

# THE EVIL FORCES OF THE DRAGON (13:1-18)





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**Vv.1-3: “...a beast coming out of the sea”** – Satan now tries to mimic the Holy Trinity. The first beast he brings out of the sea mimics the Son (as Satan copies the Father) and gives this beast his power and throne (Jesus receiving authority and throne).

**The beast becomes an object of worship (mimics Jesus, in that it is the object of worship and it suffers a fatal wound but lives; just as Jesus is our object of worship and suffers a fatal wound (crucifixion) but lives (resurrection and ascension)).**



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+ The first beast bears ***“...on each head a blasphemous name.”*** another mimic of the Son, who bears the Divine Name. Undoubtedly, this refers to the beast claiming to be God and usurping the Divine Name; yet, since it is not God, nor one of God’s saints, it blasphemes by claiming the Divine Name!

+ This beast is distinct from Satan, but is under the control of Satan.

+ Just as the Lamb is seated on the throne of God and shares God’s authority, so the beast shares Satan’s throne and authority. But we must remember that this beast is Satan’s vassal, since it owes its position to Satan and it rules by his authority and sanction.



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+ ***“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed”*** – The fact that one head was killed indicates that any particular ruler (kingdom/empire) will not remain forever. Rulers will come and go! In other words, many human powers, at any given time, will represent the beast. And because of this, ***“The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.”***

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+ The description of the beast, ***“leopard, bear, lion, etc.,”*** comes from Dan. 7:2-7. Daniel depicts four beasts, referring to successive evil empires; here, they are condensed into one.

As John saw this, he may have understood the relation to Daniel 7, therefore, we can say that this beast is a composite of the prior three (Babylon, Medo-Persians, Greeks). These three empires have been placed onto the rubbish heap of history. This beast, which John sees, resembles the fourth beast and it will stay active for ***“a time, times, and half a time”*** as prophesied in Dan 7:25.



# IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

In light of history, the identity and interpretation of this beast includes all earthly kingdoms. Yet, our interpretation must be broadened: *the beast represents and symbolizes every human authority and sinful human nature that Satan can corrupt and control and use in his warfare against the woman (the Church) and her offspring (you and me).* This includes political, social, economic, philosophical, and educational systems, as well as individuals. No one entity or person in history will exhaust what the beast signifies.

So what are we to do?

Let's read Acts 5:29 and Eph. 6:10-18.



# IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

**Vv. 4-8: *“Men worshipped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast and asked, ‘Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?’”*** – Whenever people engage in actual state worship (worship of state and its leader), or when they place their sole hope and trust in human institutions and resort to them in place of God, they worship the devil, since he encourages such idolatry. So strong is the beast’s stranglehold on people that they are helpless to oppose it. We Christians are not exempt; rather, we are the *focus* of the dragon’s warfare, but we must not worship the dragon or the beast. Rather we worship the Lamb because the Father has given Him His authority and no one is like the Lamb or can make war with Him – He is the One who is able to make war with the beast and to conquer him – in fact, He already has through His death and resurrection.

# IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

+ ***“ . . . forty-two months ”*** – the beast’s blasphemous assault on the Church will be intensified at the End, for ***“He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.”*** (This refers to Satan’s *“little season”* when he is unbound to deceive the nations– cf. Rev. 20). Life on earth will be very bad during this time: ***“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”***

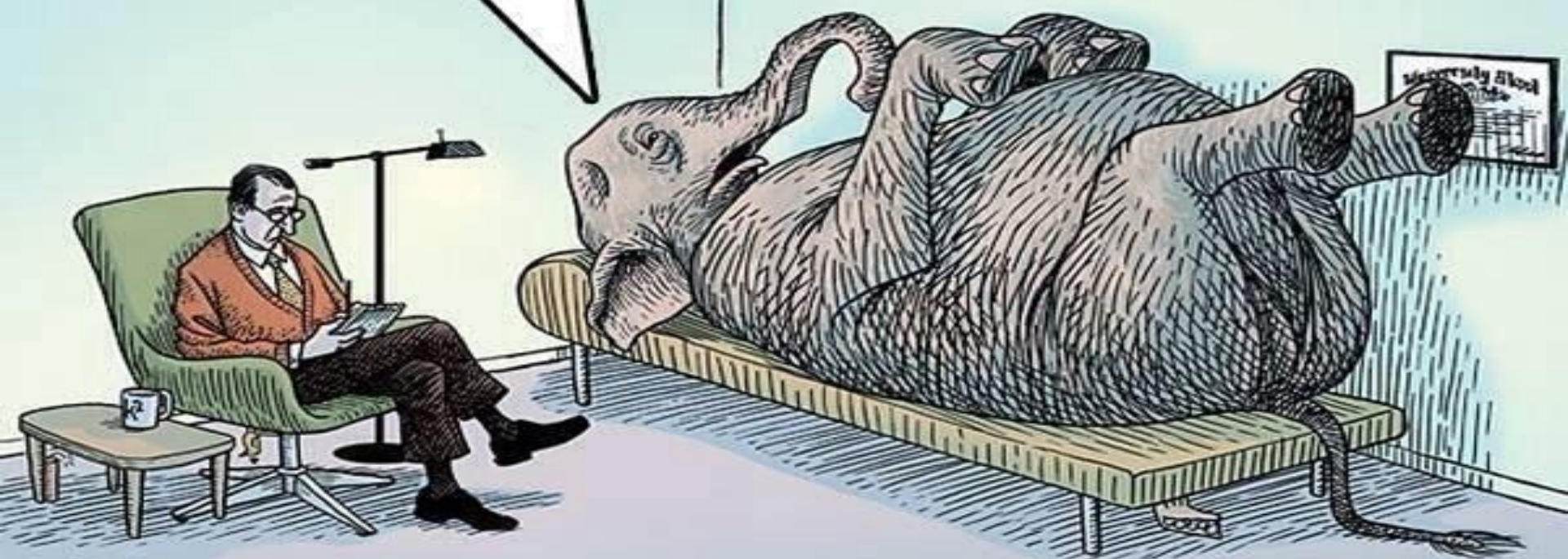


# IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

**There is no middle ground; either you are with the Lamb or you are with the beast (Satan). All unbelievers, by their denial of Jesus, idolize Satan by worshipping the first beast.**

**Believers, on the other hand, are assured of their salvation, for their names have been written in the Lamb's *"book of life"* since *"from the creation of the world."* Thus, even during Satan's "little season," believers can be comforted to know that their salvation is secure through faith in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer and King.**

Sometimes, even if I  
stand in the middle  
of the room, no one  
acknowledges me.





# THE SECOND BEAST FROM THE EARTH

**Vv.11-14:** The second beast comes out of the earth – this is a parody of the Holy Spirit, for this beast directs worship to the first beast, just as the Holy Spirit directs worship to Christ. So here we have an evil replication: **DRAGON (FATHER) 1ST BEAST (SON) 2ND BEAST (HOLY SPIRIT); an UNHOLY TRINITY!**



+ This second beast is *“from the earth”* and unlike the first beast, *“from the sea”*, is external tyranny that forces its rule upon people and enslaves them.

The second beast is from the earth and what it represents works from within and among people. *So, the beast of the earth does not force itself upon people but rather worms its way into their confidence and then leads them astray!*

# THE SECOND BEAST FROM THE EARTH



+ *“He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.”* This beast has one head and two horns. The reference to a lamb suggests that he acts innocently and in meekness (cf. Mt 7:15). However, it is deceptive since its voice is like the dragon, that is, it speaks for Satan! This beast appears as if it were the Christ, but since it speaks for the dragon, it is **in reality a false christ (antichrist) (2 Cor. 11:13-15).**



# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

While the beast from the sea represents every tyranny by human power and enterprise (political, social, economic, etc.), the beast from the earth represents religious tyranny.

In brief, the first beast can be called the ***“political beast,”*** while the second beast can be called the ***“religious beast.”***



# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

The religious beast is the “false prophet” of Rev 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10 and is to be identified also as the “*harlot*” of Rev 17-18. While Revelation retains the symbol of the beast from the sea throughout, the symbol of the beast from the earth appears only here. The false prophet replaces the beast of the sea, and it turn, the false prophet is replaced by and becomes the harlot. This suggests that while the religious beast at first represents all false religions and spiritual movements, including gross idolatry and pseudo-Christianity, as Judgment Day nears it develops and evolves into its more deadly form; apostates of the false-church, the Antichrist (1 John 4:1-3).



# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

*For example, manifestations of this beast in the first century was seen in emperor worship and temple cults.*

*Luther saw this manifestation as the papacy. The point is that this beast manifests himself in different ways in every generation.*

*Today, we have all false-religions and pseudo-Christian Churches (Church Growth Movement; American “Evangelicalism”; Decision Theology; Denial of the Sacraments, etc.), as there have been throughout history. And soon its wickedness will become more and more blatant!*

# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

**Vv.15-17:**

**+ This beast is trying hard to mimic the Holy Spirit; for it comes upon the first beast so that he could speak and make people worship him (*The Holy Spirit came upon Christ and filled Christ throughout His ministry*); also, those who don't worship the first beast will be persecuted and killed (although, those who deny Jesus will suffer eternal death)!**



# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

**Further, this beast gives a mark (the name of the beast) to all who worship the first beast (*Believers in Christ are marked, sealed with the Divine Name in baptism*). Not a literal mark, but a spiritual mark, just as believers do not receive a literal mark, but a spiritual mark – the Divine Name is written upon our hearts; it is a spiritual reality and Christ knows who are His.**

**In the same way, the dragon knows who are his by the spiritual mark on them (they are his children). This is telling us, again, that there is no middle ground – either one is a believer and bears the Divine Name or one is an unbeliever and bears the name of the beast (Satan).**

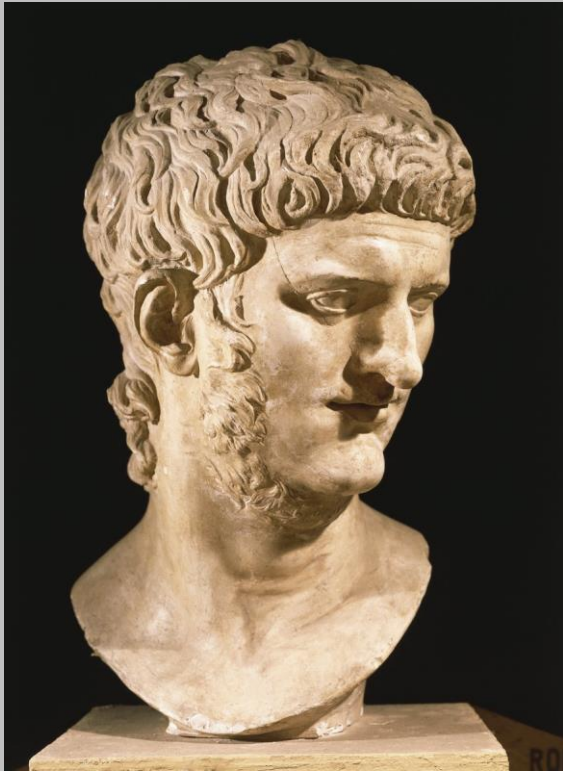
# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

**+ “...let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666”** – There is so much mystery and confusion about this number. But, there needn’t be. John is told that the number of the beast can be calculated and that it’s the number of man. Thus, John and Christians of his day are told that they can identify the *historical identification of the beast, in time.* And they could!



# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

Using the Hebrew numerology of *gematria* (which was a popular way in which Jews and Christians could speak against the Roman emperor without his knowing), Nero Caesar, which, in Hebrew is קסר נרוך (neron cesar), comes out to 666 when you add together the numerical value for each of the seven Hebrew consonants.



Thus, John is told that the ruthless Nero Caesar (54 – 68 A.D.), who had brought horrific persecution upon Christians, was a manifestation of the beast. The Christians of John's day would've understood this well.

# THE IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

**Interestingly, the Greek word for beast, *θηρίον* when transliterated into Hebrew and calculated, also has a numerical value of 666. This does not mean that Nero is the only manifestation of the beast, but only that he was a manifestation of the beast at that time.**

**Satan manifests himself in the form of this beast in many and various ways throughout history. Nero was just one example. Each generation will witness further activities of the beast. We see the activity of the beast in politics and a plethora of other false practices today!**





# **SPIRITUAL MEANING OF: 666**

**We should note before leaving this subject the significance of the number itself, beyond what has been said.**

## **Why 666?**

**The number of God is 3 (the Holy Trinity). But, God's perfect number, which symbolizes His relationship to the world, is 7 (3 for the Holy Trinity + 4 for the number of the world – 4 directions, 4 winds, 4 corners of the earth, etc.). So, Satan, in his attempt to mimic God, tries to get to 777, but falls short at 666. As a type, the deeper significance of the number is that which it typifies – the unholy trinity of the dragon!**

# SPIRITUAL MEANING

What is very interesting is that when *Ἰησους* (Jesus in Greek) is calculated, it is 888. We might think it should be 777. But, 888 symbolizes the truth that Jesus brings about the fulfillment of all things, for He is the One who brings in the 8th day, the eschatological and eternal kingdom.

