

Revelation 13

Outline of the chapter:

- I. In verses 1-10 we see the Beast of the Sea
 - a. We see his appearance in verses 1-2
 - i. Ten horns (each with a crown) and seven heads (each with a blasphemous name)
 - ii. He looks like a leopard with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion
 - b. In verse 2b we see his authority comes from Satan himself
 - c. **His (possible) assassination (13:3a): Some believe he will be killed and then rise from the dead.**
 - d. **His adulation (13:3b-4, 8): Following this the entire world is astonished and worships him.**
 - e. **His arrogance (13:5-6): For a period of forty-two months, he blasphemes God.**
 - f. **His activities (13:7, 9-10)**
 - g. *In regard to God's people* (13:7a, 9-10)
 - i. The cruelty (13:7a, 9-10a): He persecutes and conquers them.
 - ii. The challenge (13:10b): They are exhorted to display endurance and faithfulness.
 - h. *In regard to all people* (13:7b): He rules over them.
- II. THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH (13:11-18): This is the false prophet
 - a. Rev 16:13 identifies this priest as the false prophet
 - b. **His mission (13:11-12): With the appearance of a lamb but the voice of a dragon, he forces the world to worship the Antichrist.**
 - c. **His miracles (13:13, 15): He performs great miracles.**
 - i. *He calls down fire from heaven* (13:13).
 - ii. *He gives life to a statue* (13:14-15): This statue bears the image of the Antichrist.
 - d. **His mark (13:16-18)**
 - i. *What it is* (13:18): It is the number 666.
 - ii. *Where it is applied* (13:16): Either on the right hand or forehead.
 - iii. *Why it is applied* (13:17): No one is able to buy, sell, etc., without it¹

Verse by verse with notes:

- I. In verses 1-10 we see the Beast of the Sea

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Then 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.² And the beast which I saw was like

¹ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 13:3-17.

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. ³ 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; ⁴ 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?" ⁵ There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. ⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

⁷ It was also 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 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.

- a. We see his appearance in verses 1-2
 - i. Ten horns (each with a crown) and seven heads (each with a blasphemous name)
 - ii. He looks like a leopard with feel like a bear and a mouth like a lion.
 - iii. There is great detail to the beasts description. Remember that John uses an Old Testament pool of imagery. The early Jewish people likely would think back to Daniel.
 - iv. Jack Graham shares in his book on pages 93-98 of "All Things New, the Revelation, What it Means and Why it Matters."
 - v. During the great tribulation the battle will intensify and culminate in the battle of Armageddon
 - vi. Everything is not out of control but is governed by God.
 - vii. Satan will make his last stand, his last attempt to entice people away from God and toward eternal demise.
 - viii. The antichrist: Graham believes we first saw the antichrist in Rev 6 when he appeared as a counterfeit Christ riding on a white horse.
 - ix. Here in chapter 13 he is the beast, the final world dictator, the coming prince of darkness.
 - x. Graham believes at first the antichrist will not appear to be a monster at all. He will be attractive, sophisticated, and skilled in persuasion. He will develop dominion over the people of the world, and they will worship him.
 - xi. The antichrist is spirit and person.
 - xii. 1 John 4:3: There are many antichrist.
 - xiii. Satan does not know when the end will come. Jesus said that only the Father in Heaven knows; therefore, satan must always have somebody ready (Matthew 24:36).

- xiv. Anti is against but can also mean “counterfeit.” Satan has always been the counterfeit.
- xv. The antichrist comes out of the sea, this is the turbulence of the tribulation. The son of Satan will make his appearing and gain power in the second half of the tribulation.
- xvi. Revelation 17 speaks of the seas in turmoil as being the languages and the nations and the peoples of the world. So, when it says the beast rises out of the raging sea, it’s an indicator that he is not a Jewish messiah, but a gentile ruler.
- xvii. Ten horns and seven heads are symbolic
- xxviii. Horns=power and authority while crown represents rule.
- xix. Verse 2 goes back to the book of Daniel and the nations. The Babylonian Kingdom is the lion; the Medo-Persian kingdom is the bear; the Greek Kingdom is the leopard (See Daniel 7:3 and following).
- xx. He will be a powerful persuader.
- xxi. **That ends Jack Graham’s thoughts.**
- xxii. The sea, could be that he comes from the sea of peoples.
- xxiii. This man is likely the man that Christ calls the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15.
- xxiv. Henry Morris shares: there is one significant different between the description of the dragon and that of the beast. The dragon had seven crowns (representing kingdoms) and the beast had ten crowns on the ten horns. This suggests that the seven heads were historical kingdoms, the ten horns future kingdoms and their kings receiving crowns only after the seven historical kings and kingdoms have passed from the scene of power. The probable identity of the past kingdoms would be: Sumeria, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
- xxv. On its head were blasphemous names. That cross references with Daniel: Dan 7:8; 11:36; Rev 17:3
- xxvi. There is another view: The beast is not literal but symbolic of the political falleness of Rome, their ideology...persuasion and the false prophet: is emphasizing the religious side of the Roman Empire.
- xxvii. Dr Mulholland: It has been noted at several points that “sea” represents the realm of rebellion or, as Wright puts it, “the sea *represents* evil or chaos” (1992:289). See also notes on 4:6 and 21:1.²

² M. Robert Mulholland Jr., “[Revelation](#),” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 518.

xxviii. **seven heads and ten horns.** “Seven” and “ten” are symbols for totality, completeness, fullness (see note on [12:3](#)).¹³

For a metaphorical view Dr Mulholland shares: In this section John describes the nature of Satan’s war against God’s children—the human race. The war is fought on two fronts, represented by two “beasts.” Each beast is an image for the way in which Satan’s rebellion spreads through human societies.⁴

ESV Study Bible:

Enemies of the Church ([Revelation 13–19](#))

Enemy	Method of Attack
The beast	intimidating violence
The false prophet	deceptive heresy
The prostitute	beguiling affluence

- b. In verse 2b we see his authority comes from satan himself
- c. To me, it does seem that this beast is the antichrist, also called man of lawlessness (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; 2 Thess. 2:3-12). The ESV Study Bible: *Yet the imagery of [Daniel 7](#) that appears in the description of the beast shows that it represents not only a future individual but also present world powers that wage Satan’s war against the Lamb and his church. Most dispensationalists, and many other futurists, think the first beast ([Rev. 13:1–10](#)) is a political world leader and the second beast ([vv. 11–18](#)) is his religious counterpart, who enforces worship of the first beast.*
- d. The ESV Study Bible continues: *The beast looks like a leopard but has feet like a bear’s, a mouth like a lion’s mouth, and ten horns, and it wages “war on the saints” ([v. 7](#)). Thus it resembles all four beasts that Daniel saw emerge from the sea before the Son of Man appeared ([Dan. 7:1–8, 21](#)). As those beasts symbolized kingdoms ([Dan. 7:17, 23](#)), so this beast, a composite of them all, represents every human empire—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and their successors—that demands absolute allegiance and trust, enforcing its demand with coercion. Its 10*

³ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 518.

⁴ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 521.

horns and seven heads mirror those of the dragon ([Rev. 12:3](#)), who gives the beast its great authority.

Satanic Imitations of God's Reality

God's Reality		Satanic Imitation	
the real Trinity (Father, Son [Lamb], Spirit)	1:4–5	the false trinity (dragon, beast, false prophet)	16:13 ; 20:10
Lamb standing, as though it had been slain	5:6	many-headed beast with mortal wound healed	13:3
sealing of the saints	7:2–3	mark of the beast	13:16–18
Bride in white	19:7–8	prostitute in purple and scarlet	17:1–6

- e. **His (possible) assassination (13:3a): Some believe he will be killed and then rise from the dead.**
- f. **The ESV Study Bible:** *Lit., "as slain to death." The beast falsely imitates the Lamb, "standing, as though it had been slain" (5:6; cf. chart). Rome, the manifestation of the beast in John's day, seemed to have been mortally wounded by Nero's suicide (A.D. 68) and the civil chaos that followed, but experienced a "resurrection" in the reigns of Vespasian and his sons Titus and Domitian. Then in Domitian's reign (A.D. 81–96), Nero's beastly persecution of the church also revived. Many interpreters think this verse also predicts a future remarkable recovery of the Antichrist from a deadly wound, a deceptive attempt to parallel Christ's resurrection.*
- g. **His adulation (13:3b–4, 8): Following this the entire world is astonished and worships him.**
- h. They worship him. This mirrors the acclamation often given to Caesar as he entered the cities.
- i. The people also worship the dragon, as we see in verse 4.
- j. Verse 4 shows the dragon, Lucifer, gave authority to the beast.

Dr Mulholland shares:

"The beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God" (13:5). The beast's blasphemy of God is the antithesis of the elders' praise of God:

THE ELDERS (4:10)

Bow before God
(Acknowledge God to be God)

THE BEAST (13:6)

Blasphemes God (Does not acknowledge God to be God)

Worship God (Allow God to be God in their lives)

Blasphemes God's name
(Does not allow God to be God)

Cast their crowns (Yield control of their lives to God)

Blasphemes God's dwelling
(the place where God is in control)

If, as we saw, the actions of the elders represent the deep inner orientation toward God of the citizens of God's realm, New Jerusalem, then the blasphemies of the beast and those who worship him represent the deep inner orientation against God of the citizens of the dragon's realm, fallen Babylon.⁵

- k. They say things like "Who is like..." and "who can wage war with..." These are things that should be said of the Lord: Ex 15:11; Is 46:5
- l. **His arrogance (13:5–6): For a period of forty-two months, he blasphemes God. Blaspheming a name was attacking the person..**
- m. **He was given a mouth to speak these things.** This is the second half of the tribulation period and combined with the first half makes up Daniel's 70th week in Daniel 9:27.
- n. **There** is correlation: Dan 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36; 2 Thess 2:3⁶
- o. **ESV Study Note:** The beast uttered haughty and blasphemous words, like the horn (king) on the fourth beast in Daniel's vision ([Dan. 7:20, 25](#)). forty-two months. Many futurists think this is the second half of the great tribulation.
- p. **Verse 6** shows that he blasphemes against God, His Name, His tabernacle which would be those who dwell in Heaven.
- q. **ESV Study Note:** The identification of God's dwelling as those who dwell in heaven confirms that the measured sanctuary ([11:1](#)) symbolized the worshipers in it. Likewise, the "holy city" is the Lamb's church-bride ([21:2, 9–27](#); see [Eph. 2:22](#)).
- r. **His activities (13:7, 9–10)**
 - i. **He is** making war with the saints.
 - ii. **He** even has authority over all the people (tribe, people and tongue and nation)
 - iii. **Make war- see:** Dan 7:21; Rev 11:7
- s. *In regard to all people* (13:7b): He rules over them.
- t. **ESV Study Note:** *The martyrdom of believers seems to be their defeat, but their death-defying faithfulness conquers the dragon and the beast* ([12:11; 15:2](#)).

⁵ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "[Revelation](#)," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 522.

⁶ [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

- u. **Dr Mulholland:** *This is an expression of God’s sovereignty over the beast. To churches like those in Smyrna and Philadelphia, experiencing tribulation at the hands of their fallen Babylon world, **the vision is an assurance that God is still in control.***⁷
- v. **Dr Mulholland:** *All the conquering in the vision is, with two exceptions, something that the Lamb does (3:21; 5:5; 6:2; 17:14) or the faithful people of God do (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7). The two exceptions are: (1) 11:7, John’s vision of the cross as the consummation of the old covenant—a “conquering” by the beast that is really a terrible defeat; and (2) **here, the** beast’s “conquering” of God’s people.*⁸
- w. Verse 8: all who dwell on the earth worship him.
- x. Verse 8: that means anyone whose name is NOT written in the Lamb’s book of life. Notice the detail describing this book.
 - i. Written from the foundation of the world.
 - ii. Book of life
 - iii. From the Lamb who was slain.
 - iv. ESV Study Bible: Those not enrolled in the Lamb’s book blindly worship the beast and will be cast with it into the lake of fire. The parallel expression in [17:8](#) shows that “before the foundation of the world” is best taken to modify “written” rather than “slain” as in some translations.

Extra detail not to be shared:

They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made—the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered. The alternative rendering (see NLT mg) is better: “They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made.” The progression of the Greek syntax is unmistakable: “the ones whose names were not written”—written where? “in the Book of Life”—what Book of Life? the Book of Life “of the Lamb”—what Lamb? the one “who was killed”—killed when? “before the world was made.” The last phrase *apo katabolēs kosmou* [^{TG}2602/2889, ^{ZG}2856/3180] (from the foundation of the world) immediately follows *esphagmenou* [^{TG}4969, ^{ZG}5377] (having been slain). This translation is found

⁷ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 519.

⁸ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 519.

NLT New Living Translation

mg margin

^{TG} Tyndale-Strong’s Greek number

^{ZG} Zondervan Greek number

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in the KJV and NKJV. However, many other versions (RSV, NRSV, NJB, NET, NASB, ESV) agree with the rendering of the NLT. Why do these translations and commentators¹ interpret the last phrase of the verse so it modifies “written”? The primary rationale comes from considering 17:8, which literally reads, “And they will be amazed, those who dwell upon the earth, of whom has not been written the name upon the book of the life from (the) foundation of (the) world.”⁹

It would seem that many translators and commentators have taken 17:8 as the standard by which 13:8 is to be understood. The conventions of orality, however, would call for 13:8 to be the standard by which 17:8 is understood.² Originally, Revelation would have been read aloud to an audience (cf. 1:3—“the one

KJV King James Version

NKJV New King James Version

RSV Revised Standard Version

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

NJB New Jerusalem Bible

NET The NET Bible

NASB New American Standard Bible

ESV English Standard Version

NLT New Living Translation

¹ Beale represents this group, although he seems to want it both ways. On the one hand, he writes, “these unbelieving multitudes were ordained not to have eternal life from before the creation of the whole [*sic*] world” (1999:700). On the other hand, he says, “the statement about the Lamb’s death is immediately followed by the pre-creation temporal expression. And it is unlikely that the concluding temporal clause goes with ‘written,’ since twelve words separate them” (1999:702). He then “solves” this dilemma by presuming that 13:8 is dependent upon 17:8 and the distance between “written” and “from before the creation of the world” was created to insert “of the Lamb that was slain” as an identification of the Book of Life. As noted in the note on 13:8 and in endnote 2, this flies in the face of the logic of orality. Mounce, however, affirms the reading that indicates it was before the foundation of the world that the Lamb was slain: “It is better in this case to follow the order of the Greek syntax and read, “the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world” (1977:256). Witherington (2003:183) joins Mounce in this understanding.

⁹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 519.

² The NT world was an oral culture. Kelber (1983:xv) argues effectively that “a disproportionately print-oriented hermeneutic” tends to govern contemporary biblical interpretation. Especially apropos for Revelation, Kelber notes, “The teacher lives a life that is paradigmatic in terms of his message. Because in oral hermeneutics words have no existence apart from persons, participation in the message is inseparable from imitation of the speaker” (1983:151). John clearly expects his readers to make the reality of his vision the context of their life, thus identifying both them and himself with the same phrase, “having the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (1:2; 6:9; 20:4), and beginning his communication with “blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written” (1:3, NRSV). How does one “keep” John’s vision

who reads ... and ... all who listen”). One anomaly in the phrase “Book of Life” is the presence of the definite article (*tēs* [^{TG}3588, ^{ZG}3836]) with “life” (*zōēs* [^{TG}2222, ^{ZG}2437]), i.e., “the life” (3:5; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; with a variant form in the Greek of 20:12—“the book that is the life”). I suggest the presence of the article raised expectations that John would identify what specific life was being noted. When the hearers heard the first instance of the phrase “the Book of Life” (3:5) it would raise a question in their minds, “the book of the life of what or whom?” From Jewish tradition and the OT, they would be aware of the fact that God had a book (Exod 32:32–33; Ps 139:16; Dan 12:1; Mal 3:16) and, of course, they would be well aware of “the book of the Law” (Deut 28:61; et al.) often further qualified with “of God,” “of Moses, or “of the Lord.” The phrase, “the book of the life,” however, would be unusual, not being found in the LXX and only once in intertestamental literature (1 *Enoch* 108:3, but there “book of life,” not “book of the life”).

This appearance of the phrase (13:8; cf. NLT mg) resolves their question: It is “the Book of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made.” This creates an entirely new framing of “the Book of Life” for the hearers, a framing which would then color all subsequent uses of the phrase. When, therefore, the listeners hear 17:8, they would naturally “fill in the gaps” from their remembrance of 13:8—i.e., it is the Book of the Life of the Lamb who was slain. This may possibly be confirmed by 21:27, where the qualifier “Lamb’s” is added, presumably because of the distance between 13:8 and 21:27, and the absence of the qualifier in 17:8 and 20:12 and 15 requires its addition here to ensure the hearer goes back to 13:8 rather than to 17:8. The hearing of this new formulation in 13:8 would have been already framed by the vision of God, the woman, in 12:1ff where (as we have seen) John saw that the cross is a revelation of the very essence of God’s nature even before Satan’s rebellion, thus even before the world was created. This is the profound reality which, as Jesus indicated, was hidden from the foundation of the world (Matt 13:35), and which Peter affirms that Jesus, the Lamb, was destined before the foundation of the world to become our Redeemer (1 Pet 1:20).¹⁰

Promises to Overcomers

other than by entering into its reality? That Revelation is written orality can especially be seen in 1:3, where John clearly expects his recipients to hear the account of his vision. In such a setting, later abbreviated elements depend upon earlier introductions of the topic for their full understanding.

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LXX Septuagint

NLT New Living Translation

mg margin

¹⁰ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 519–520.

The following images depict ways in which God will be God to those who conquer (cf. [Rev. 21:7](#)).

Promise	What Will Happen	Fulfillment
2:7	will eat from the tree of life	22:2
2:11	will not be hurt by the second death	20:6 ; 21:7–8
2:17	will be given a white stone	21:11, 18–21
2:26–27 ; 3:21	will reign with Christ on his throne	20:4
2:28	will be given the morning star	21:23 ; 22:5, 16
3:5	will be clothed in bright garments	19:7–8 ; 21:2, 9–10
3:5	name will be in the book of life	21:27
3:12	will be made a pillar in God's temple	21:22–23
3:12	will participate in the new Jerusalem	21:10
3:12	will have God's name written on them	22:4

y. Verse 9: listen

z. The challenge (13:10b): They are exhorted to display endurance and faithfulness.

aa. ESV Study Bible: *Because captivity and sword are God's ordained route to victory for his saints, they must practice endurance. Perseverance is a major theme in Revelation ([12:17](#); [14:12](#); [16:15](#); [17:14](#); [21:7–8](#); [22:7, 10, 12, 14](#); see also "overcoming" in the seven letters, [chs. 2–3](#), and [chart](#)).*

II. THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH (13:11–18): This is the false prophet.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. ¹² 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. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 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. ¹⁵ And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 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, ¹⁷ and he provides that no one will 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. 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.

a. Rev 16:13 identifies this priest as the false prophet

b. Dan 8:3 is a cross reference for Rev 13:11.

- c. **His mission (13:11–12): With the appearance of a lamb but the voice of a dragon, he forces the world to worship the Antichrist.**
- d. **ESV Study Note:** The False Prophet from the Land. *A second beast rose out of the earth to enlist worshipers for the first beast through lying words and miracles. Later called the “false prophet” (16:13; 19:20), this beast wields power through deceptive words. In John’s day the imperial cult in Asia fostered “worship” of the empire and the emperor as divine savior and lawgiver. The abuse of religious devotion to manipulate thoughtless allegiance to the state is an ageless phenomenon.*
- e. Further: *The second beast resembles the Lamb, but its lying words expose its real nature; it is like a dragon (cf. 12:15; 16:13–14; 19:20).*
- f. Notice verse 12, this beast exercises all the authority of the first beast.
- g. It says “in his presence” and this could be translated “by his authority.” So, this false prophet has the power of the first beast (the antichrist) and is under the antichrist’s authority. This is setting up a false trinity.
- h. This false prophet is making the earth and all who dwell in it worship the first beast, the antichrist.
- i. **Now, if you have the view that the beast is not literal but symbolic of the political fallenness of Rome, their ideology...persuasion and the false prophet: is emphasizing the religious side of the Roman Empire we can see how that could fit as well. I don’t lean that way, but that is a Biblical view.**
- j. **His miracles (13:13, 15): He performs great miracles.**
 - i. *He calls down fire from heaven (13:13).* Notice the cross reference.
Remember that even the devil can copy signs and wonders. The false prophet is copying God’s signs. Remember that God originated these and God will judge them later on.

Mt 24:24 *For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

Re 16:14 *For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful.*

Re 19:20 *Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.*

1 Ki 18:38 *Then fire from the LORD fell from the sky. It consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, and the dirt, and licked up the water in the trench.*

Lk 9:54 *Now when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do you want us to call fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”*

2 Th 2:9f *The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan’s working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders, ^{2:10} and with every kind of evil deception directed against those who are perishing, because they found no place in their hearts for the truth so as to be saved.*

- ii. *He gives life to a statue (13:14–15):* This statue bears the image of the Antichrist.

- iii. He deceived those who dwell on the earth, how? Because of the signs which it was given to perform. He performs them in “the presence of the beast...” Or better translated “under the authority of the beast.”
- iv. They are to make an image of the beast.
- v. Notice how it is repeated a number of times (3) that the beast had the wound and has come to life (verses 3, 12 and 14).

Dr Mulholland:

who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. Lit., “who had the wound of the sword and lived.” This rendering misses the significance of the image here, which does not speak of a fatal wound (13:3, 12; see note on 13:3), but of a wound of the sword. The vision here provides insight into the cause of the mortal wound—it is from “the sword.” **But what sword? From the rest of the vision the obvious candidate would seem to be the sword that comes from the mouth of the Messiah (1:16; 2:12; 19:15). The problem is that in 1:16; 2:12; and 19:15, the “sword” is *rhomphaia* [^{TG}4501, ^{ZG}4855], not *machaira* [^{TG}3162, ^{ZG}3479], the latter term being used for the sword of the second rider (6:4) and the instrument that gave the beast its mortal wound (13:14). It appears that the beast is mortally wounded by the sword of his own rebellion.**

John seems to have introduced here, rather obliquely, a reality that the vision later clarifies. It will be seen in 17:16 that there is an internal warfare associated with fallen Babylon. The fallen Babylon/beast complex appears to carry within it the seeds of its own destruction. John sees the harlot, fallen Babylon, seated first on “many waters” (17:1), but also on the scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns (17:3). The “many waters” are subsequently identified as “masses of people of every nation and language” (17:15), one of John’s standard descriptors of the population of fallen Babylon (5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6). Thus, the harlot (fallen Babylon), the citizens of fallen Babylon, and the beast are bound together in an unholy trinity. But John sees that the ten horns upon the beast destroy the harlot (17:16). The very essence of the rebellious order is self-destructiveness. It may be this reality John is alluding to when he sees that the beast’s mortal wound was caused by the same kind of sword (*machaira*) introduced as an attribute of the second rider (6:4), who, it has been seen, is the dragon, Satan, who gives his power, authority, and throne to the beast (17:13).

Prior to 13:14, John has provided another hint at this same reality. In 13:10, those who are to be killed with the sword (*machaira*) will be killed by the sword (*machaira*). As explained in the commentary below, John was making a strong allusion to apostate Israel (Jer 15:2) and to Egypt, where those who refused God’s word through Jeremiah had fled (Jer 43:11). The implication is that to rebel against God results in being killed (or mortally wounded) with the sword (*machaira*).¹¹

- vi. Re 19:20 *Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those*

Lit. literally

^{TG} Tyndale-Strong’s Greek number

^{ZG} Zondervan Greek number

^{TG} Tyndale-Strong’s Greek number

^{ZG} Zondervan Greek number

¹¹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 520.

who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

- vii. Notice verse 15: even the image of the beast gets breath. That image speaks and causes as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Re 13:12 He exercised all the ruling authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and those who inhabit it worship the first beast, the one whose lethal wound had been healed.

Re 14:9 A third angel followed the first two, declaring in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and takes the mark on his forehead or his hand,

Re 14:11 And the smoke from their torture will go up forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night, along with anyone who receives the mark of his name."

Re 16:2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Then ugly and painful sores appeared on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Re 19:20 Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

Re 20:4 Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those who had been given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. These had not worshiped the beast or his image and had refused to receive his mark on their forehead or hand. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

ESV Study Bible:

Since idols "have mouths but cannot speak" ([Ps. 115:5](#)), the impression that the first beast's image has breath and might even speak may simply be another hoax, one with which it deceives those who dwell on the earth. But it is more likely that this describes some kind of miracle worked by demonic power yet still subject to God's sovereign control (it is allowed, [Rev. 13:14](#); cf. [19:20](#); [Deut. 13:1–4](#); [2 Thess. 2:9](#)). Those who refuse to worship the symbol of the state, whether bowing to Nebuchadnezzar's statue ([Daniel 3](#)) or burning incense to the Roman emperor, will be slain.

k. His mark (13:16–18)

- i. *What it is (13:18):* It is the number 666.
- ii. All have to have the mark.
- iii. Small and great
- iv. Rich and poor
- v. Free man and slave
- vi. Right hand or on their forehead.
- vii. *ESV Study Note: The Israelites bore God's law on their hands and foreheads to signify his authority over their deeds and thoughts ([Deut. 6:8](#)). Neither the beast's mark nor the seal of God on believers' foreheads (cf. [Rev. 7:3](#); [14:1](#); cf. also [Ex. 28:36–38](#); [Ezek. 9:4](#)) have to be understood as physical features, though they may be that. Both symbolize the spiritual control of heart*

allegiance and behavior, either by the beast or by the Lamb; but God's seal secures safety.

viii. Again, satan is copying what God has done. See below:

Re 7:3 *“Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”*

Re 14:9 *A third angel followed the first two, declaring in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and takes the mark on his forehead or his hand,*

Re 20:4 *Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those who had been given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. These had not worshiped the beast or his image and had refused to receive his mark on their forehead or hand. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

- ix. Verse 17: no one can buy or sell without the mark. They must have the name of the beast or the number of his name.
- x. Verse 18 is the number. The number must be calculated.
- xi. The number is a man.
- xii. This gets tricky.
- xiii. ESV Study Note:

The number of the beast, which is 666, may symbolize creaturely deficiency as the number of a man in contrast to divine completeness (symbolized by seven). The invitation to one with understanding to calculate this number, however, suggests the use of gematria, an ancient code using the numerical values of letters. Both “beast” and “Nero Caesar,” written in Hebrew characters, add up to 666, but many interpreters expect a future, greater fulfillment in a world ruler who is violently opposed to God and his people.

xiv. NET Bible:

- xv. **tn** Grk “it is man’s number.” *ExSyn 254* states “if ἀνθρώπου 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, ἀριθμός, as definite and the genitive, ἀνθρώπου, 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 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).” See G. K. Beale,

Revelation, [NIGTC], [723–24](#), who argues for the “generic” understanding of the noun; for an indefinite translation, see the ASV and ESV which both translate the clause as “it is the number of a man.”

- xvi. **sn** The translation *man’s number* suggests that the beast’s number is symbolic of humanity in general, while the translation *a man’s number* suggests that it represents an individual.
- xvii. ⁵⁵ **tc** A few mss (Ⲣ¹¹⁵ C, along with a few mss known to Irenaeus {and two minuscule mss , 5 and 11, no longer extant}), read 616 here, and several other witnesses have other variations. Irenaeus’ mention of mss that have 616 is balanced by his rejection of such witnesses in this case. As intriguing as the reading 616 is (since the conversion of Nero Caesar’s name in Latin by way of gematria [alphabetical code of assigning numbers to a name] would come out to 616), it must remain suspect because such a reading seems motivated in that it conforms more neatly to Nero’s gematria.^{1 12, 13}

the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. In the Roman world, as well as the Jewish, there was no system of numbers such as our Arabic numerals. Instead, the letters of the alphabet were used as numbers. This facilitated a process known as gematria—that is, using the values of the letters (i.e., alpha = 1, beta = 2, gamma = 3, etc.) of a person’s name to arrive at their “number.” John is telling us that the number represents a man.

His number is 666. The number “666” has the support of Ⲣ⁴⁷ a A P m Irenaeus Hippolytus. A variant reading is “616,” which has the support of Ⲣ¹¹⁵ C and other mss (according to Irenaeus). The textual history of this passage gives us another important clue to understanding the identity of the person. While strong

¹² Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Re 13:18. NIGTC NIGTC *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (a commentary series) ASV ASV American Standard Version (1901)

tc tc Text-critical Note—discusses alternate (variant) readings found in the various manuscripts and groups of manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament.

ExSyn ExSyn Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament

¹³ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Re 13:3–17.

Ⲣ Rev 9–17; 3rd

⁴⁷ Rev 9–17; 3rd

A (Alexandrinus) most of NT; 5th

P (Porphyrianus) Acts—Revelation; 9th

m Majority Text

Ⲣ Rev 2–3, 5–6, 8–15; 3rd

¹¹⁵ Rev 2–3, 5–6, 8–15; 3rd

C (Ephraemi Rescriptus) most of NT with many lacunae; 5th mss manuscripts

textual evidence gives the number as “666,” other manuscripts have “616.” This opens an intriguing possibility.

In the Roman world of John’s day the name of the emperor Nero would have appeared in two basic forms: Greek = Neron Caesar, and Latin = Nero Caesar. If the letters are transliterated into the Hebrew alphabet, the value for the first is 666, for the second 616! This may sound far-fetched, but John has already played with Greek and Hebrew at 9:11, and will do so again at 16:16. Since John conveyed his vision in Greek, the language of the eastern Mediterranean, the reading “666” (corresponding to the Greek spelling) appears in the earliest and strongest manuscripts. The reading “616” has only slightly less textual evidence, especially P^{15} , a third-century papyrus and the uncial manuscript C, a fifth-century manuscript that is a strong witness in Revelation. Since these are Greek manuscripts, however, it would seem that a scribe who knew Latin and, most likely, was preparing a copy of Revelation for a primarily Latin speaking audience “interpreted” the original “666” as “616” for his Latin readers. Another possibility is that the Greek manuscripts with “616” were developed from a Latin translation in which the shift from “666” to “616” had taken place. However it came into being, it seems most likely that the “616” reading was an adaptation of John’s gematria for Latin speakers.¹⁴

P Rev 2–3, 5–6, 8–15; 3rd

¹⁵ Rev 2–3, 5–6, 8–15; 3rd

¹⁴ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., [“Revelation,”](#) in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011), 520–521.