

INTRODUCTION:

1. We begin considering a chapter that is among the most challenging chapters in the Bible. Widely divergent opinions are held by many different Bible teachers.
2. We are on track and safe as long as we interpret the Word of God in a normal, literal way, whether studying prophecy, doctrine, history, or any other Bible subject.¹
3. In our study of Revelation chapter 12, we learned the identities of three of the first five persons John has shown us. The woman symbolizes the Jewish people. The child is the Lord Jesus Christ. The dragon is Satan.
4. In this portion of Scripture, we will learn the identities of the last two great personalities of the Great Tribulation.
5. Before offering the results of my study, consider the comments on this chapter written by Alva J. McClain:

(2) *The “tabernacle” of God in Rev. 13:6*

In the 13th chapter of Revelation the beast out of the sea (vs. 1) appears at the height and fullness of his brief span of world power. The entire world of nations, politically and religiously, is at his feet. And with the exception of those “written in the book of life of the Lamb” all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (vs. 8). At this point in his mad career, he opens his mouth in terrible “blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven (vs. 6). Thus, according to the King James Version, the objects of the beast’s blasphemy are *four*: God, His Name, His tabernacle, and certain ones who dwell in heaven. But the best Greek text reduces the number to *three* objects. The manuscript evidence overwhelmingly supports the omission of the conjunction *kai* (“and”) in the final clause. The words “them that dwell in heaven,” therefore, stand in apposition to the preceding clause, and are exegetical in character, defining and identifying the “tabernacle” mentioned there. The “tabernacle” of Rev. 13:6, hence, cannot be heaven itself (as in Heb. 9:11), but is specifically defined as a body of personal beings who will be dwelling in heaven at this time during the career of the beast. The American Standard Version has well rendered the verse as follows: “And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, *even* them that dwell in the heaven.”

Who are these dwellers in heaven referred to as God’s “tabernacle”? The Greek term used here, I think, points to the correct answer. It is *skene*, which means a tent, dwelling, abode, or habitation. In Scripture it is used variously: to designate the tabernacle of Old Testament history (Heb. 8:5); the celestial tabernacle (Heb. 8:2); the holy of holies (Heb. 9:3); and the bodily tabernacle of the soul (II Pet. 1:13-14). Although this term itself is not applied directly in the New Testament to the Church, the idea it represents is often connected with the Church. According to Paul, the Church is a “temple” [*naos*] of God (I Cor. 3:16-17); a “habitation [*katoiketerion*] of God” (Eph. 2:22); and the “body” (*soma*) of Christ (Col. 1:24). Herein is one of the unique glories of the Church: to be the corporate dwelling-place of God through the Spirit, beginning with the day of Pentecost and extending out into future ages without end. In the visions of the Apocalypse, then, the Church of the present age appears in its corporate capacity as the habitation (*skene*) of God already *in heaven* at the very time the antichrist reaches the height of his power *on earth*. And this point in time, the reader should recall, will arrive at exactly the middle of the entire period of seven years covered by

¹ Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation Of Prophecy*, (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1974).

the judgments of chapters 6-19, i.e., at the beginning of the beast's total power extending forty-two months (13:5).

This body of the saved in heaven, referred to as the "tabernacle" of God, must not be confused with "the great multitude" of Rev. 7:9-17; for, according to the divine identification, the latter are those who are seen coming (Grk. present tense) up out of "the great tribulation" of those terrible days (vs. 14, ASV), whereas the Church is to be kept out of that "hour of trial" (Rev. 3:10, ASV). Moreover, though both groups are redeemed through grace by the same Lord, the descriptions of their respective destinies are clearly different, as may be seen by comparing the account in Rev. 7:14-17 with New Testament predictions of the Church's regal future.

The question now may be raised as to what form the beast's blasphemy of God and the Church will take. Since to blaspheme is to speak impiously and injuriously of divine things, in what way will he speak? To this the inspired record gives no specific answer in the passage. But from the general teaching of Scripture there are some legitimate inferences which may be drawn. First, among all the redeemed, none have attracted a greater measure of satanic hatred than the Church which is the body and bride of Christ. For its members are destined to reign with Him in the highest level of His Kingdom, a comparable place once held by Satan himself. Second, when the satanic beast of the end-time reaches the height of his absolute earthly power, the Church will have been removed to heaven wholly beyond his malignancy. Third, this mysterious disappearance of millions of people from the earth bodily in "the twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. 15:51-52) will be a world-shaking event, something impossible to keep from public knowledge by any power or device of news control. Such an event, clearly miraculous in nature, will demand some plausible explanation on the part of the beast who will then be on the march toward political supremacy and seeking to attract to himself as world leader the admiration and confidence of all men. In this dangerous emergency, with his leadership at stake, what could be more reasonable than to find the beast resorting to the well-known technique of "the great lie," explaining perhaps to his followers that the vanished people were opposers of social progress, "apostles of discord" standing in the path of religious unity; and therefore they have been taken away by *divine judgment*? Perhaps this will be part of the "strong delusion" welcomed by the ungodly of that coming day (II Thess. 2:11). At any rate, a lying explanation of this kind would certainly satisfy the meaning of the "blasphemy" of Rev. 13:6, for it would malign both the character of God and also that of the true Church which today is the only light of the world and salt of the earth.²

6. As we begin, imagine yourself in John's position, as the seer who observes these things unfolds your eyes. Imagine the amazement and how astonished he must have been.

(13.1) And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

1. "Beast" translates θηρίον, "beast, monster, wild animal, esp. the ones hunted, hostile, and odious to man. Herodotus uses the word for birds, pigs, cats, as well as for wild animals such as sharks. The word describes the qualities of the dangerous person who was vicious, cruel, cunning, to be feared and unpredictable in his actions. This is the monstrous person in whom the political power of the world is finally concentrated as represented in Daniel 7 and as 'the man of sin' in 2 Thess. 2:3."³

² Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 466-468.

³ Rogers, Jr., Cleon L. and Rogers III, Cleon L., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998), page 636.

2. This individual is not like the living beings referred to in Revelation 4.6. Notice that this wild beast of a man rises from the sea. What does the phrase “a beast rise up out of the sea” mean?
3. Several opinions are put forth here that are plausible. Some commentators feel that the sea is representative of turmoil in the world and that this first beast rises to prominence amidst the chaos, just as Napoleon rose during the French Revolution from a lowborn nobody who was an army corporal to become emperor of France. Others point out that the seas are often symbols, in Scripture, of the great Gentile masses and that this beast must, therefore, be a Gentile. Still others feel this refers to the Mediterranean Sea and that the beast originates from this area.
4. I believe there is some truth in each view. Following the Rapture, there must, of necessity, be much chaos and disorder in the world. This beast of a man will then rise to prominence in the regions of the former Roman Empire and restore order to that greatly troubled region with a great display of organizational and diplomatic genius.
5. This beast’s tremendous authority and dictatorial rule is seen in John’s description of his seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns. Heads speak of authority, horns of power, and crowns of imperial rule.
6. Daniel 7.1-8, particularly verse 8, is a parallel prophecy that will help to visualize what will happen at that time:
 - 1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.
 - 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.
 - 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.
 - 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.
 - 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.
 - 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.
 - 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

⁸ I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

7. Notice the similarities between Daniel 7.7-8 and Revelation 13.1. Notice, also, the differences. Daniel speaks of empires, while John speaks of a man. The answer to why these passages seem different, even though I have described them as parallel prophesies, is that there is little difference between the empire and the emperor.
8. Was not Nazi Germany an extension of Adolph Hitler's personality? Was not Italy an extension of Benito Mussolini's personality? Was not Soviet Russia an extension of Joseph Stalin's personality? Was not Communist China an extension of Mao Zedong's personality? This is how Daniel could write about the empire, and John could write about the beast, and they two are writing about the same thing.
9. That this beast of a man is opposed to everything that is of God is seen in the last phrase. "And upon his heads the name of blasphemy."

(13.2) And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

1. This individual about whom John writes, who is so much like a beast, is a kind of composite personality. Suppose these symbols represent the great Greek, Persian, and Babylonian empires of the ancient past and all of the dreams and aspirations of those empires. In that case, this man is the total of all the hopes and aspirations unsaved humanity has ever dreamed of accomplishing.
2. This beast will have the military genius of the Greeks, who dashed like a leopard in conquest across the known world under the leadership of Alexander. At the same time, he will have the might of the Medo-Persians, who could field a standing army of more than one million men and stamped and crushed the known world like a giant grizzly bear. Finally, he has the mouth as a lion. That is, he speaks with tremendous authority. His words are law. And all of these aspects of the beast are further heightened by the fact that the beast's power, his seat, and his authority are backed by the dragon, by Satan.

3. Matthew 4.8-11:

- ⁸ Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;
- ⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
- ¹⁰ Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

¹¹ Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

4. Satan once offered the world to the Lord Jesus Christ in return for worship. Christ, of course, refused Satan's repugnant offer. The Lord of Glory would forcefully take His kingdom back, not compromise. He was not about to barter with the Devil for what He had created from nothing. But this man in Revelation 13.2 will dicker. This beast of Revelation chapter 13 does accept Satan's offer and thus becomes the most powerful mortal in the history of the world.
 5. How can this happen? Keep in mind that the Devil controls the world that we now live in. First John 5.19 reads, "**And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.**" That is, the wicked one controls the whole world.
 6. This is why First John 2.15-16 says what it says about the world: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
 7. Do not love this present, evil world. It is contaminated and defiled by the one who controls it, energizes it, and fills it with his moral decay and putrefaction. It is all a matter of personal loyalty, after all. The world is attractive, enticing, and fun. Who could deny that? But as a matter of personal devotion to God and His Son, Jesus Christ, we are told to choose. You have to choose. You cannot have it both ways. If you love the world, you cannot love God. And if you genuinely love God, you cannot love the world.
 8. That this beast of a man becomes as powerful as he will become shows us two things: *First*, it shows us whose side he is on. Since the whole world lies in wickedness, for him to ascend to the position he will occupy, he cannot be on God's side. *Second*, for Satan's hireling to succeed as he will shows us that God will have withdrawn His influence to a great extent, letting the Devil have his own way, not knowing that by getting what his wicked heart craves, he will still be fulfilling God's grand design.
- (13.3) And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.
1. There are several views put forth on this verse. Let me share two with you.
 - a. If the seven heads of verse 1 represent the seven great world empires that have ruled on this planet, this deadly wound refers to the destruction of and the reemergence to prominence of the Roman Empire. The world empires were the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman, and finally, the revived Roman Empire being the seventh. If the Roman Empire is going to

be revived to its former glory, there is no doubt that the world would wonder after the beast.

- b. However, if the seven heads represent individuals who head governments, say, if this speaks of seven Roman emperors, you begin to talk about Satan bringing people back to life from the dead. Such a view gives me pause. Only God has the power to give life in this way. But what if He allowed Satan to bring someone back from the dead?
2. Of the two positions, I am inclined to understand that the world marvels at this beast's ability to consolidate the different factions that once made up the old Roman Empire and deliver that false peace that everyone is working so hard to achieve. Any man who can provide stability and eliminate governmental chaos will have a following.
3. John Walvoord offers excellent comments on this verse:

John in his vision sees one of the heads of the beast as wounded unto death, and the apparent parallelism is to the slain Lamb, described in 5:6. John further observes that the deadly wound (literally "plague") is healed and that the entire earth marvels at the beast. Countless views have been offered in the interpretation of this verse, one of the very common ones being to identify the person wounded to death and healed as some historic character. Among the more common suggestions are Nero, Judas Iscariot, and in modern times such personages as Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin. The multiplicity of suggestions seems to be evidence in itself that these explanations are not the meaning of the passage.

The wounding of one of the heads seems instead to be a reference to the fact that the Roman Empire as such seemingly died and is now going to be revived. It is significant that one of the heads is wounded to death but that the beast itself is not said to be dead. It is questionable whether Satan has the power to restore to life one who has died, even though his power is great. Far more probable is the explanation that this is the revived Roman Empire in view. As Alford states, "This seems to represent the Roman pagan Empire, which having long been a head of the beast, was crushed and to all appearance exterminated." It is questionable, however, whether Alford is right in saying that "the establishment of the Christian Roman Empire" was the stroke which caused the death.

The identification of a head with the government over which he has authority is not a strange situation. The person is often the symbol of the government, and what is said of the government can be said of him. Although verse 3 will continue to be a subject of controversy, the theological reasons for resisting an actual resurrection of a historical character to head the revived Roman Empire are so great as to render it improbable even though such personages as Nero and Judas Iscariot will continue to attract the attention of modern students of the book of Revelation. The beast is both personal and the empire itself; so also is head. The revival of the future empire is considered a miracle and demonstration of the power of Satan.⁴

⁴ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), pages 199-200.

(13.4) And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

1. Notice where the narrative arc leads. Humanity will end up worshipping the dragon, or Satan, for giving the beast the power to do what he will. And humanity will worship Satan by worshipping Satan's man, the beast.
2. Satan has always craved worship and homage due only to God, which he will finally have from those who worship his beast. How do we know Satan has always wanted the worship and adoration that properly only belongs to God? Isaiah 14.12-14:
 - ¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
 - ¹³ For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
 - ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
3. Satan has long been ambitious. It was his ambition that fueled his rebellion against God. But how to acquire worship from humanity? By imitating God's tri-unity with an unholy trinity. Satan is the counterfeit god, and the beast is his counterfeit savior. This beast will be the superman the world is waiting for.
4. No more intelligent, brilliant, diplomatic man will be anywhere. And powerful? Who would dare war with such a man as this one will be? "He has brought us peace," they will say. "He's too powerful to be opposed." Who would make war with him? Who do you think will make war with him? Right. The Lord Jesus Christ will make war with him.

(13.5) And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

1. What a talking man this antichrist will be. Speaking great things will be his trademark. And blasphemy, too. His great things will likely center on how great the human race is, how we can do anything we want to do if we feel positive enough, and how the government will solve all our problems if we learn to be compassionate and feeling.
2. His blasphemies will feature references to God and Christ. He will probably talk about the worship of God as an emotional crutch for the unstable and fearful need for survival. He may intimate that religion was dreamed up and fearful shepherds invented God to explain lightning and thunder.
3. I am sure he will ridicule believers and mock the blood of Christ. But he will only do that for three and one-half years. During the first half of the Tribulation, he will keep quiet about religion. But once Satan is cast out of heaven, this beast, the antichrist, will become the most venomous blasphemer humanity has ever seen.

4. But he only gets away with it for three and one-half years. Why? Because God has him on a string. And God's string is only three and one-half years long. Then the beast's ravings will be over, and Christ will reign.
5. Consider these 42 months more closely with me. It is the last half of the seven years of the Tribulation.
 - a. In Jeremiah 30.7, those seven years are referred to as "the time of Jacob's trouble." "Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."
 - b. These seven years are also referred to as Daniel's 70th week, in Daniel 9.24-27:
 - ²⁴ Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.
 - ²⁵ Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.
 - ²⁶ And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.
 - ²⁷ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.
 - c. Matthew 24.1-31 reveals what the Lord Jesus Christ had to say about this period the night before His crucifixion:
 - ¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.
 - ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
 - ³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?
 - ⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

- 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.
- 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
- 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
- 8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.
- 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
- 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.
- 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.
- 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
- 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
- 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
- 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
- 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
- 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
- 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
- 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
- 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
- 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.
- 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.
- 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.
- 25 Behold, I have told you before.
- 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.
- 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

- 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
- 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

6. This fellow will be the center stage actor, the central figure during the last 3½ years before our Lord's Second Coming in power and great glory.

(13.6) And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

1. Verse 6 necessarily occurs during the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation. Our certainty about the event's timing is because the antichrist will not show his true nature to the world until Michael, the archangel, casts Satan out of heaven. That act will provoke Satan's rage, vented through this human instrument called the beast.
2. Consider the word "blasphemies." Βλασφημέω means "to ridicule or slander."⁵ Anyone can blaspheme, but the beast is brazen enough to blaspheme the living God.
3. Common sense would dictate that these blasphemies begin when the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem is defiled. Look again at some verses, several from passages referred to recently.

Daniel 7.25: "And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Here we have the blasphemy.

Daniel 9.27: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

This verse talks about the treaty made between the beast and the nation Israel which is to last seven years or one week. But when Satan is cast out of heaven, he rages

⁵ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 841.

against Israel, and his beast, the antichrist, breaks the treaty and desecrates the rebuilt Temple.

Matthew 24.15: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”

The beginning of blasphemy is this abomination of desolation, desecrating the Temple.

4. Back to Revelation 13.6. Not only does the beast defile the Temple and blaspheme God and His name, he blasphemes them that dwell in heaven. Who is referred to by “them that dwell in heaven”? It can refer to the angels who have just defeated Satan in battle. It can refer to the saints in heaven. Or, it can refer to both.
5. Notice what he is doing. Satan is reviling everyone who stands on God’s side. This includes angels, Church Age believers who have been raptured and are in heaven at this time, Old Testament believers who have died awaiting their resurrection, and those Tribulation saints who have lost their lives during this period.
6. He passionately hates everyone aligned with God. So, where does this fellow obtain his malevolence and hatred? Understand that he is more intensively opposed to the plan and purpose of God than anyone who has ever lived because he is Satan’s masterpiece. But he is only quantitatively different than you, who are lost, not qualitatively different. Any of you who is lost is of the same essence in his opposition to God as the antichrist. It is just that the antichrist is a more determined and powerful foe of God than most lost people are.

(13.7) And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

1. The universal dominion of the beast can be seen. God allows the beast to war against His saints on earth. Who is a saint? Remember, the word “saint” comes from the Greek word for holy, ἅγιος, meaning set apart or different.
2. Pay attention to the word “power.” Two words in the Greek New Testament are typically translated by our English word “power.”
 - a. One word is δύναμις, and it refers to might and strength. The term is found in Romans 1.16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
 - b. The other word is ἐξουσία, which concerns authority. This term is found in Matthew 28.18: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

- c. The term used in Revelation 13.7 is the second word, ἐξουσία, referring to authority. Thus, the antichrist will be given authority “over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”
 - d. Where did the beast’s authority come from? His authority came from Satan. Though God will permit what the antichrist will do, it will be Satan, who exercises illegitimate authority as the god of this world, who will grant to antichrist the illegitimate authority to wreak havoc on humanity during the last 3½ years of the Tribulation.
3. Though his illegitimate authority will be given over all the people of the earth, notice that the beast will make war against those who are spiritually different, spiritually set apart, to overcome them. All believers, no matter what kindred, nation, or tongue they represent, will be sought after by the beast. This will be a worldwide persecution of genuinely saved folks, as has never been seen before.
- (13.8) And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
1. In this verse we see the universal worship of the beast by the unsaved. All “that dwell upon the earth” shall worship him.
 - a. Remember two things that will inform us regarding who will worship the beast: #1, those who “dwell upon the earth.” That is John’s technical phrase for permanent residents of this planet. This world is their home. They are not just passing through like believers are. This describes unbelievers.
 - b. #2, verse 7 shows us that the beast will persecute believers, saints, holy ones, and those different from lost humanity. The reason for their persecution, in part, is their refusal to worship the beast.
 2. But the most conclusive thing that tells us these beast worshipers are not saved is that their names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life. Those who are not saved will worship the antichrist. Every single person.
 3. Consider “the book of life of the Lamb” in Revelation 13.8. I am aware of three generally held opinions on the subject of the “Lamb’s Book of Life.”
 - a. One opinion is that God has a book in which the name of everyone born into this race is written. As long as the person remains alive, his name remains in the book. But if he should die without Christ, his name will be removed, and he will go to Hell. On the other hand, should he ever trust Christ, his name will remain in the book forever.

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- b. The second view is that there are two books that God has. One is called “the Book of Life,” and the other is called “the Lamb’s Book of Life.” In this view, your name is written in the Book of Life when you are born and removed when you die. But your name is written into the Lamb’s Book of Life only when you repent and trust Christ to save your soul. When one dies, he is received into heaven only if his name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
 - c. The third view about the Lamb’s Book of Life is simply stated: “A divine journal records the names of all those whom God has chosen to save and who, therefore, are to possess eternal life (13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19; cf. Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20). Under no circumstances will He erase those names (*see notes on Ex. 32:33; Pss. 69:28; 139:16; Heb. 12:23; Phil 4:3*) as city officials often did of undesirable people on their roles.”⁶
4. Which of these views is correct? I believe the third view. But rather than adopting one view over the others, you should study the Word of God and formulate your opinion. That is how the child of God should arrive at his personal beliefs and convictions.
5. In the Old and New Testaments, several passages refer to a book God possesses or writes in. Let us examine these one at a time.

A Study of God’s Books

BOOK TYPE	PASSAGE	COMMENTS
	Exodus 32.32-33 (Ez 18.4, 20)	
	Psalms 56.8	
	Psalms 69.28	
	Psalms 139.16	
	Daniel 12.1-2	
	Malachi 3.16	
	Luke 10.20	
	Philippians 4.3	
	Revelation 3.5	
	Revelation 13.8	
	Revelation 17.8	
	Revelation 20.12	
	Revelation 20.15	
	Revelation 21.27	
	Revelation 22.19	

⁶ Footnote on Revelation 3.5, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1996.

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Write some information about the passage next to the verse(s). The left column is the one in which you can indicate what you think the book mentioned in the passage refers to.

6. After this exercise, I think we can all agree on several things:
 - a. *First*, it appears there are three books, or three kinds of books, that God keeps; a book that records the names of those who are physically alive (we will call this Book 1), a type of book or ledger that holds information on each individual's works or activities during this physical lifetime (we will call this Book 2), and the Lamb's Book of Life, on which all of the names of the righteous are recorded (we will call this Book 3).
 - b. *Second*, it appears that Book 1 and Book 3 only record people's names. And it seems that only Book 1 can have a name removed from it at the time of physical death.
 - c. *Third*, the passages did not indicate the names recorded in Book 1. But the characters entered into Book 3 seem to have been documented from the foundation of the world, according to Revelation 13.8 and 17.8.
 - d. *Finally*, we know that only people whose names are written in Book 3 go to heaven and that only those who have trusted Christ as their personal Savior have their names written in Book 3.
7. We have learned about a book mentioned in Revelation that will play a major role in your destinies, a book that God alone keeps and controls, and you need to be in. Are you in that book? Have you trusted the Savior whose book it is?

(13.9-10) ⁹ If any man have an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰ He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

1. If you keep in mind what is stated in verse 8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," then it becomes pretty apparent why Bible-believing Christians have always strongly resisted ecumenicalism, and why liberals and others who likewise do not believe the Bible have always been eager to join ministerial alliances and other kinds of interfaith groups. The Word of God predicts a future world religion. Keep this in mind as we consider Revelation 13.9-10.
2. We cannot know whether a future world religion will arise from a uniting of apostate Christian denominations, paving the way for a coming together of so-called Christians with others, such as Buddhists and Hindus, and perhaps even Muslims before the Rapture. Recall Sun Yung Moon's Unification Church once surged in popularity for such universalism. By the time of the Great Tribulation, a world

religion will be realized, featuring the worship of a man chosen and empowered by Satan. When that happens, true believers in Jesus Christ will be separated from this world religion and then be persecuted.

3. Consider verse 9: “If any man have an ear, let him hear.” This phrase, or one very much like it, is found eight times in the Gospels, each uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ. How many times has this phrase been used in the Revelation? Seven times. To each of the churches of Asia, the Lord Jesus Christ wrote, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Why is the warning issued to a broader group than Churches, as in Revelation chapters two and three? The broader scope of this challenge likely is because at this time in the future, the Church Age has passed, all Church Age Christians having been raptured more than 3½ years before. Since there will be no Churches anywhere on earth during the Great Tribulation this challenge is not addressed to Churches. Therefore, the message’s scope is expanded to anyone who will hear it. And what is to be heard is found in verse 10.
4. Though the Greek words are not, for some reason, translated into English by the King James translators, verse ten contains two statements that begin much like verse nine begins, with the Greek word for “if.” Allow me to paraphrase: “If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes. If any man is to be killed by the sword, he must be killed by the sword.” These two verses comprise three phrases, each a conditional statement that begins with the word “if”:

If any man have an ear, let him hear.

If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes.

If any man is to be killed by the sword, he must be killed by the sword.

5. We have here the law of divine recompense. These are God’s reminders and promises that not only will He reward deed for deed, but that vengeance is His. Is the antichrist imprisoning God’s children, tribulation saints who read this verse? He will be imprisoned. Does he murder God’s children with the sword for no other reason than their refusal to receive the mark of the beast? Then he will be killed with the sword that cometh out of the mouth of the King of kings.
6. Read from John Walvoord’s nuanced commentary on this portion of Scripture:

Those who persecute the saints and lead them into captivity must in turn suffer the righteous wrath of God. In this ultimate triumph and judgment upon wicked men lie the patience and faith of the saints in their hour of trial. The Scriptures frequently mention this final vindication (Gen. 9:6; Matt. 5:38; 26:52; Rom. 12:19; Gal. 6:7). The same truth which serves as an encouragement to the saints acts as a warning to their persecutors. Their ultimate doom is assured as in this case at the end of their brief period of power (Rev. 13:5; 16:6; 18:2-3, 5-8, 20; 19:20).⁷

⁷ Walvoord, page 204.

7. “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” “Patience” refers to “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, *patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance.*”⁸
- a. James 1.3 tells us that “the trying of your faith worketh patience.” So we see faith is the prerequisite. Of course, faith is God’s gift, Ephesians 2.8-9, so God receives the glory for anyone’s patience. That faith will be severely tested and tried during the Tribulation. When that happens, believers will want to strike out against their oppressors and defend themselves, but the Spirit of God will minister to their needs, reminding them that they are not to respond as unsaved Christ-rejecters retaliate. They are not to avenge themselves and try to “get even” as our sinful nature is so prone to want to do. Instead, they must wait for the Great Day when their Lord comes again. He can be trusted to settle accounts. He will get even. He will execute His judgment upon the damned. He will vindicate Himself.
 - b. Has an unbeliever crossed you today? Perhaps another Christian is doing you wrong. Are you supposed to lash out and seek revenge against those who do you wrong? No. Be confident that the lost man will get his reward. Why so? Because when he persecutes you, he persecutes the Lord Jesus. Remember what the Lord Jesus Christ said to Saul of Tarsus, in Acts 9.4, for persecuting Christians? “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Let vengeance be God’s. Romans 12.18-21:
 - ¹⁸ If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
 - ¹⁹ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
 - ²⁰ Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
 - ²¹ Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.
8. What about the Christian who is wronging you? He is your Father’s child, too, is he not? Let your Father in heaven chasten and hasten His will to be known. God will deal with him. This does not mean you should not rebuke him when he does wrong. But it also means you should not seek revenge when he sins against you. There is a difference.
9. We endure so much less than the Tribulation saints must take. Indeed God’s grace, which will surely be sufficient for them, is enough for us. Is there any doubt about that? So, if you are down in the dumps and feel like giving up, why don’t you return to the throne of grace in prayer and get another measure of God’s extraordinary grace to get you through the low spot in your life, Hebrews 4.16? “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find

⁸ Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pages 1039-1041.

grace to help in time of need.” Or, if you don’t feel like praying, consider the Lord Jesus Christ’s experiences, Hebrews 12.1-4:

- 1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
- 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

10. Walvoord again:

Taken as a whole, the first ten verses of Revelation 13 predict a future world government which from God’s point of view will be a continuation of the ancient Roman Empire expanded ultimately to cover not only the area of the ancient empire but the entire world. This government will be empowered by Satan, and its primary objective will be forcing the whole world to worship Satan and his human representative, the world dictator.

The purpose of Satan to take the place of God in this future great tribulation is the motivating power behind Satan’s activities today. Satan’s desire to be like God originally plunged the universe into sin (Isa. 14:14). His program has never changed, and he is seeking today as throughout his career to lure men to obey him instead of God. In the great tribulation this purpose will be transparently clear, and after its manifestation it will be brought into divine judgment.⁹

(13.11) And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

1. Look at the word “another.” Remember that two entirely different Greek words are translated by our single English word, “another.” One Greek word, ἄλλος, tends to mean another of the same kind, while the other Greek word, ἕτερος, typically means another of a different kind.¹⁰ Our word “heterosexual,” referring to people who like to marry people who are not like them, begins with this Greek word ἕτερος. The word we have here tells us that what we are dealing with is a second beast of the same type and nature as the first beast, ἄλλος.
2. Notice that this beast comes up out of the earth. There are two ways in which this symbolism can be understood since this man could not come up out of the dirt. If the earth is symbolic of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine, then this second beast is either Jewish or comes from the region of Palestine. But if the word “earth” stands for order, in contrast to the turmoil of the sea, then this man has risen to his

⁹ Walvoord, page 204.

¹⁰ Bauer, pages 46-47 and 399.

high position through promotions up through the ranks of some organization, some complex bureaucracy. Many believe the great organization the second beast rises through is the Roman Catholic Church—a possibility.

3. This second beast does have authority, as his two horns symbolize, and as our next verse tells us, but he likes to be seen as a man of peace and serenity. This is the lamb. But notice that his speech betrays the shabby imitation of meekness. The Bible says that he will speak as a dragon. This does not necessarily mean that he will roar because the dragon is capable of flattering lies. This just tells us that what the second beast tries to portray is far different from what he actually is. Unfortunately, he will succeed in fooling all but the elect, God's people.
4. To fix the distinction between these two evil men in your mind, consider them both relative to the Lord Jesus Christ. The first beast, the antichrist, opposes the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the second beast imitates Christ with his pretense of being a lamb. The first will likely be antireligious, while the second will use unsaved humanity's religious tendencies to accomplish Satan's wicked ends.

(13.12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

1. This verse reveals that the first and second beasts work harmoniously. There are several things about this union that we should notice as being unusual.
2. It should be unusual that these two wicked men can be united and not bicker and fight amongst each other. When is generally the only time and circumstances in which the corrupt can cooperate in anything? That is right. When opposing God. In the end, the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Romans were united in their opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, the antichrist and the false prophet (as this second beast is referred to) unite to oppose God. Pride alone usually prevents the wicked from submitting to one another at any other time.
3. Notice that the second beast exercises his power before the first beast and that he exercises all the power of the first beast. I believe the antichrist will use this one out in the limelight to build up the mystique that will surround him. This aura will make the antichrist seem far more powerful and mysterious than he is.
4. The goal to be reached? To cause the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast. Again the earth dwellers are mentioned. What a sharp contrast John makes between those whose homes are here on earth, whose affections are here on earth, and those whose hearts are fixed upon Jesus Christ and who want to be with Him.
5. Also, notice that those who pretend to be resistant to such influences, convincing themselves that when the Tribulation comes, they will be somehow immune to the deceptive practices of the antichrist and the false prophet, will nevertheless be persuaded to worship the beast. How so? The second beast will exercise "all the

power of the first beast before him.” The result of this application of supernatural persuasive power will be the worship of the first beast by the entire unsaved population on earth at that time.

6. But it will not be satanic power only that will persuade the lost to worship the beast. Second Thessalonians 2.1-12 shows us that God also plays a part in this supernatural delusion:
 - 1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,
 - 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.
 - 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
 - 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
 - 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
 - 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.
 - 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.
 - 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
 - 9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
 - 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
 - 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
 - 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
7. So you see, it will not only be the result of Satan’s persuasive power that the unconverted will be deceived into worshipping him. It will also result in God judging the unconverted by sending them a strong delusion. It is good to come to Christ now and not presume you will be able to later.
8. The reference to the deadly wound of the first beast being healed probably convinces people that he deserves to be worshipped, which probably means that the wound referred to back in verse 3 is an actual physical wound. So, it may be that the antichrist will be attacked by some crazed assassin, either appearing to murder or almost killing him. But he recovers miraculously.

9. When John Hinkley tried to kill President Reagan, he almost succeeded. What an outpouring of concern and adoration that won for President Reagan, and how it silenced his political opponents for a time. Imagine what will happen if something similar happens to the antichrist, and he succeeds in pinning the blame on a crazed Christian fundamentalist.

(13.13) And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men

1. There might be a reason why the second beast calls fire down from heaven. Remember the two witnesses of God who are on earth at this time? One of those men will likely be Elijah, the prophet of fire from heaven, who called fire down from heaven onto Mount Carmel, First Kings 18.37-39.
2. Remember Revelation 11.5? “And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.” How else can the second beast, the false prophet, deal with these two witnesses and this fire that protects them by duplicating that fiery miracle with some counterfeit and preaching a far different message than they preach?
3. If I remember the situation in Jerusalem, just before the Babylonians sacked the city, the prophet Jeremiah preached repentance, preaching it loud and hard. On the other hand, the false prophets talked really nicely and spent most of their time predicting future prosperity, which we remember never came. That same type of contrast will be seen during the Tribulation, with most people believing the lies as usual.
4. When given a choice of whom to follow, unregenerate humanity will always follow the nice-talking, nice-smelling fraud and hate the man of God. Has not that been the story of history? It sure has been.

(13.14) And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

1. “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth” Here is our phrase again, “them that dwell on the earth.” Of course, they will be deceived. They are the ones whose roots are here, who have all their hopes and aspirations tied up here, who give no thought to eternity, and who have no stake in the hereafter.
2. Matthew 24.24:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

3. Jesus predicted more than one false prophet. There are undoubtedly false prophets on the scene today. Why can some see these false prophets and some cannot? I am not positively sure I have all the answers to that question.
 4. But this false prophet has brought people full circle. Humanity starts by rejecting God. Then we come to the place where we deny the existence of God as He has revealed Himself. Then we will turn to idolatry. That is the way Paul describes it in Romans chapter 1. And we see the end of the cycle here in Revelation 13.14.
 5. A great idol is constructed. An image of the superman is erected, the antichrist. And humanity, those who dwell on the earth, will worship the image of this beast “which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” Folks, if my count is correct, this is the third mention of the wounded antichrist. This might suggest that the attempt on his life and astounding recovery plays a large part in his rise to power and his influence over the people.
 6. Unsuccessful assassination attempts of political figures garner tremendous public sympathy, as the attempts against former President Teddy Roosevelt and President Ronald Regan illustrate. In 2004, a candidate tried to make a huge deal about his minor wounds while in Vietnam to translate those life-threatening scratches into electoral votes. It did not work for Jean Françoise Kerry because swiftboat veterans rallied to tell the truth. But the principle still applies. With the vast crowds of people, being wounded in the line of duty, especially when the wound happens in the public eye and is in the public consciousness, tends to have a dramatic effect. So, I expect the antichrist will experience such things in his dramatic rise to prominence and ultimate control over the unsaved people of this world.
- (13.15) And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.
1. The word “life” is not the usual Greek word for “life” used by John. The normal Greek word for life is ζωή, from which we get the words “zoo” and “zoological.” However, this word is πνεῦμα, which refers primarily to spirit or breath. I take this to mean that the beast cannot give life to the image, but he can provide that which appears to be life to the image. I think we have an imitation of God's life-giving power.
 2. Additionally, the image speaks. Not typical of an idol. Perhaps it will be a cleverly designed robot. Whatever it is, people will fall for it to the point that this image demands worship by all and death to anyone who refuses. Shades of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. Thus, the false world religion that came into existence will be suddenly cast aside so people can be required to worship the antichrist's image.
 3. Daniel 3.1-6:

- 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.
- 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.
- 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
- 4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,
- 5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:
- 6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

4. Daniel 6.1-9:

- 1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;
- 2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.
- 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.
- 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.
- 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.
- 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.
- 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.
- 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

- 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.
5. Why would the antichrist and the false prophet use an image and require people to worship the image, with the penalty of death for those who would not? And why did Nebuchadnezzar and then the Persians think it so very important to exercise control over the religious conduct of their population? It goes back to a man named Nimrod.
6. We first see the tying together of political and religious authority to rule people and to oppose the plan and purpose of God in the career of Nimrod:
- a. Genesis 10.6-10 introduces us to the man:
- 6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.
7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.
8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.
9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.
10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

To be “a mighty hunter before the LORD” shows that Nimrod competed with God. Matthew Henry writes about him:

Nimrod was a mighty hunter *against* the Lord, so the LXX; that is,

(1.) He set up idolatry, as Jeroboam did, for the confirming of his usurped dominion. That he might set up a new government, he set up a new religion upon the ruin of the primitive constitution of both. *Babel was the mother of harlots.* Or,

(2.) He carried on his oppression and violence in defiance of God himself, daring Heaven with his impieties, as if he and his huntsmen could out-brave the Almighty, and were a match for the Lord of hosts and all his armies. *As if it were a small thing to weary men, he thinks to weary my God also,* Isa 7:13.¹¹

- b. Genesis 11.1-4:

- 1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.
2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

- ³ And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.
- ⁴ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.
- 1) God planned that men would spread and replenish the earth after the flood. Nimrod planned to build an empire. To do that most efficiently, he would wield political power and lure the population into the idolatrous system he had devised to control their passions and tap into their spiritual inclinations.
 - 2) The tower of Babel was a temple. It was built not to reach heaven physically (they were more intelligent than that) but to spiritually reach heaven or to pretend to.
7. Down through the centuries, despots have always used religion to advance their political and military agendas.
- a. The Egyptians had their gods. Remember, when God used Moses to deliver the Israelites, the plagues visited upon the Egyptians were judgments against the Egyptian's gods. Thus, their deliverance from the political oppression of Pharaoh was very much a spiritual deliverance, as well.
 - b. The Assyrians had their gods.
 - c. The Greeks had their gods.
 - d. The Romans had their gods. Remarkably, Augustus Caesar was the Pontifex Maximus, the religious leader and Rome's political and military leader.¹²
 - e. Some have said that during World War Two, Adolf Hitler made not-so-subtle appeals to the pantheon of ancient Germanic gods and that allusions to Valhalla were frequently before the people.
 - f. The communists came out against all religions. Still, Lenin was more practical than Marx (after all, Marx was only a Satan-worshipping theoretician)¹³, and he saw the need to transform Soviet communism from an antireligious despotism into a very religious antireligion. That approach continues to this very day in North Korea.
 - g. During World War Two, Josef Stalin's appeal to the Russian people to fight against the Germans was an appeal to fight for Rossiya, Mother Russia.

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Augustus-Roman-emperor/Expansion-of-the-empire#ref390667>

¹³ Richard Wurmbrand, *Was Karl Marx A Satanist?* (Diane Books Publishing Co., Fourth Edition, 1978)

- h. How about Great Britain during her empire era? The British looked upon their national mission as what they called “the white man’s burden” to socialize, educate, civilize, and evangelize the pagans of the world. But the East India Company worked to oppose the missionaries and their efforts whenever Christianity interfered with business. This showed that religion was seen as a tool to advance a business, military, and political agenda.
 - i. Christians must be wary of those who use appeals to God and country and wrap themselves in the flag while holding a Bible. Though there are, no doubt, some who are both patriotic and religious, for the most part, history has shown us that men with political and military agendas find that soldiers are more likely to fight and more willing to die. Civilians are more likely to send their sons and daughters to war if a healthy measure of religion is added to the patriotic recipe.
8. We will find that the greatest since Nimrod at mixing politics and religion will be this team we identify as the antichrist and the false prophet, the first and the second beast. They will seduce everyone who is not elected. Thankfully, though the antichrist intends to kill everyone who does not worship him, a remnant will be saved alive to populate the millennial kingdom that the Lord Jesus Christ will establish as His second coming.

(13.16) And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads

- 1. Remember God’s 144,000 sealed servants? Where were their seals placed? On their foreheads. Satan has never done anything original except to originate sin. Here he seals his servants and tries to go God one better with a mark on the hand or the forehead.
- 2. No time is needed to elaborate on how the world is being prepared for the implementation of Satan’s wicked program. You know that military personnel who live in housing provided on military installations are now required to implant an electronic identification device in pets that they own. You are aware that purchases require only a credit card or smartphone near the purchase device.
- 3. The technology is here. The cultural shift toward mutilating your body with piercings, tattoos, and scars will make it so easy for the antichrist to implement this scheme. And it will be easy to malign and ridicule Christians for refusing to do this type of thing, portraying them as obstinate and obstructionist, hindering progress and expansive thinking.
- 4. In the end, everyone will be taken in, everyone will be convinced, and everyone will be persuaded. Everyone, that is, except the elect.

(13.17) And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Revelation Chapter 13

1. You will have a choice. You can choose between the mark of the beast, the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Take anyone you want.
2. But take one because you cannot buy or sell anything without one of those marks on your forehead or the back of your hand. That means you cannot purchase food or sell your wares.
3. People living on earth at that time will starve to death and go bankrupt simultaneously. Assuming they love the Lord Jesus more than they love their own life. You see, you can buy food and water if you deny Christ and take the mark of the beast. But believers will not do that. Not people who are really believers.

(13.18) Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

1. The number of the beast is 666. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin all used letters from their alphabet to represent numbers and did not have a set of numbers distinct from their letters of the alphabet, as we do. Thus, the number 666 ends up being a jumble of letters to us, and no one can figure out what it means.
2. There have been thousands of ridiculous attempts to figure out precisely what 666 means, but no one can be certain of identifying the beast using this number because the beast has not yet been revealed. And I do not think he will be revealed until we leave here.
3. But there are some things about 666 that we can see. In the Bible, seven is the number of perfection, the number of God if you will. Six lets us know that no matter how great the beast is or where this one comes from, he is still no more than a man. No matter how high he may ascend, he cannot ascend to God.
4. Thus, in the darkest hour of history, the elect on earth at that time will know that though the devil does his best through the beast to destroy them, they still have God on their side.