

INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

- Last lesson we covered the history of the woman who gives birth to a male child (Israel), her offspring, the dragon and a war in heaven. Now we continue in this “interlude” between the 2nd and 3rd sets of judgments with information about the two beasts of the tribulation.
- These two beasts are two distinctly different people, coming world leaders. The beast from the sea is commonly identified as the “Antichrist.” There is a lot of negative connotation attached to this word, which often misleads people into thinking this person will be a monster. He will be, but initially he will be seen as the only one with answers in a dark period of time. He will be charismatic, and will deceive the masses who will follow him blindly.
- The word “anti” in Greek means “opposite,” or “against” or “instead of.” It carries a meaning of substitution, in place of something or someone else. It literally means “against the anointed One” or in place of the anointed One = instead of Christ. It is interesting to note that the Latin equivalent is “vicar.”
- The title Antichrist is never used for this final world leader in the book of Revelation. It is a title we have given, a name we can associate with this first beast out of the sea. This final world ruler has many titles in both the old and new testaments, but the word “antichristos” is only used in John’s epistles:
 - “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the **Antichrist is coming**, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour...Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:18, 22-23)
 - “...and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is **the spirit of the Antichrist**, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 John 4:3)
 - “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. **This is a deceiver and an antichrist.**” (2 John 1:7)
- This chapter is perhaps one of the most difficult to interpret. Many people have spent lifetimes trying to determine who this beast from the sea is, and who is the beast from the earth. To discuss all the commentary on this one subject alone would take years. We are trying to limit our discussion to what we know, not what could be.



¹Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

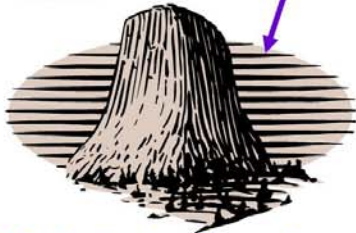
- **“beast”** – this is the word *therion* in Greek, which specifically means a wild beast or beast of prey. This is not the same word used for the living creatures.
- When we first saw this beast he was described as the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit (11:7). We assume this is the same beast as the one described here. We know this beast to be the final world ruler, so we will call him “antichrist” even though that title is not used in this book of Revelation.
- Many scholars believe a reference to the **“sea”** is a reference to the Mediterranean, but more symbolically to the “sea of people” or humanity in general. Some say this is a reference to the Gentile nations, and therefore this beast is a Gentile. Others have different ideas, and say this beast is a Jew, and that the sea represents ALL peoples, not just the Gentiles. There are scriptural references that can be used to defend both positions, and that is why this is such a difficult identity to interpret.
- **“...having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.”** Interpreting this difficult passage requires understanding of the Old Testament, in particular, the book of Daniel (especially Daniel chapters 2 and 7). Before looking at these two chapters, however, we can say that the seven heads represent the 7 world kingdoms (empires) throughout history: Sumeria, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.
- **Rome is not two different empires.** It is one, never conquered like the others, and will rise again in some form. There is a gap in time between the two phases of this one empire (the legs of iron on the statue, transitioning down to the 10 toes of iron and clay.) We don’t know for sure, but the general speculation is that this final world empire will consist of 10 regions. Each horn has a crown, possibly indicating 10 regional kings. From the book of Daniel we know that the “little horn” (antichrist) will supplant 3 other horns, rising to power, and will eventually receive all the power originally in the hands of the other kings. In Daniel this little horn blasphemes God and His people, hence the blasphemous name.
- **“Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.”** To understand this vision of John’s, **it is important to understand several portions of the book of Daniel.**
- **Daniel Chapter 2: The Dream Statue:** The dream of Nebuchadnezzar represents **world empires** from that moment until the end of time. These are GENTILE kingdoms. Head of gold represents Babylon. The shoulders and arms of silver represent the Medes and Persians (Persian Empire later). The belly and thighs of bronze are Greece and the Greek Empire. The legs of iron are the Roman Empire, later divided. The feet and toes partly of clay and partly of iron represent both a brutal strength and a mortal weakness in the last days empire. Clay and iron won’t mix and will crumble. The Stone that crushes the statue is the Messiah (Jesus) and His Kingdom will fill the earth. No other human governments will arise after this point. This awesome statue is how man sees world empires—dazzling, brilliant, awesome and powerful. God has a different idea, later in Chapter 7.

- **Daniel Chapter 7: The 4 Beasts in a Vision:** Daniel has a vision which includes 4 beasts. There is a lion, a bear, a leopard and a “terrible” beast. These 4 beasts correlate to the statue in chapter 7. The winged lion is Babylon, the bear with 3 ribs in his mouth is Persia, the winged leopard is Alexander the Great and the subsequent Greek Empire, the “terrible” beast is the Roman Empire. This is how God sees man’s government: blood thirsty, violent, “beastly!” World history shows us how accurately the prophecies in Daniel have been fulfilled. This terrible beast (Roman Empire) was never conquered. It will be “revived” in the end times in some sort of coalition of power with 10 heads. This beast here has 10 horns, and we see the beast from the sea in this chapter with 10 horns on 7 heads. (10 toes in statue above) *(NOTE: Some speculate that these beasts in Daniel 7 may have DUAL identities, and may represent both ancient world empires, AND more current empires that have and will come onto the geo-political scene at the end of time. For example, there is speculation that the winged lion may also represent the British Empire, and perhaps even the United States, as well as ancient Babylon. The bear may represent Russia, as well as ancient Persia. The leopard may represent some sort of Arab alliance (consider the building Russian-Arab States alliance against Israel) that may form in the future, as well as Greece. This is speculation, but it is not unusual for prophecies to have dual fulfillment, a near and a far fulfillment in history.)*
- It is interesting to note that in Daniel, both chapters 2 and 7, the order of the world empires is as they have been through history: Babylon – Rome (Sumeria, Egypt and Assyria were in power before Daniel’s vision). Here, in Revelation, John speaks of them in the reverse order, from Greece backwards (leopard, lion, bear). **Daniel was looking forward. John is looking backward.** At the time of this writing, Rome was in power.
- The verses below also give us **some more critical information** about this final world ruler.
- **Daniel Chapter 8:23-25** *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.”*
- **Daniel 9:26-27** *“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”*
- **Daniel 11:36** *“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”* (through end of chapter)
- *“The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”* There is no difficulty in interpreting this statement. We know the identity of the dragon. It is the enemy, satan. We therefore know that antichrist receives all that he has from satan.

COMPARISON OF DANIEL CHAPTER 2 AND CHAPTER 7



**Daniel Chapter 2
Man's View of Human
Government: Awesome
Statue**



Divine "stone" crushes statue, fills whole earth, will stand forever (kingdom of Jesus)

Daniel 2

Interpretations may differ, but **BOTH VISIONS HAVE SAME MEANING AND OUTCOME:**

Man's governments are permanently replaced by God's government, and Jesus on the Throne. Chapter 2 is a BRIEF look at this passing of world empires. Chapter 7 provides more detail, especially about end times government and ruler.



1: Winged Lion = Babylon AND, Great Britain???



2: Bear w/ribs = Persia AND, Russia??



3: Winged Leopard = Greece AND,??



4: Terrible Beast = Rome AND, ...final world empire

**Daniel Chapter 7
God's View of Human
Government:
Bloodthirsty Beasts**

10 Toes (ch 2) correspond to 10 horns (ch 7) BOTH final world empire

- Little horn rises
- pompous (AntiChrist)
- Against Most High
- Persecute Saints
- For 3-1/2 years
- Loses dominion
- Killed, thrown in Lake of Fire



- Heavenly Court is seated
- Books are opened
- Judgment
- Son of Man given dominion
- Saints of Most High possess kingdom



Daniel 7

**SCENE 3: The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man—
History's Curtain Call!**

SCENE 1: The 4 Beasts

SCENE 2: 10 Horns and a Little Horn

7 Heads

- Historical World Kingdoms
1. Sumeria (Nimrod, Bab-el)
 2. Egypt
 3. Assyria
 4. Babylon
 5. Medo-Persia
 6. Greece
 7. Rome

The 8th? Antichrist/Revived Rome?

10 Horns

A possible 10-kingdom confederacy of nations at end times, possibly before Tribulation, prior to AntiChrist. All rising from the previous historical world kingdoms. These signify the total history of the kingdoms of MAN, culminating in the very worst.

Man of lawlessness will "uproot" three of horns and replace them

Notice these crowns on the beast's HORNS, not on his heads. Who has real power?



DANIEL VISIONS

Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar's dream of statue (world kingdoms from man's point of view, impressive)
Chapter 7: Daniel's vision from God (God's view of world kingdoms—savagely beasts)

Revelation 13—reverse order of kingdoms. Daniel looking forward, John looking back

Beast like a leopard (panther): speed of Greece, cunning
Feet of a bear: crushing strength of Persia
Head of lion: wealth, splendor of Babylon, absolute rule

We can call the entire beast the Revived Roman Empire, or Rome 2 (Neb's statue), final world kingdom, separated by gap between Rome 1 and Rome 2

Out of the sea, can mean from the sea of masses of humanity, possibly Gentiles, or Mediterranean Sea, a person with ancestors of nations around this sea. Don't know for sure. Have evidence can be either Gentile or Jew.

Revelation 13: Background Information

NOTE: We cannot always be sure of what we are looking to in the future, but we can always be sure of what we have seen in the past, as it is prophesied in the Word. In today's world, geopolitical boundaries are changing so frequently, we should not jump to conclusions. Our ideas of a "revived Roman Empire" may look nothing like we think they will. There are many issues and conditions at play today, including the rise of Islam, that may alter our "speculations." Wherever we can, we should stick to God's Word and not wander off into un-based speculation of the future. As the European Union was forming, and keeps changing, many have speculated about its role in end times and leapt to erroneous conclusions. Just keep watching, and knowing what the Word says about these times. It is possible that we cannot know these identities yet. The people who need this book the most will be those who live through these times, so they can look at their current events and see prophecy fulfilled.

³ *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.*

- This is a difficult passage to interpret. This, and other scriptures, lead many scholars to **believe that the antichrist will be killed and raised back to life at some point**. We won't even attempt to provide all the background information for the many speculations that surround this issue. However, there are several popular thoughts in this regard.
- Some believe that for the first 3 ½ years of his world leadership he is merely a man (human) who worships the enemy, that he **literally dies and satan raises him back to life and actually indwells**, or uses, the physical body and is now "super human." This is based upon the concept of satan counterfeiting Jesus' life, in that the enemy will seek to counterfeit himself as the anointed one (incarnate).
- Others say this "antichristos" is actually **an historic figure who is "reincarnated"** or brought back to life for this role, such as Judas Iscariot, Nero (or other Caesar), Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, etc. There are all sorts of thoughts about this. A convincing argument can be made for Judas. However, this has several flaws, based upon a common knowledge of how God works and how life is given. Yet, many still hold to this, and God cannot be limited in how He works.
- Still others believe that this "mortal wound" and healing is a **grand deception**. The other arguments state that the enemy has the power over life and death, and can, in fact, raise someone from the dead. Many do not believe this, but rather that God alone has power over life and death, and resurrection (*we believe this*). They hold that this wound may be real, and appear to be fatal, but that a huge deception causes people to *believe* he was brought back to life, when indeed he never died in the first place. The wording in this verse lends itself to this conclusion. John says one of the beast's heads looked "**as if**" it had been wounded. Satan's chief business is counterfeiting, trying to make something appear to be of God when it is not. In this chapter there is a counterfeit trinity (*the dragon, the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth, we'll get there in a moment!*), a counterfeit "messiah" and a counterfeit resurrection. None of these things is real, they are phonies. Hence the belief that the "resurrection" is a fake as well.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ makes Christianity unique among all religions. It is the only one boasting an actual resurrection from the dead. Islam comes close with their prophet's ascension into heaven. But this is also one of many counterfeit religions by the enemy. Come close to what is real, and maybe people will fall for it. The enemy will try to duplicate our Lord's resurrection through deception. The enemy has been counterfeiting the things of God since his origin, and continues to do so in an attempt to steal away the children of God.
- Later in this chapter (v 14) we are told that the beast's wound was "**by the sword**." Notice that we are not told specifically that he is resurrected, merely that his wound was healed. There is a very interesting passage in Zechariah 11:17. Here this final world ruler is referenced as the "evil (or worthless) shepherd." Listen to a description of him: "**Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye; his arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded.**" Is this a description, the only one in scripture, of the physical appearance of the antichrist after this seemingly mortal wound? Perhaps. It is an interesting comment to consider.



- **The bottom line on this passage** is that it really doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Whether the antichrist is literally dead and raised back to life, or the world is deceived through amazing trickery, the end result is the same: the whole world is amazed and follows him. They have bought the lie.
- There is **one more argument** regarding this 7-headed beast with one head receiving what appeared to be a fatal wound. In chapter 17, a further description of the beast is found, which we will discuss later. However, in 17: 10 describing the beast, it says *"...there are also seven kings..."* This means that the heads can be considered "kings." In Scripture, the word used for "king" and "kingdom" (*basileus*) is the same. There is no distinction between them and the context of the passage is used to determine whether the king, or the kingdom, is being spoken of. In many cases, God does not make this distinction, and the king and kingdom are regarded as one. In that case, the head with the fatal wound here has also been interpreted as a kingdom, not necessarily as the human king. Some say that the Roman Empire will be reborn, resurrected, so to speak, and that this passage does not necessarily imply that a human receives a fatal wound and comes back to life. It may apply to a kingdom, a world power, instead, though this is not the most popular theory.
- Some people spend lifetimes trying to decipher these very difficult passages, and following all the threads throughout scripture. We believe that the answers are there (yet so many commentators disagree and come to differing conclusions), but perhaps we will not be able to place all the puzzle pieces together until the very time these events occur. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of Old Testament references to a person most believe is the antichrist. Putting all the pieces together is a challenge.

⁴ *So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

- Either through deception or occultic power, **the world** (those who do not know God and His Son) **now worships both the dragon and the beast**. We mentioned that the dragon, the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth make up an evil (unholy) counterfeit trinity. The world now worships the enemy (satanic worship) and his masterpiece, the beast from the sea (antichrist).
- They are amazed by the power they've seen displayed, or been deceived with. **They boast that no one can compare to this beast**, and certainly no one can go to war with him and win. In their deluded minds, he is the all-mighty one.



⁵ *And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.*

- A certain commentator (Missler) has referred to the antichrist as "Mr. Big Mouth." We have several allusions to his big mouth and his blasphemy throughout scripture. The "little horn" of Daniel 7 has *"a mouth speaking pompous words."* There will be many other references in this book that the antichrist speaks powerfully and speaks against God and God's people. "Speaking great things" may also be translated "pompous words." He is arrogant and filled with himself...and the enemy.

- Notice the phrase **“and he was given authority...”** This is very important. **God is still in control.** From the book of Job we know that even the enemy must have permission before he does anything. God is the only Almighty One!
- **“...forty-two months.”** Here is that very specific time frame again. God is reminding us that this beast has a limited reign, and it is a specific period of time, not a figurative season. The Great Tribulation Jesus spoke of is the last half of the general 7-year tribulation, the time when this “mouth” is fueled by the enemy.

6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

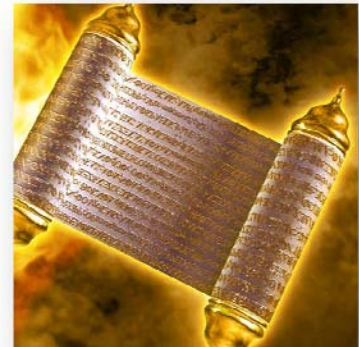
- Now we see the **subject and target of the blasphemy** of this beast. The word used here for blasphemy means evil speaking, railing, against God. But that isn’t the antichrist’s only target. God is the main heading of this blasphemy. There are three named targets: 1) His Name, 2) His tabernacle (dwelling place, which is currently in heaven), 3) His people (who are now in heaven). This last group is in opposition to “those who dwell on earth” (unbelievers).
- In chapter 12 the Jews were persecuted, and “her offspring” which can be seen both as the saints of this tribulation period, and the Church, even though during the tribulation it is not on earth. The Church is a separate entity from tribulation saints. The Church is composed of those who dwell in heaven with God, as seen in this verse. The beast blasphemes everything of God, now and before. ALL who love God are persecuted.



7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

- **There is a lot of information in these two verses.** First, we are told that this beast is allowed (by God, remember He is in ultimate control!) to “make war” with the saints, and even to overcome them. Again, we have lots of other scripture references that indicate this. The beast will hate believers, and will set out to obliterate them and their God (a remarkably vain thing, Psalm 2). It will truly be the time of “Jacob’s Trouble” during these 7 years, and trouble turns to terrible for believers, Jew and Gentile, in the last half of the tribulation.
- From Daniel 7:25, we know the same thing: **“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”** This again is the “little horn” of Daniel’s vision, and the same period of time is referenced.
- Some have a hard time with this verse, recalling the words of Matthew 16:18: **“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”** Jesus is making a play on words here. Peter means rock. Jesus’ Church is not built on Peter, but on the statement Peter had just made that elicited this remark by Christ: **“You are Christ, the Son of the Living God.”** (Matthew 16:16) Jesus refers to His Church here, and that the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. Yet in chapter 13 of Revelation, we see the beast given power to overcome the saints.

- It is helpful to remember that the Church, the body of Christ made up of all believers from the time of Pentecost to the time of the removal of the Church, is not the same group as referenced throughout Revelation during the tribulation. These are “tribulation saints,” an entirely different set of believers. We will all become one eventually, but for this period of time, they are given different distinctions, and are in different “dispensations.”
- Again, notice the *“was granted”* and *“authority was given...”* phrases. We must not forget Who is in control during this time.
- This world leader is given authority over everyone on earth. No one is exempt, and everyone must worship him, and they do. All, except those whose names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb – believers. This speaks of a **one world government**, and eventually a **one world religion**. The objective of the antichrist is to be worshipped himself. This aligns with satan’s ultimate goal (Isaiah 14:12-17). One commentator (unknown) wrote: *“Those who prefer a comfortable religion which does not demand righteous behavior will find just what they are looking for.”* (NOTE: A one-world government, often referred to as “The New World Order” has been promoted for several years by many very recognizable leaders, including both President Bush’s, Mikhail Gorbachev, Tony Blair, and many many others, some of which are merely financial sources behind the scenes of some very powerful plans to move us in this direction. This goes beyond the “conspiracy theory” realm. There is very solid evidence, in the public domain, that points to this. And, according to Bible prophecy, this is indeed the direction we are headed.)
- **The Book of Life** is referenced many times in scripture, as well as the Lamb’s Book of Life. We could do an entire study just on this concept. Moses knew of the book and had a conversation with God about it (Exodus 32). There is discussion in scripture about names being blotted out of this book, and names written in the Lamb’s book. To summarize the entire concept, we can assume that God’s Book of Life contains the names of EVERY human being ever born. It is His desire than none perish. This is sort of God’s book of “anticipation.” However, if they die without receiving His gift of Jesus, their names are blotted out. In the Old Testament, if they died in their sins without repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, their names were blotted out. The only names that remain then are those who are forgiven. For us, forgiveness comes only through Jesus. The Lamb’s book of life starts out blank and names are added, as they believe in Him. In a certain sense, we could say that God’s Book of Life actually becomes the Lamb’s Book of Life. Either way, the names of all believers are written in God’s book. It can be seen as the census listing of dwellers in heaven with Him (as opposed to the “inhabitants of the earth.”)
- The phrase *“slain from the foundation of the world.”* Is difficult for us to comprehend. This indicates that God’s plan was determined and even accomplished before the entire material universe was created. He had already given His Son, and the Lamb had already been slain before He even created the world. Can we understand this? God says He inhabits eternity and sees the beginning from the end. This is beyond human comprehension, but someday we will understand.



⁹ *If anyone has an ear, let him hear.* ¹⁰ *He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

- **Verse 9 sounds familiar.** Notice, however, that the words that generally follow this phrase (from chapter 2 and 3 in the letters to the churches) are missing. In chapters 2 and 3, the entire phrase reads: *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”* Is it a mere accidental omission here in chapter 13? No, God’s word is perfect in its precision. The statement is not here because the Church is not here in chapter 13. Now the admonition is to “anyone.” In other words, pay attention, I have something to say, and anyone who is trying to hear God should hear what He is saying at this point. It is an attention getter, aimed at anyone who really wants to know, not the Church, which is not here at this time.
- Verse 10 speaks of **God’s divine retribution**, and the fact that the saints during this time will suffer greatly. They will be arrested and killed, but those who perpetrate these things will die themselves the same way. This is intended to be a word of encouragement to the faithful to remain strong to the end.

¹¹ *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.*

- We are now introduced to the **second beast** in this chapter. Together with the dragon and the first beast, we have an unholy trinity – satan’s counterfeit godhead.

DRAGON	BEAST FROM THE SEA	BEAST FROM THE LAND
Satan	Antichrist	False Prophet
Evil power anti-GOD	Political power, evil anti-CHRIST	Psychological power, evil anti-SPIRIT

- This beast comes **up out of the EARTH**, unlike the SEA as in the first beast. Some believe this is a reference to the land of Israel (the earth being a reference to Israel), though we don’t have any concrete proof of this. This would indicate this beast was Jewish. This may be, but at this point it is merely speculation. This beast is apparently the one referenced as the “False Prophet” in chapters 19 and 20.



- *“...he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.”* The reference to a lamb is an obvious counterfeit of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Lambs are gentle, and this beast may appear gentle and kind, but his voice gives him away. He is a mouthpiece for the dragon, satan. This is his true character. His whole purpose is to work toward the complete dominance of the earth by the antichrist (the first beast from the sea), and the worship of the earth dwellers of antichrist. He can be considered the “high priest” of the false religious system. Another good title for him would be the antichrist’s “henchman.” Some people say that this beast is even more anti-christ than the antichrist himself. Horns speak of power. This beast has been given some unusual powers to exercise with those who resist this enforced worship.

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

- This second beast has the **complete authority of the first beast**, which has the complete authority of the dragon. There is a chain of command here that reaches to Enemy.
- *“all authority...”* This beast does the evil of the first beast. The Greek words used here clearly show action – this beast is carrying out the first beast’s evil plans.
- This “false prophet” will work to **insure worship of the antichrist**, the one who appeared to have been healed of a deadly wound. Notice again the reference to the *“earth and those who dwell in it...”* Unbelievers will worship the antichrist, not believers.
- There is some evidence to indicate that the false prophet will be the **head of the apostate church** during the first half of the tribulation. Revelation 17 shows the demise of the harlot (the false church) at the mid-point, and after this time the second beast enforces worship of the antichrist.
- **COMMENTARY: “Since man is incurably religious, a world dictator must provide man with an outlet for his religious inclinations.”** (LaHaye). Actually, God has programmed mankind to worship Him as the Creator. We are designed uniquely to seek God, but our pride and will get in the way and we end up worshipping, as He intended, but the wrong god.

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

- This second beast has been given some unique powers. He is able to make fire come down from heaven. This should immediately cause us to think of one other person who did this: **Elijah, in his contest between God and Baal on Mt. Carmel.** Also, when **Moses pleaded with Pharaoh to let God’s people go, one of the plagues was hailstones and fire.** These powers of the second beast may be an attempt in some way to convince people that the Two Witnesses are not the only ones with this kind of power. But this power is satanic. We should remember that even the magicians of Pharaoh’s court could replicate a few of the things Moses did, but they couldn’t come close to replicating all of them. God is still in control, even here.
- These unusual powers of the second beast are called **“signs”** which are apparently supposed to convince people of this beast’s “divine” powers. There are verses (in addition to this one here) that could indicate this is all trickery, and not even real. We don’t know. We must remember that John’s gospel called many of the things Jesus did “signs,” but those signs were not parlor tricks or merely miracles, they were fulfillment of solid prophecies regarding His person and His work. Those signs in the book of John are intended to convince readers that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The signs used in this chapter in Revelation are intended to deceive.
- “Those who dwell on the earth” are now being coerced into **making an image of some sort of the antichrist.** We don’t know what form this takes. In today’s world, it could be a statue, a hologram, or even a television image, or something else.

¹⁵ *He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

- This image of the beast is **unclear in its form**. A television image seems to have breath and can speak, so does a hologram or a robot, but this is speculation only. The word image in Greek means “likeness.” This could be anything. We don’t know how this likeness of the antichrist could kill people if they don’t worship it, but perhaps it merely means that the false prophet orders people killed who do not do so.
- This image of the beast issue is reminiscent of the **image of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 3**. The king of Babylon ordered everyone to worship his image, and those who didn’t were to be thrown in their execution chamber – the fiery furnace. It is interesting to note that Daniel does not seem present during this incident. Only his cohorts (*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, or their Hebrew names of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah*) were there, and we all know the story of their faithfulness to God and miraculous deliverance. Some speculate that this might be an early allusion to the removal of the Church, or non-presence of the Church (Daniel), and the protection of Israel (his Jewish buddies) during this time.

¹⁶ *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

- These last verses are one of the **most mysterious and investigated passages in all of scripture**. It is particularly of interest in today’s high tech world, when it is completely possible that such marks can be issued to everyone on earth. This wasn’t possible a few short years ago. But in the age of computers and tracking abilities, this is very doable today and has even been tested in some regions – on foreheads and right hands. Today’s headlines are a chilling reminder of how close we are to this time.
- The Greek word used here is *charagma*, meaning **engraving, brand, seal, or etching** (in today’s world this could include tattoos with barcodes, biochips, and other things). In Leviticus 19:28, God forbids such etching and tattoos (any permanent marking). (*See also Leviticus 21:5, Deuteronomy 14:1, Isaiah 49:16, Ezekiel 9:4, Exodus 12:9, 16*) He reserves that right to mark His own, or we give that right to the enemy. God has His own mark for believers. While unbelievers take this “mark of the beast,” God’s children are sealed by Him.
- This mark is the **mark of doom**. We know from the next chapter that no one who receives this mark can be saved. They are doomed to the lake of fire for all eternity. Pretty good incentive for NOT taking the mark.
- Because of the very large population of tribulation saints, there will most likely be some sort of **“underground” economy** going on during this time that will enable believers to survive, at least those who can remain in secret and not be killed by this “image of the beast.” This required mark will mean complete economic control by the antichrist. Believers will live in very difficult times at this point.
- It is interesting to note that while many still recoil at the “mark of the beast” or a single type of identification code, especially anything with “666” in it, the troubling issues of identity theft, medical records and keeping track of everyone’s personal “data” has **already made the public receptive to this idea**. The world will make it seem attractive and needed. When it is time to issue such a mark, people will flock to the marking stations. It is so important to know what God’s Word has to say about this mark.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

- This verse has been commented on, picked apart, puzzled, speculated and otherwise chewed on for centuries. The verse itself indicates that it **requires wisdom to calculate this number.** The word used here for “calculate” literally means to count. Where does wisdom come from? Certainly not from worldly man. All our answers come from God, from scripture. Proverbs 1:7 says that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. We study scripture to understand scripture. And in scripture, God has used a sort of numerology to make references and symbolic relationships. The number six is used repeatedly as a symbol for man. **Six literally means “less than complete.”** Seven means “perfectly complete.” So six is one less than seven, one less than perfectly complete. In Hebrew, six is considered an “insidious” number. It is despised. In fact, you will never see any Kosher foods packaged in groups of six items. The Jews avoid this number because it is used so often in scripture in a negative allusion to the incompleteness of man. It is considered an evil number, and is representative of fallen, sinful and unregenerate man.
- There are **several scriptural allusions** to the number six, chiefly in three areas: Goliath (having 6 fingers, 6 toes, height of 6 cubits, 6 sheckel spear, 6 pieces of armor, etc.), Solomon (6 steps to his throne, yearly revenue of 666 talents of gold, 600 sheckels of gold in each of his shields, etc.) and Nebuchadnezzar (his statue 60 cubits high, 6 cubits wide, 6 musical instruments). Both Goliath and Nebuchadnezzar were enemies of Israel. Solomon was one of her greatest kings, but even he is a type for antichrist. Solomon started off well, asking for wisdom to rule God’s people, but his many foreign wives turned his head and heart away from God. He sinned repeatedly and introduced idolatry into the land. He was a hard taskmaster requiring very heavy taxes from the people. He could have been a type for a deliverer, but instead became an oppressor to feed his own lusts and desires. Six always refers to something or someone that is less than complete, something human. We are incomplete until we are “in Christ.” (*The beautiful picture of the menorah in the tabernacle, and the vine and the branches in John 14 are examples of this completion.*)
- It is interesting to note that if you **add up all the numbers between 1 and 36**, you will arrive at the sum of 666.
[1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16+17+18+19+20+21+22+23+24+25+26+27+28+29+30+31+32+33+34+35+36 = 666] And, the word “beast” in its evil sense, is used exactly 36 times in Revelation.
- We could spend weeks on deciphering this number alone. There have been so many attempts to attach it to a person, which may or may not be possible, that it is now in the realm of being ridiculous. The most important thing we should see here is that **six is the number of man**, and the antichrist will be a man*. Three sixes (666) is the number of complete imperfection, 777 is the number of complete perfection. 888 is beyond perfection (8 is the number of new beginnings, and is often associated with Jesus). The 666 may indicate the unholy trinity. Perhaps at some future time, during the tribulation, this “formula” will serve as a way to concretely identify the antichrist, if there is any question. For us today, such speculation is a waste of time.



- The Hebrew, Latin and Greek languages all have **numeric values assigned to their alphabets**. For us English speakers, this is a foreign concept and we do not easily understand what is implied in a single word. For example, the Greek letters for the name Jesus, add up to the number 888. Jesus is beyond perfection.
- **Some people do not interpret the beasts as literal persons, but as worldly conditions in opposition to God, including the ferocious power and deceptive activity and propaganda of both the first and second beasts that exist in the world today. However, there is entirely too much evidence (in both testaments) to indicate that these beasts are in fact man, human persons. This may be why God states their number as 666, a number only assigned to sinful man in scripture. We read in Revelation 19 that both of these beasts end up in the lake of fire. This would seem odd if they weren't indeed human beings.*

(We will not speculate here on any of the literally thousands of ideas about what 666 could mean, who it might relate to, or possible theories. This has been done throughout the centuries and every time people have been wrong. The best explanation is that the triple six is the number of a man, each digit falling short of the perfect completion of the number 7. Someday it may be possible to "calculate" this number to identify the antichrist.)

