

# THE ANTICHRIST AND FALSE PROPHET OF REVELATION 13

## INTRODUCTION

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- Chapters 12-15 are still part of the interlude between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet (chapters 10-15)
- They do not advance the chronology of the Tribulation events, but they do fill in a number of details of that time period
- Specifically, they describe seven persons who are involved in the second half of the Tribulation:
  1. The woman representing Israel (12:1-2)
  2. The red dragon representing Satan (12:3-4)
  3. The male child representing Christ (12:5-6)
  4. The archangel Michael representing the angels (12:7-12)
  5. The offspring of the woman representing the remnant of believing Israel (12:13-17)
  6. The beast out of the sea representing the Antichrist (13:2-10)
  7. The beast out of the earth representing the false prophet (13:11-18)

## THE ANTICHRIST

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- In the Tribulation, the world will be longing for a leader who will be able to unite all the divided nations
- They will look for someone to bring hope and a sense of security, a strong leader who will be able to save the world from the brink of disaster
- They will find this authoritative personality in the Antichrist
- He will unify the world under his rule and will be able to bring a temporary peace
- “But he will turn out to be far more than the world bargained for. He will be a dictator more cruel and powerful than any other leader the world has ever known. This man...will be the culmination of a long line of would-be world conquerors. What men like Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors in ancient times and Hitler and Stalin in modern times only dreamed of doing, the Antichrist will actually do – he will rule the entire world and receive its worship.”<sup>1</sup>

### His Description

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**Revelation 13:1** ~ And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

- The “dragon” is Satan (cf. Rev 12:3-4, 9)
- The “seashore/sea” may symbolize the masses of people who will follow Antichrist, probably unbelieving Gentile nations (cf. Rev 17:15) indicating that Antichrist will be a Gentile
- Or it may refer to the abyss which the beast comes up from (cf. Rev 11:7; 17:8)
- The “beast” was first mentioned in Rev 11:7, but he is described more fully here

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 36.

- He is called a “beast” because he will be a savage, vicious, ferocious individual
- Although there have been and will be many antichrists throughout church history, this is the great and final Antichrist who is still to come
- “ten horns and seven heads” – this description is similar to that of Satan in Rev 12:3, indicating a very close relationship with him
- The seven heads likely represent the seven consecutive world powers who existed under Satan’s dominion: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist’s future empire (see Rev 17:9-10)
- The 10 horns symbolize power and strength (cf. Ps 18:2; 75:4-5; 92:10) and represent the great power of the kings who will rule under Antichrist’s absolute authority
- The 10 horns refer specifically to 10 kings or nations who will comprise a revived Roman empire united under Antichrist

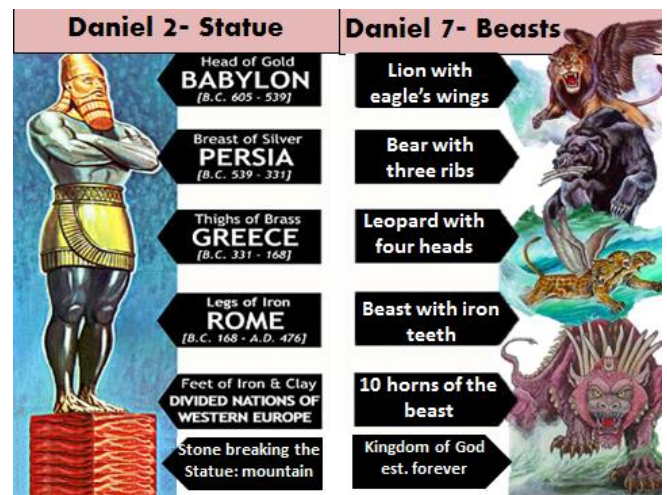
**Revelation 17:12** ~ The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

- This revived Roman Empire occurring in the Tribulation will be the 10-nation confederacy ruled over by Antichrist which was anticipated in Daniel

**Daniel 2:41-42** ~ In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.

**Daniel 7:7-8** ~ After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

**Daniel 7:24** ~ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.



- The beast is not only a kingdom (the final, anti-God, world government), but also an individual ruler
- He will be a man of great ability who will be closely aligned with Satan
- He will be a great leader, capable of solving the complex problems facing the world
- He will be intelligent, with an understanding of economics and political matters

- He will be powerful militarily, with great oratorical ability, and capable of inspiring many to follow him
- He will possess power to perform miracles and to rule the world
- “This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intellectual genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power. Added to those natural qualities will be the hellish power of Satan. The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and consummate wickedness.”<sup>2</sup>

**Daniel 8:23-25** ~ In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue. 24 His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. 25 And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency.

**Daniel 11:36-45**

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-10**

- He will possess “blasphemous names,” indicating that he will identify himself as a god, similar to the way previous Roman emperors designated themselves as God

**Revelation 13:2** ~ And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

- John’s repeated use of “like” demonstrates a straining at human language in his attempt to describe the “beast”
- The three preceding world empires were described in Daniel 7 with the same symbols:
  - “lion” = Babylon (Dan 7:4) = power
  - “bear” = Medo-Persia (Dan 7:5) = strength
  - “leopard” = Greece (Dan 7:6) = swiftness
- The fact that the beast is represented by all three animals demonstrates that the attributes that made each of those empires great will be all present in Antichrist’s rule
- His empire will be a composite of the empires that preceded it in that it “gathers all these elements and characteristics in itself and is far more dreadful in its power and blasphemy than the preceding empires.”<sup>3</sup>
- His “power and his throne and great authority” will all come from Satan himself
- Thus, he will be a tool of Satan since he will be sold out to him
- Although it might be hard to imagine how anyone so Satanic and brutal could rise to power, it can be easily understood by seeing how past dictators (on a smaller scale) have gained control by offering solutions to some of society’s greatest problems

## His Worship

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**Revelation 13:3-4** ~ I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

- John saw “one of his heads as if it had been slain”
- “slain” is the same word as in Rev 5:6 referring to the Lamb “as if slain,” meaning “slaughtered to death”
- Apparently, this was a wound inflicted by a sword (cf. Rev 13:14)...a wound which was healed

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 42.

<sup>3</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 198-199.

- This verse has been the subject of much debate and a number of different views have been advanced for the meaning of his fatal wound being healed:
  - Some have identified the beast as someone from the past/present who will become the final world ruler (Nero, Judas, Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini)
  - Others have believed it to refer to the destruction of the pagan Roman empire by the Christian Roman empire with the future revival of the Roman empire its miraculous healing
  - Others believe it to be one of the other previous kingdoms that was destroyed and then revived
- But there are a number of problems with these views:
  - The phrase “as if slain” is used in Rev 5:6 of Christ, implying that it is also used of a person in this passage
  - Although v. 3 speaks of one of the heads being slain, other passages specifically state that it is the beast himself who is slain (Rev 13:12, 14)
  - The personal pronoun in the phrase “his fatal wound” indicates a specific person is in view, not the empire as a whole
  - It seems unlikely that the reviving of the Roman Empire would cause the whole world to be amazed
- Thus, probably the best explanation is that it refers to either a literal or a staged death and resurrection by Antichrist
- Perhaps he is really killed and God allows him to be resurrected
- Or maybe more likely, his death and resurrection will be a counterfeit of Christ’s death and resurrection performed by the deception of the false prophet (cf. Rev 13:12-15)
- Whatever happens, the people of the world will be “amazed” at his apparent invincibility to death and will follow him
- The whole earth will “worship” him (v. 4), that is all those except whose names are “written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain” (v. 8) will worship Satan and the Antichrist
- Antichrist will encourage and demand this worship

**2 Thessalonians 2:4** ~ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

- From the beginning, Satan has sought to receive the worship due to God alone
- Thus, in this greatest counterfeit act, Satan will attempt to become God and to make the beast like Christ
- His program has never changed...he is always seeking to lure people to worship him instead of God

**Isaiah 14:14** ~ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.

- By worshipping Antichrist, the people will actually be worshipping Satan, the real power behind him
- They will blasphemously ascribe to him deity and worship that belongs only to God
- The implied answer to both rhetorical questions (“who is like the beast and who is able to wage war with him?") is “No one but God!”

## **His Arrogance**

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**Revelation 13:5-6** ~ There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

- Three times the word “blasphemy” occurs in these two verses noting the fact that Antichrist will be the most arrogant person in history
- He will speak great things and blasphemies against:
  - God (His Person)
  - His name and His tabernacle (His abode)
  - Those who dwell in heaven (His people)
- This arrogance is one of the main features of Antichrist’s kingdom and was anticipated in Daniel:

**Daniel 7:8** ~ While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth **uttering great boasts**.

**Daniel 7:11** ~ Then I kept looking because of the sound of **the boastful words which the horn was speaking**; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

**Daniel 7:25** ~ **He will speak out against the Most High** and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

**Daniel 11:36** ~ Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god **and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods**; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

- Antichrist will be given “authority to act for forty-two months,” most likely the entire second half of the Tribulation known as the Great Tribulation
- This refers to God’s sovereign control, allowing Antichrist to demonstrate the full expression of his wickedness, but only for the period of time God allows

## **His Authority**

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**Revelation 13:7-10** ~ It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

- He will be “given” (again referring to God’s sovereignty) the ability to go to war against God’s people and “overcome” them by killing them
- Many Tribulation saints (both Jew and Gentile) will die as martyrs, while others will be preserved
- This does not mean that “he will have the power to destroy their faith. He will overpower them physically, but not spiritually. Genuine saving faith cannot be destroyed...But Antichrist will slaughter God’s people on an unprecedented scale as he expresses his world dominance.”<sup>4</sup>
- He will have “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation” such that “all who dwell on the earth will worship him”
- What others have only dreamed of, Antichrist will succeed in doing
- “The dream of world conquest achieved in part by the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Macedonian, and Roman empires is now for the first time realized completely and is the satanic counterfeit of Christ’s millennial reign permitted by God in this final display of the evil of Satan and wicked humanity.”<sup>5</sup>

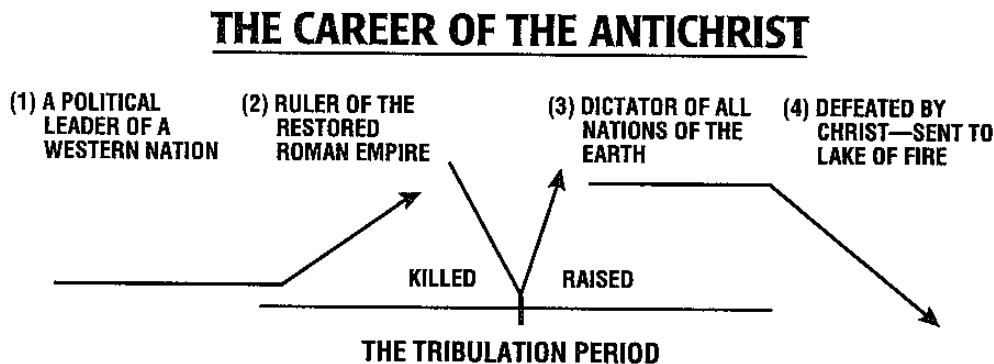
<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 201.

- He will become a worldwide ruler, which was predicted in Daniel

**Daniel 7:23** ~ Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.

- Notice that Antichrist will dominate the world politically and militarily (“authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation”) but also religiously (“all who dwell on the earth will worship him”)
  - This anticipates a universal worship of the beast in the form of an ecumenical world religion
  - Although the attempts to unite all churches in this age have failed, a world religion will occur in the Tribulation which will have as its focal point a man empowered by Satan himself
  - The universal religion of the Tribulation will be satanic and blasphemous instead of involving the worship of the true and living God
- The worship of Antichrist will exclude those who are included in the “book of life,” a phrase that occurs 7 times in Revelation (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19)
  - It only occurs in 1 other place in the NT (Phil 4:3)
  - Some think that the book of life originally contained the names of every living person and that the names of the unsaved are blotted out when they die
  - This idea stems from Rev 3:5 ~ I will not erase his name from the book of life
  - But it better to understand that those who are saved had their names written in the book of life from eternity past in anticipation of the death of Christ for them and that they can never be removed from it
- Verse 9 (“if anyone has an ear, let him hear”) is an announcement of something important
  - Notably, this phrase was used frequently in Christ’s message to the churches in Rev 2-3
  - In each of those occurrences, the phrase “what the Spirit says to the churches” was added
  - That phrase is notably absent here, likely indicating that the church has been raptured before the time of these events
  - The important statement comes in verse 10 and could be taken 2 different ways:
    1. It could refer to the divine retribution that will come on Antichrist: “After all that has been said about the power of the Beast, verse 10 contains a word of great comfort. The captor will be taken captive; the killer will be killed. When God’s purposes are finished through Antichrist, God will take him captive and confine him to the Lake of Fire. Knowing this brings the patience and faith that sustains the saints who endure these persecutions.”<sup>6</sup>
    2. It could refer to those believers alive at this time and the captivity that awaits them as well as the perseverance they must demonstrate



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<sup>6</sup> Charles Ryrie, *Revelation*, 116.

<sup>7</sup> Chart taken from Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 250.

## THE FALSE PROPHET

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- One of Satan's primary tactics is deception
- He is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44)
- He "disguises himself as an angel of light [and] his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor 11:14-15)
- He blinds "the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4)
- For this reason, Scripture gives many warnings about false prophets: Deut 13:1-5; Jer 23:16, 21-22, 25-32; Matt 7:15; 24:11
- Just as all former antichrists will culminate in the final Antichrist, so too will all former false prophets culminate in a final false prophet
- The false prophet is Antichrist's evil companion who will lend credibility to him
- "The false religious system, which was supported in this way imitated the divine Trinity. Satan seeks to take the place of God the Father; the first beast assumes the place of Jesus Christ, the Son, the King of kings; and the second beast, the false prophet, has a role similar to the Holy Spirit who causes Christians to worship God. This is Satan's final attempt to substitute a false religion for true faith in Christ."<sup>8</sup>
- "While Antichrist will be primarily a political and military ruler, he will also claim to be God. The false prophet will be his high priest, the religious leader who will lead people into the satanic religion of worshipping Antichrist. The false prophet will deify Antichrist and convince unbelievers that he is the only hope for the world's salvation...He may well be the most eloquent, powerful, convincing speaker in human history, and his lofty oratory will persuade the world to worship Antichrist."<sup>9</sup>

### His Description

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**Revelation 13:11** ~ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

- He is described also as a "beast," indicating similarity with the first beast...he is "another" beast = *allos* = "another of the same kind"
- But he is distinct from the first beast in that he arises from the "earth" rather than the sea
- He has "two horns" (instead of 10), likely indicating he is strong but not as strong as the first beast
- He "spoke as a dragon," namely like Satan...he will be Satan's mouthpiece, speaking winsome, deceiving words of praise about the Antichrist
- "False prophets often appear meek, mild, and harmless. They offer hope and solutions to the problems troubling men and women. Yet they are ever the voices of hell, and when they open their mouths, Satan speaks. So it will be amid the unspeakable horrors of the Tribulation. The false prophet will come like a lamb, speaking false, deceptive words of comfort. He will promise the suffering, tormented people of the world that all will be well if only they will worship Antichrist."<sup>10</sup>

### His Power

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<sup>8</sup> Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 962). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>9</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*; 56-57.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

**Revelation 13:12-15** ~ He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

- John records 4 manifestations of the false prophet’s power:
- First, he “exercises all the authority of the first beast” (v. 12)
  - This is true because he is sustained by the same Satanic power as Antichrist
- Second, he “makes the earth ... worship the first beast” (v. 12)
  - He doesn’t promote himself, but rather promotes the worship of the Antichrist
- Third, he “performs great signs” (*semeion megas*) – (v. 13)
  - He will make fire come down on the earth in the same way the two witnesses did in Rev 11:5
  - “People sometimes overlook the fact that, while God can do supernatural things, Satan within certain limitations can also perform miracles”<sup>11</sup>
  - That Satan can fabricate supernatural signs is evident from the fact that the magicians in Pharaoh’s court imitated some of the miracles God did through Moses and Aaron (cf. Ex 7:11-12, 22)
- Fourth, he “deceives those who dwell on the earth” (v. 14-15)
  - He will deceive the world in fulfillment of God’s judgment:

**2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** ~ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

- He will accomplish this deception by ordering people to make an image or an idol of the first beast which they will do (similar to Nebuchadnezzar’s statue to himself in Daniel 3)
- And he will give breath to the image they make, with the ability to speak...this could refer to the image actually coming to life or some deception that gives the appearance of real life and speech to this image through mechanical means
- Because the giving of life is a prerogative of God alone (and not Satan’s), many believe that the false prophet doesn’t actually give life to the idol but merely gives the appearance of it
- “With today’s amazing special effects technology and robotics, that is not out of the realm of possibility. Add to that the world’s desperate need, amid the carnage of the Tribulation, to believe in a death conqueror, and the ruse becomes very believable.”<sup>12</sup>
- Regardless, he will harness demonic power for this deception
- The idol has the power to kill those who do not worship the beast, a likely reference to the martyrs mentioned in Rev 6:9-11; 7:13-14

## His Agenda

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**Revelation 13:16-18** ~ And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one

<sup>11</sup> Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 962). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>12</sup> MacArthur, *Revelation 13-22*, 62.



who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

- The false prophet will force all people to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead in order to buy and sell
- Buying and selling will be critically important activities in the Tribulation for survival; thus, the sign will be necessary to conduct business and to purchase the basic necessities of life
- As a result, each person will be forced to decide whether to receive the mark (and thereby worship the Antichrist) or not and suffer the consequences as outcasts
- The mark will demonstrate that they are beast worshippers similar to the way the sealing of the 144,000 Jews marked them out as belonging to God (cf. Rev 7:2-3)
  
- The mark of the beast will consist of “either the name of the beast or the number of his name”
- In Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, letters had numerical equivalents
- Numerous individuals have been associated with the number 666 including Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, etc. but none of these are true since Antichrist is still future
- “There has been much speculation on the insignia or “mark” of the beast, but it could be any of several kinds of identification. Countless attempts have been made to interpret the number 666, usually using the numerical equivalents of letters in the Hebrew, Greek, or other alphabets. As there probably have been hundreds of explanations continuing down to the present day, it is obvious that if the number refers to an individual it is not clear to whom it refers. Probably the best interpretation is that the number six is one less than the perfect number seven, and the threefold repetition of the six would indicate that for all their pretensions to deity, Satan and the two beasts were just creatures and not the Creator. That six is man’s number is illustrated in many instances in the Bible, including the fact that man should work six days and rest the seventh.”<sup>13</sup>
- The number “seven” refer to God’s perfection; thus, the number “six” falls short of the perfect number “seven,” representing man and his inability to achieve perfection

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<sup>13</sup> Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 963). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.