**THOUGHT FOR TODAY: When we work, we work. When we pray God works.**

**John’s vision of the 1st beast rising from the sea.**

[**Revelation 13 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.**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/1/s_1180001)

* The act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God
* The act of claiming the attributes of God

1. **Then I stood on the sand of the sea**: In [**Revelation 12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/1-18/s_1179001), John’s vision mainly had *heaven* in view. Now the scene of his vision shifted to the earth, and in his vision, he **stood on the sand of the sea**.
2. **And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea**: The ancient Greek word translated **beast** here has the idea of a wild, dangerous animal. Because John calls him a **beast** and not a *dragon* (as in [**Revelation 12:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/3/s_1179003)), this creature represents someone distinct from Satan who was ***embodied*** by the dragon ([**Revelation 12:9**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/9/s_1179009)).
3. **Having seven heads and ten horns**: Though this **beast** is distinct from the dragon of [**Revelation 12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/1-18/s_1179001), he is still closely identified with him. He is ***not*** the dragon, but he is ***like*** him, because the dragon also had **seven heads and ten horns** ([**Revelation 12:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/11/3/s_1178003)).
4. Any creature with **seven heads** would be hard to kill, because if you wounded one head, six still remained.
   1. In Biblical imagery **horns** express strength and power. A bull with two horns is a powerful creature, but a **beast** with **10 horns** has that much more power — just like the dragon of [**Revelation 12:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/3/s_1179003).
5. This likeness to Satan is just one of the things that identifies this **beast** with the one popularly known as the *Antichrist*.
   1. The word *Antichrist* or *antichrists* only appears in the Bible 5 times in 4 verses ([**1 John 2:18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/18/s_1161018)**,** [**2:22**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/22/s_1161022)**,** [**4:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/4/3/s_1163003)**,** and [**2 John 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2jo/1/7/s_1165007)).
   2. [**1 John 2:18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/18/s_1161018) **Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.**
   3. With this, John referred to an individual who has captured the imagination of many people, some who don’t even know the Bible. But many are ignorant about this person called *the Antichrist*, except what they have learned from movies like *The Omen*.
6. We must begin by understanding what the title *Antichrist* means.
   1. The prefix ***anti*** may mean “the opposite of” or “instead of.” The Antichrist is the “opposite Jesus”; he is the “instead of” Jesus.
   2. Most people have focused on the idea of the “opposite Jesus.” This has made them think that the Antichrist will appear as a supremely evil person, that as much as Jesus went around doing good, he will go around doing bad. As much as Jesus’ character and personality was beautiful and attractive, the Antichrist’s character and personality will be ugly and repulsive. As much as Jesus spoke only truth, the Antichrist will speak only lies. This emphasizes the idea of the “opposite Jesus” too much.
      1. **2 Thessalonians 2:7-12 (Believe a Lie and be Dammed)**

**For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.**

**This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.**

* 1. The Antichrist will instead be more of an “instead of Jesus.” He will look wonderful, be charming and successful. He will be the ultimate winner, and appear as an angel of light. In this sense the Antichrist will be a satanic messiah, *instead of* the true Messiah Jesus Christ.
  2. In [**1 John 2:18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/18/s_1161018), John also spoke of *the Antichrist and many antichrists*. There is a “*spirit*” of antichrist, and this “*spirit*” of antichrist will one day find its ultimate fulfillment in ***the Antichrist***, who will lead humanity in an end-times rebellion against God.
  3. In other words, though the world still waits to see the ultimate revelation of the Antichrist, there are little “previews” of this man and his mission to come. These are the *antichrists* with a little “a.
  4. Though we commonly call this coming world leader the Antichrist, the Bible gives him many names or titles. He is also known as:
     1. The *little horn* of [**Daniel 7:8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/8/s_857008).
     2. The *king of fierce countenance* of [**Daniel 8:23**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/8/23/s_858023).
     3. *The Prince that shall come* of [**Daniel 9:26**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/9/26/s_859026).
     4. The *willful king* of [**Daniel 11:36-45**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/11/36-45/s_861036).
     5. The one who comes *in his own name* of [**John 5:43**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/jhn/5/43/s_1002043), whom Israel will receive as a messiah.
     6. *The son of perdition, the man of sin, the lawless one* of [**2 Thessalonians 2:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2th/2/3/s_1118003).

1. **And on his horns ten crowns**: This is something *different* about the **beast** compared to the dragon of [**Revelation 12:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/3/s_1179003), who had *seven diadems on his heads*. The seven crowns of the dragon expressed his strength and power, because seven is a number associated with strength and completeness. The ***10* crowns** of the **beast** express his rule over a group of ***10*** nations. (We heard this on 12/19/23, 10 Nations are coming together to discuss Israel war and the remaining hostages.)
2. Most commentators think that the **10 horns** are distributed among the 7 heads, but David Hocking sees all **ten horns** upon one of the heads. The figure of **ten horns** also associates this **beast** with the beast of [**Daniel 7:7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/7/s_857007), which represent the final world empire of the Antichrist, which the Messiah will ultimately conquer: *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns*. ([**Daniel 7:7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/7/s_857007))
3. In Daniel’s vision, the *ten horns* specifically represented *ten kingdoms* that this final world dictator has authority over ([**Daniel 7:24**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/24/s_857024)). In John’s vision the **ten crowns** on the **ten horns** emphasize this idea.
4. The visions of [Daniel 7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001) and [Daniel 2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/2/1-49/s_852001) also connect the governments represented by the **ten crowns** with the ancient Roman Empire. In those visions, Daniel saw three successive world empires, each succeeded by a fourth — which in the context of the visions is plainly the Roman Empire. In the days of that fourth empire the Messiah will come, destroy all earthly rule and reign over the earth. Since we do not see the reign of Jesus on earth in the way Daniel prophesied, we can see that the Roman Empire will “resume” in some way, expressed by this collection of **ten crowns**.
5. **And on his heads a blasphemous name**: The seven heads of the **beast** each advertise blasphemy against God. This speaks of more than the beast’s message; it speaks of his character. He is a blasphemer, who speaks against God (as in [**Daniel 7:25**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/25/s_857025)).

**The description of the beast of the sea again connects it to images from** [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001)**.**

[**Revelation 13:2**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/2/s_1180002) **Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a be*ar, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.**

1. **Like a leopard… a bear… a lion**: In this vision, God used images from Daniel’s vision of [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001) to communicate the identity and nature of this **beast** to John. [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001) used four animals (*beasts*) to describe the course of human government from Daniel’s time until the ultimate reign of Jesus on this earth.
2. The first three animals are a **lion** (in Daniel, a picture of the Babylonian Empire), a **bear** (a picture of Medo-Persian Empire), and a **leopard** (a picture of the Greek Empire). The fourth animal was a dreadful, indescribable beast which shared the most terrifying characteristics of the previous beasts, yet represents the final world empire under the leadership of a Satanic dictator ([**Daniel 7:7-8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/7-8/s_857007)).
3. John presents this **beast** as the extension of the fourth beast of [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001), connecting his empire with the characteristics of the great empires of the past. This final world empire will have the catlike vigilance of a **leopard**, the slow and crushing power of a **bear**, and the authority and ferociousness of a **lion**.
4. Since the beasts of [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001) represented empires more than specific men, some have thought that the **beast** of [**Revelation 13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/1-18/s_1180001) is not a person, but a government or a cultural system. Many believe the beast is a broad picture of totalitarian governments, especially the totalitarian states of the 20th century. For example, Mounce writes: “The beast has always been, and will always be, in a final intensified manifestation, the deification of secular authority”
   1. (Mounce). But others see the **beast** as a person, specifically the Antichrist — the final Satanic dictator who leads the world in rebellion against God. Some (like David Hocking) combine the approaches and say that the beast is a modern, world totalitarian government, *but* the one head that has ten horns is specifically the Antichrist — the leader of this beast of a final satanic dictatorship. But with any empire, especially brief empires, the government is almost totally identified with the ruler. When we think of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the figures of Adolph Hitler as an individual and Nazi Germany as a state are virtually the same.
5. **Now the beast which I saw**: All the indications in [**Revelation 13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/1-18/s_1180001) are that the **beast** is a man, though he is closely identified with his world-dominating government.
   1. (Seiss) “The Beast is worshipped as a god; but people never worship an empire as such; neither do they make a succession of emperors into an object of religious devotion. The paying of divine homage to kings has been a common thing in the world’s history, but it has always been rendered to individuals.”
   2. An image is set up of the beast, and the whole world is *commanded to worship it*. This makes far more sense if the **beast** is a man more than an empire or a government. Through history, men have often bowed down to an image of a political ruler.
   3. (Seiss) “This Beast also has a proper name — a name expressive of a particular number, and that number ‘a number of *a man*;’ which cannot be conceived except on the idea of an individual person.”
   4. (Seiss) “This beast is finally damned. He goes to perdition, into the lake of fire, where he continues to exist and suffer, after passing from this earthly scene ([**Revelation 17:11**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/17/11/s_1184011)**;** [**20:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/10/s_1187010)), which cannot be true of systems of government.”
   5. The antichrist is also called *the son of perdition* ([**2 Thessalonians 2:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2th/2/3/s_1118003)**),** as was Judas ([**John 17:12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/jhn/17/12/s_1014012)). Judas was a man, not a system or a government, so it follows that the antichrist will also be a man.
   6. With all this in mind, we agree with (Seiss): “We would therefore greatly err from the Scriptures, as well as from the unanimous conviction and teaching of the early Church, were we to fail to recognize this Beast as *a real person*, though one in whom the political power of the world is finally concentrated and represented.”
6. **The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority**: This world leader is really empowered and supported by Satan. Through this man, Satan will express his own desire and authority. In this, the **beast** takes the offer that Jesus refused ([**Matthew 4:8-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/4/8-10/s_933008)).

**The beast and his wound.**

[**Revelation 13:3**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/3/s_1180003) **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.**

1. **One of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded**: This is a *head* wound, a *mortal* wound, not a superficial injury.
2. **And his deadly wound was healed**: The recovery of the beast increases his fame and authority (**all the world marveled and followed the beast**). Twice later ([**Revelation 13:12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/12/s_1180012) and [**13:14**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/14/s_1180014)) this recovery is mentioned in connection to the world’s worship and devotion to the beast.
3. Some who see the beast not as a man but as a government see this as the revival of the Roman Empire, fulfilling [**Daniel 7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/7/1-28/s_857001). In this perspective, the Roman Empire has been *dead* but will again be *revived*, and the world will marvel. Yet the most natural way to understand John’s words in [**Revelation 13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/1-18/s_1180001) make us believe that he speaks of a man who will be **mortally wounded** and then **healed**. The man will lead a revived Roman Empire, and his personality will dominate it — yet he and the empire are not exactly the same.
4. **Wounded… healed**: This is truly an *Anti*christ, who even imitates Jesus in His death and resurrection. The world will believe this, and it will add tremendously to his fame and power.

**The authority and popularity of the beast.**

[**Revelation 13:4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/4/s_1180004) **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?”**

1. **So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast**: As people worship this beast and bow down before his government, it may be that they do not know they are bowing down to Satan himself; but it is worship of Satan none the less. They clearly worship both the **beast** and the **dragon**, but their worship of the dragon may be unknowing.
   1. Though Satan worship becomes more and more popular each year, it is still only a tiny fraction of people who openly worship Satan. But this is because more people expect Satan to appear with ugliness and horror, this is incorrect
   2. [**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2co/11/14-15/s_1089014) **And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.**
2. **Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?** The world will be amazed at the power of the beast, and will believe he is so mighty that he cannot be conquered. For a time, the beast will look like a tremendous *winner*. When he blasphemes Jesus and persecutes God’s people, they will appear to be complete losers — for a short time.
   1. They worship the beast, and the dragon behind the beast, simply because of the beast’s might.
   2. (Robertson) “Worship of the devil and the devil’s agent is justified purely on the ground of brute force.”

**The beast’s blasphemies.**

[**Revelation 13:5-6**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/5-6/s_1180005) **And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.**

1. **Speaking great things and blasphemies**: “Blasphemer” may be a more accurate title than “Antichrist” for this end-times dictator. This beast is a man who speaks against God and everything God stands for (**His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven**).
   1. Some Roman Emperors blasphemed God this way; but they did not fulfill these prophecies, even if they did prefigure their fulfillment.
2. **And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months**: The beast continues without restraint by God for a period of **forty-two months** — the familiar three and one-half years. The duration of the period shows that the beast has full reign for the first half of the final seven years, and that during the whole time he is still under God’s authority.
3. Why does the beast **blaspheme… those who dwell in heaven**? This could mean that he speaks against those who were taken in the rapture, and are therefore out of his reach.

**The beast makes war against the saints.**

[**Revelation 13:7-8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/7-8/s_1180007) **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. 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.**

1. **It was granted to him to make war with the saints**: [**Revelation 12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/12/1-18/s_1179001) described the broad phenomenon of Satanic persecution during the tribulation period. Here, the main instrument of that persecution is revealed: the government of the beast will persecute and kill all those who do not bow in worship to the beast.
2. **To overcome them**: **Overcome** does not mean that the beast can overcome the faith of the saints, but that he can destroy their physical lives, and by all appearances defeat the cause of God’s people on this earth.
   1. Who are these **saints** who are **overcome** by the beast? Various views of the timing of the rapture will determine who these persecuted ones are. Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God’s people who come to Christ after the church has been raptured. Those who believe in a post-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God’s people who are on the earth before the final rapture, including what we think of today as the “church.”
   2. Jesus said of the church, that *the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it* ([**Matthew 16:18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/16/18/s_945018)). If this group of saints (a term not exclusively applied to the New Testament church) is overcome by Satan, perhaps they are not the same New Testament *church* that Jesus spoke of.
3. **All who dwell on the earth will worship him**: This final world dictator will demand and receive worship from the whole **earth**. But those who **worship him** pay the price: they are those **whose names have not been written in the Book of Life**.
4. *How* will **all who dwell on the earth… worship him**? It will probably be after the pattern of the worship demanded by the Roman Emperors in the days of the early church. There were times in the early church when all residents in the empire were required to burn a pinch of incense before a statue of Caesar and say, *Caesar is Lord*.
   1. Christians who refused to do this were persecuted because of it. The Romans saw it as an act of *political* allegiance, but the Christians saw it as an act of religious worship.
   2. After the great and terrible totalitarian rulers of the 20th Century (Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao), it isn’t hard to imagine a dominating world leader demanding such a declaration of allegiance, tantamount to worship.
5. The **Book of Life** contains the names of all God’s *redeemed* ([**Revelation 20:15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/15/s_1187015) **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**
6. **The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**: This deeply meaningful title for Jesus reminds us that God’s *plan of redemption* was set in place before He even created the beings who would be redeemed. God wasn’t “surprised” by the fall of Adam or any other evidence of the fallen nature of man. God isn’t making it up as He goes along. It is all going according to plan.
   1. God the Son had a relationship of love and fellowship with God the Father *before the foundation of the world* ([**John 17:24**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/jhn/17/24/s_1014024)).
   2. The work of Jesus was ordained *before the foundation of the world* ([**1 Peter 1:20**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1pe/1/20/s_1152020)).
   3. God chose His redeemed *before the foundation of the world* ([**Ephesians 1:4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/eph/1/4/s_1098004)).
   4. Names are written in the Book of Life *before the foundation of the world* ([**Revelation 17:8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/17/8/s_1184008)).
   5. The kingdom of heaven was prepared for the redeemed *before the foundation of the world* ([**Matthew 25:34**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/25/34/s_954034)).

**A warning to all.**

[**Revelation 13:9-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/9-10/s_1180009) **If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 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.**

1. **He who has an ear, let him hear**: This introduces a solemn word of warning, meant to capture the attention of all who hear.
2. **He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity**: This means that the functionaries of the beast are not without guilt. Though these things are prophesied and part of God’s predetermined plan, it does not lessen in the slightest way man’s personal responsibility. If you work for the beast and lead others **into captivity**, you certainly **shall go into captivity** yourself. God will measure unto you what you have measured to others.
   1. This may have a secondary or additional meaning: there is no hope in fighting against the Antichrist. The only way of victory is steadfast faith and endurance in Jesus.
3. **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints**: Though they are viciously attacked by the Antichrist and his followers, the **saints** of God must keep steadfast **faith** in the ultimate justice of God. He will reward their persecutors with persecution of His own.

**John’s initial description of this 2nd beast rising from the land.**

[**Revelation 13:11**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/11/s_1180011) **Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.**

1. **Then I saw *another* beast**: This creature represents someone *like* the beast rising from the sea, because the same word **beast** is used to describe them both. At the same time, *this* ***beast*** *is different*.
   1. They are different in origin, because one comes *out of the sea*, the other **out of the earth**.
   2. They are different in rank, because the second is subordinate to the first (*causes the earth… to worship the first beast*, [**Revelation 13:12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/12/s_1180012)).
   3. They are different in appearance, because the second has a mild, “lamb-like” appearance.
2. **And he had two horns like a lamb**: The **two horns** may express the fact that this beast has authority in two realms, such as religious and political authority. Or, he may have **two horns** simply because that’s how many horns lambs have (**two horns like a lamb**).
3. **Spoke like a dragon**: Despite his lamb-like appearance, the message of the second beast is the same as the message of the first beast.
4. This second beast is called *the* ***false prophet*** ([**Revelation 16:13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/16/13/s_1183013)**,** [**19:20**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/19/20/s_1186020)**,** [**20:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/20/10/s_1187010)), as someone distinct from the first beast (the Antichrist) and the dragon (Satan).
5. With the dragon, the beast rising from the sea, and the beast rising from the land we have an ***unholy trinity***. The dragon is the *anti-Father*, the beast rising from the sea is the *anti-Christ*, and the beast rising from the land is the *anti-Holy Spirit*.

**The second beast’s “job description.”**

[**Revelation 13:12-15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/12-15/s_1180012) **(NKJV) 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. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 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. 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.**

1. **He exercises all the authority of the first beast**: The beast rising from the earth is essentially a Satanic prophet, who leads the world to **worship** the beast and the dragon.
   1. It may seem fantastic to some that the world will be led into worship of a man and of the devil. But by nature, men have an undeniable religious impulse, and they also have an undeniable rebellion against God. What men want most is not the elimination of religion, *but they want their own religion*. They say they want the kingdom, but they don’t want God in it.
2. **He performs great signs**: The beast rising from the sea has the “signs and wonders” to back up his false teaching. A specific miracle of the false prophet is described: **he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men**.
   1. It is important that John highlights *this* miracle. In the eyes of the deceived world, it answers the miracle of the two witnesses, who minister during this period and are persecuted by the Antichrist and his false prophet ([**Revelation 11:5**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/11/5/s_1178005)).
   2. To the deceived world, this also puts this false prophet in the class of Elijah ([**1 Kings 18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1ki/18/1-46/s_309001)). We can imagine the false prophet as saying, “Let the true God answer with fire” and then performing his deceptive wonder.
   3. (Seiss) “There is a supernatural power which is *against* God and truth, as well as one *for* God and truth. A miracle, simply as a work of wonder, is not necessarily of God. There has always been a devilish supernaturalism in the world, running alongside of the supernaturalism of divine grace and salvation.”
   4. In the days of the Exodus, Aaron performed miracles, and up to a point was matched miracle-for-miracle by the magicians of Egypt ([**Exodus 7-9**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/exo/7/1-25/s_57001)).
   5. In [**Deuteronomy 13:1-5**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/deu/13/1-5/s_166001), God knows there will be supernatural works on behalf of false prophets and idols, and He warns His people to judge a worker of miracles by their message, not only by their works.
      1. Jesus said that some who worked miracles — *even in His name* — were false followers and would perish in hell ([**Matthew 7:22-23**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/7/22-23/s_936022)).
      2. Jesus said that in the end times, false prophets would emerge and *show great signs and wonders to deceive* ([**Matthew 24:24**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/24/24/s_953024)).
      3. Paul said that the Antichrist will come *with all power, signs, and lying wonders* ([**2 Thessalonians 2:9**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2th/2/9/s_1118009)).
      4. Knowing all this, the emphasis on *signs and wonders* among some Christians is frightening. Some Christians say or think, “You can really know where God is and where His power is by signs and wonders.” Thinking this way is to leave yourself wide open to deception.
         1. Years ago there was a large, multi-denominational conference of people who thought this way, and their slogan read “Unity Under Signs and Wonders.” That’s a unity that Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet could all join in. Signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God’s work are love and truth.
   6. **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**: The beast rising from the earth will use a deceptive, animated **image** as the focus point of the worship of the beast.
      1. It may seem strange to us to have the whole world give this kind of worship to the image of a man, but the personality cults of totalitarian governments in the twentieth century are a good example of this kind of worship.
      2. All we have to do is remember totalitarian states like the Soviet Union or Communist China, and their omnipresent pictures of Stalin or Mao and we see a pattern that will be ultimately fulfilled by the Antichrist.
      3. The image of the beast is animated in some way, in that it has **breath** and can **speak**. Whether the image is animated supernaturally or technologically, the result will be impressive.
      4. The Psalmist mocked idol worshippers because *the idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not* ([**Psalm 135:15-16**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/135/15-16/s_613015)). This image of the Antichrist will be a different kind of idol, because **the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed**.
      5. This idolatrous image is what Jesus, Daniel, and Paul spoke of as *the abomination of desolation* ([**Daniel 9:27**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/dan/9/27/s_859027)**,** [**Matthew 24:15**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/24/15/s_953015)**, and** [**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2th/2/3-4/s_1118003)). It is an idolatrous image set up in the holy place of a rebuilt temple; it is an *abomination* in the sense of being supreme idolatry, and it is *desolation* in the sense that it will bring the judgment described by the seals, trumpets, and bowls.

**The economic strategy of the first beast and the second beast.**

[**Revelation 13:16-17**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/16-17/s_1180016) **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, 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.**

1. **He causes all… to receive a mark**: Under the government of the beast and his associate, all will be given a **mark**. Without the mark, one will not be able to participate in the economy (**no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark of his name**).
   1. Since the ancient Greek word for **mark** (*charagma*) isn’t generally applied to people, some have taken this as a symbolic mark. But a literal mark needed to buy or sell is certainly conceivable and practical.
   2. The technology to give people a mark that enables them to buy and sell in the electronic economy is available. There are many different ways it could happen, and such programs are proposed and tested constantly.
2. **A mark on their right hand or on their foreheads**: Satan is not a creative being; all he can do is imitate God. We are not surprised to find that this too is a Satanic parody of something God will do; it imitates God’s mark upon his people ([**Revelation 7:3-4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/7/3-4/s_1174003)).
3. **The number of his name**: This was a common concept in the ancient world. In Greek (and Hebrew as well), letters were assigned a numerical value, such as “A” equaling 1, “B” equaling 2, and so forth. For example, graffiti in the ruins of Pompeii reads “I love her whose number is 545.”

**The number of the beast.**

[**Revelation 13:18**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/13/18/s_1180018) **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.***

1. **His number is 666**: Does this tell us who the beast is, by figuring out the numerical value of a name and seeing if it adds up to 666? Using this method, many candidates for Antichrist have been suggested, such as the *Pope* or the Papacy, *John Knox*, *Martin Luther*, *Napoleon*, *Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin*, and so forth. But the schemes for unlocking the **number of the beast** are as confusing as they are endless.
2. **It is the number of a man**: One persistent opinion, especially in the early church, was that this number identified the Antichrist with Caesar Nero. But to make the name “Caesar Nero” fit, one must take a variant spelling of the Greek form of a Latin name, transliterated into Hebrew characters.
   1. Modern interpretations of the idea of the Antichrist are full of the idea of some demon-child, marked by obvious evil from his birth, such as in the *Omen* movies. But the Antichrist may be someone whose evil is only seen *after* his rise to power.
3. **His number is 666**: Christians need not *fear* the number *666* in a superstitious way; but it interesting to see the way the world has an attachment to this number — even with things like “666” brand *cough syrup*.
4. The two beasts are Satanic imitations, Satan ***can’t create***, but he can effectively *deceive with imitation*.
   1. Imitations work precisely because *they are similar*; if they were so obviously different, it would be easy to tell the difference. We must beware and be familiar with the genuine.
   2. Instead of obsessing with fear and interest about the imitation — how much more appropriate is it for Christians to be interested in the genuine: ***Jesus Christ.***