

Revelation 13 - All the Earth Worships the Beast

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COURSE  COMMENTARY 

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13:1 - a beast from the sea

- **I saw a beast**

John sees two beasts. The first beast is *Antichrist*:

- 1) Seven heads and ten horns like the dragon.
- 2) A deadly wound which was healed.
- 3) The object of worldwide worship.

- **out of the sea**

Daniel's four beasts also rose from the sea ([Dan. 7:2-3](#)). This speaks of the Gentile origin of the first beast's kingdom. The second beast is from the *earth* which may indicate his origin from the land of Israel, or that he is Jewish.

- **seven heads**

Like the dragon ([Rev. 12:3](#)), the first beast has seven heads. These heads probably represent seven world kingdoms which culminate in the Beast as the seventh: 1) Sumerial (Babel) or Egypt; 2) Egypt or Assyria; 3) Babylon; 4) Medo-Persia; 5) Greece (Alexander); 6) Rome; 7) The beastly kingdom. See [Rev. 17:9-10](#). After revival from his wound, there is an "eighth head" ([Rev. 17:11](#)).

- **ten horns**

Like the dragon ([Rev. 12:3](#)), these are on the *last* head -- as Daniel saw ([Dan. 7:7](#)). They are identified as *kings* ([Dan. 7:24](#); [Rev. 17:12-13](#)).

13:2 - leopard, bear, lion

- **like a leopard... bear... lion**

The characteristics of the first three of Daniel's beasts: Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, are incorporated into the beastly kingdom ([Dan. 7:12](#)). This kingdom also has ties to Rome. The final beast in Daniel's vision continues until the end ([Dan. 2:41](#); [Dan. 7:23](#)) and the "people of the prince to come" ([Dan. 9:26](#)) were Romans who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.

- **the dragon gave him his power**

He is energized by Satan ([2Th. 2:9](#)).

13:3 - his wounded head was healed

- **one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded**

This is the seventh head ([Rev. 17:10-11](#)). "As if it has been mortally wounded" is the same phrase used of the Lamb in Revelation [5:6](#).

- **his deadly wound was healed**

The healing of his wound is the catalyst for his worship ([Rev. 13:12, 14](#); [17:11](#)). This is probably

the "foolish shepherd" ([Zec. 11:12-17](#)).

13:4 - who is like the beast?

- [so they worshiped the dragon](#)
This may or may not be explicit worship. At this point, there is only *one person* who will claim to be **god** . The answer to this dilemma is probably found in understanding the relationship between the dragon and the beast as one of *possession* .
- [they worshiped the beast](#)
His miraculous revival is the catalyst for worldwide worship. This refers to a revived *individual* , not a revived *kingdom* . This is the point where the "abomination of desolation" is initiated ([Dan. 11:36-37](#); [Mat. 24:15](#); [2Th. 2:3-4](#)).
- [who is like the beast?](#)
His revival from the dead and defeat of the two witnesses ([Rev. 11:7](#)) will make him appear unstoppable!

13:5-6 - a blasphemous mouth

- [a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies](#)
A well-established characteristic of the Antichrist ([Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25](#); [11:36](#)).
- [to continue forty two months](#)
This is the "time and times and half a time," a period of three and one half 360-day years ([Dan. 7:25](#)). This begins at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th week, when the Beast breaks his covenant ([Dan. 9:27](#)) and overcomes the two witnesses ([Rev. 11:7](#)). This is the period when "the power of the holy people" is completely shattered ([Dan. 12:7](#)), while the holy city is being tread underfoot ([Rev. 11:2](#)) and the woman flees to the wilderness ([Rev. 12:6](#)).

13:7 - war with the saints

- [it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them](#)
Nothing takes place, especially against God's elect, without God's permission. Understanding His sovereignty is *extremely important!* Daniel saw this sobering reality: ([Dan. 7:21, 25](#)).
- [authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation](#)
Global control, as prophesied by Daniel [7:23](#). This was never fulfilled by Rome in John's day.

13:8 - earth dwellers worship him

- [All who dwell on the earth will worship him](#)
This does not refer to every *person* walking the face of the planet. This is a special phrase designating those who persist in rebellion and rejection at the time of the end. They are *historically unique*. They pass the point of no return--they are destined for the Lake of Fire ([Rev. 14:9-11](#)).
- [names not written in the Book of Life](#)
Unlike other names which are blotted out, these were *never written!* This is a special category of people who refuse to repent in the face of overwhelming evidence for God. These are the ones He sends His delusion upon ([2Th. 2:11-12](#)).

13:9-10 - let him hear!

- **if anyone has an ear, let him hear**

Where is the phrase "what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7, etc.) ? The church is gone from the earth, having been raptured to heaven!

- **leads into captivity, kills with the sword**

There are significant textual variations at this verse. It could indicate retribution by God's justice (Mat. 26:52) or indicate the need to cling to God's sovereignty (Rom. 8:35-37 cf. Ps. 44:22). The Majority Text favors the latter understanding.

13:11 - a beast from the earth

- **another beast**

"Another" is *allos*, another of a similar kind to the first beast. Elsewhere he is called the "false prophet" (Rev. 19:20; 20:10). He is not an institution, but an *individual* for he is personally cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). With Satan and the Beast (Antichrist), he comprises a "satanic trinity" of sorts.

- **out of the earth**

This may indicate a Jewish origin. Some take this to indicate an origin from *beneath* the earth, but there is no support elsewhere for this idea. Only the first beast is said to be from the abyss.

- **two horns like a lamb, spoke like a dragon**

Two is the number of witness, he is the primary witness to the first beast. He *appears* to be a lamb, but he is really a **dragon** !

13:12 - in his presence

- **all the authority of the first beast in his presence**

As the Holy Spirit is to Christ, so the False Prophet is to the Antichrist. He employs the *full* power of the first beast as given to him by the dragon. We must not underestimate what he is capable of! His power is carefully controlled--he is on a leash!

- **causes earth dwellers to worship the first beast**

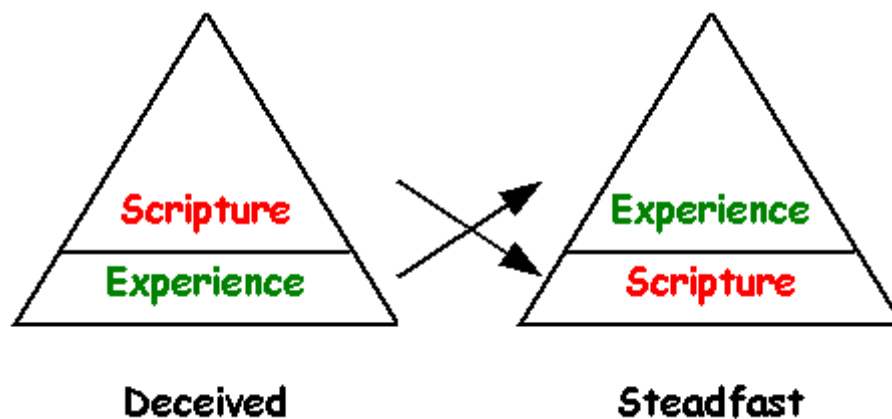
Here is the alliance of religion and state at the time of the end! He functions to direct religious affection to the state leader who eventually claims deity. As John the Baptist pointed to Messiah Jesus, so he may fulfill similar expectations (Deu. 18:15-18; John 1:21).

13:13 - great signs

- **he performs great signs**

This is exactly as Paul predicted (2Th. 2:9-11) ! The earth dwellers will be subjected to incredible deception for *God* will send them delusion!

- **signs are unreliable indicators of God!**



13:14 - make an image

- **make an image to the beast**

Jesus said "the abomination of desolation" would *stand* in the holy place. It is an *object or idol* (Mat. 24:15). There appear to be two stages to the desolation: 1)

The Beast (Antichrist) sits in the temple proclaiming himself to be god (2Th. 2:4).

2) The image is set up as a focal point of worship.

13:15 - the image breaths

- **granted power to give breath to the image**

This is the apex of the signs of the False Prophet--the image is brought to life (Gen. 2:7; Rev. 11:11). Men have previously worshiped lifeless idols. This living idol will be extremely compelling.

- **cause as many as would not worship the image to be killed**

This is the point of no return: take the mark and live destined for damnation, or refuse and die destined for eternal life. Those who take the mark are *irredeemable* (Rev. 14:9). This event is typified by the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's statue under penalty of death (Dan. 3:5).

13:16 - receive a mark

- **to receive a mark**

"Mark" is *cha'ragma* from *charasso* meaning "to engrave, mark or stamp." An indication of absolute loyalty to the Beast. There is no mention of individualized marks: the *same mark* is received by all.

- **on their right hand**

A low-technology approach, such as a tattoo, is more suitable for the disruptive time of the end. A low-tech solution is also more easily falsified. A high-technology solution would be harder to falsify, but also more prone to failure in a disruptive environment.

- **or on their foreheads**

Many examples of markings on foreheads are found in Scripture: the high priest (Ex. 28:36-38); those spared God's judgment (Eze. 9:4); harlots (Jer. 3:3; Rev. 17:5); the 144,000 sealed of Israel (Rev. 14:1). The mark identifies the category of the person and reflects their character.

13:17 - no one may buy or sell

- **no one may buy or sell**
The mark is required to participate in the global economy. Those who refuse to worship and take the mark are cut off from all supplies and means of income. They must rely on supernatural provision or the black market. This probably involves:
 - 1) A system of exchange which requires the mark. Cash will probably not be used.
 - 2) Modern inventory tracking will make supplying the black market very difficult.
- **the number of his name**
The mark is the same for all who receive it and is related to the name of the Beast. The reference to a "number" together with a "name" leads most interpreters to favor gematria as the means for associating a number with the name.

13:18 - 666

- **the number of a man: 666**
In the TR and MT text: **chi** = 600 + **xi** = 60 + **stigma** = 6.
Total = 666.
- **six is the number of man**
Man was created on day six. The triple six may relate to the "unholy trinity." Other occurrences of six in scripture have a negative connotation: six fingers and toes of ungodly giants ([2S. 21:20](#)); Goliath whose height was six cubits, wore six pieces of armor, and had a spear head weighting six hundred shekels ([1S. 17:4-7](#)); Solomon's wages of 666 talents of gold ([1K. 10:14](#)); Nebuchadnezzar's image which was sixty cubits high and six cubits wide ([Dan. 3:1](#)).
- **fruitless to speculate**
 - 1) Too many names can be made to generate "666"
 - 2) The church will not be present when the Beast becomes known ([2Th. 2:1-8](#)).
 - 3) The number of his name is perhaps the least important clue to his identity.
 - 4) He will not be revealed until the restrainer is removed ([2Th. 2:7](#)).

We are not to watch for Antichrist, but for **Christ!**

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).