we know the numerical equivalent, we can add total the numbers in the name and get a value. This process is called digital summing. The numerical total for the name is called the gammatria. Therefore, the gammatria of "Jesus" in Greek consists of the total of the numbers corresponding to the letters in the name with i = 10, a = 8, s = 200, o = 70, u = 400 and s = 200. The gammatria for Jesus in Greek is then 888. Many people have tried to come up with a man's name that totals 666 when the numbers signified by its letters are added. Taking the Latin name for Julius Caesar and converting it to Hebrew and totaling the corresponding numbers can be made to total 666. But why should John have had in mind using the Hebrew equivalent for a Latin name in his Greek writing? Not likely!

The explanation for how we calculate the number of the beast seems very simple to me. Three is the Biblical number for perfection and six is the number for man. The number 666 is thus a mockery of the Trinity and means that man is treated as perfect. I can easily understand in our day that the meaning could be that nobody is allowed to do business of any kind unless he totally subscribes to evolution as the explanation for the existence of life on earth. The world would be totally man-centered much like described in my first book, "A Search for Reality". Already 30 years ago if a physician in Sweden professed to believe in Jesus as the Christ and as his Lord and Savior he would be declared mentally incompetent and not allowed to practice medicine. Today in many of our universities if a professor does not agree totally to the concept of evolution he is ostracized and many have lost their jobs. Having taught for 40 years in secular universities, I have witnessed such maltreatment. As the universities and the main science establishment are trying to rid the U.S. of any form of creation by God as an explanation for the origin of man, I can easily understand that such a possibility could rapidly occur.