



I think there has been more talk about the Beast and the number of the Beast than probably any other topic in the Book of Revelation. I remember when the internet first came out, Sandy's uncle Hubert pulled me aside in a very "I've got a secret that I need to tell you" sort of way, and he began to talk to me in hushed tones. He looked

me in the eyes and told me that he thought the internet itself was the Antichrist. I said, "Hubert, I don't get it. How exactly is the internet the mark of the Beast?" He said, "you know.....think about it.... dubya, dubya, dubya. It stands for 666." I thought about it for a couple of seconds, and I said, "Sorry Hubert, I just don't get it." He shook his head and walked away. He knew that I had missed something important that everyone should readily see. He had a look on his face that I was purposely ignoring some obvious truth that I could understand if I'd only open my eyes. I tell this story just to demonstrate the wild reaches that people go to trying to uncover the meaning of 666. The number is the mark of the Beast and many are looking for some clue to figure out who the Antichrist is since he'll be identified with that number. The truth is that NONE OF US KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT IT COULD MEAN. We may not understand this now, but I think that those that are around when these things happen will know who the Beast is and what "his number" means.

Let's read today's passage.

Then 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. ² 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. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 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. 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?" (Revelation 13:1-4, NKJV).

The best way to interpret the Bible is to read similar passages of symbolism. It helps to get into this symbolism by reading in the Book of Daniel which also uses much

symbolism. I can't cover all the collateral passages this morning, but a dive into Daniel is necessary to make sense of this passage today. Remember that probably 70% of the book of Revelation relates back to the subjects and symbolism of the Old Testament. I will remind you that what we are reading is not an allegory. Rather, it is a description of real facts that are described with symbolism. When I first read verses, I like to try to decipher what an obvious meaning might be using symbolism that I've seen elsewhere. The Bible often uses the term "sea" to refer to the nations of people of the earth. John stands on the "sands of the sea" (in the sea of humanity) looking at one arising out of the nations of the earth. I'll take a shot at what things seem to say as I read them.

The Beast will come up out of a sea of people associated with perhaps seven major people groups or ethnic groups. Think of ancient ethnic groups like Teutons, Slavs,



Franks, Gaels, Greeks, etc. who are spread out over ten kingdoms or nation states. They are each described as having a "crown." Each of these seven heads of power will possess a name that in itself blasphemes God. As my mind wanders, I think of a name that might blaspheme all that is good and all that is of God. It may be a name as innocuous as something like "The League of Nimrod" or even "The Confederation of Babylon." It will be some name that is patently offensive to God; hence it is called blasphemy.

V.2 The beast is described in zoomorphic descriptions. It is like a "leopard" which is one of the fastest hunter-predators on earth. The feet of a bear are one of the most powerful weapons on earth. With one blow of a foot, a bear can kill an adult deer.¹ The crushing mouth of a lion can be heard a long way. When I was a little boy, we would go to the Hermann Park Zoo, and I could hear the lions roaring from blocks away as we parked and made our way to the zoo. All three of these zoomorphic descriptions denote predatory power and might. This is a person who will pounce like a leopard, smack like a bear, and crush his enemies like a lion.

The verse then tells us that it is the "dragon" that gives this "beast" its power and might. We already know who the dragon is from our last chapter. The dragon is that serpent of

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bear#:~:text=Common%20characteristics%20of%20modern%20bears,nonretractile%20claws%2C%20and%20short%20tails.>

old, Lucifer, the Devil. He will give power, authority, and dominion to this person who will arise out of the nations of the world.

V.3 This verse relates that some extension (think tenacle) of the beast's power will be mortally wounded. This could be an actual physical or political wound that will leave this beast, the Anti-Christ, appearing to be finished and powerless. And then, he will miraculously be healed. It might even speak to a facet of his power like his military might that will appear to be wiped out only to be miraculously brought back to effectiveness. I personally think it will be a mortal physical wound because that would best mimic the resurrection. Satan is a great imitator. He comes up with nothing original, rather he mimics the things of God in his own perverted way. This recovery (either physical or instrumental) will give the beast a tremendous following. This is a satanic replay of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Remember, Satan is a mocker. He copies what is real and what is of God, and he offers only his counterfeits.

V.4 His "miracle recovery" will result in many being deceived and running after the beast. Men will somehow connect this recovery to Satan himself, and they will engage in Satan worship. They will set the "dragon" up before them like a god. He will be considered so strong and invincible that people will relinquish any thought of trying to go against him. There will be no resistance.

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. (Revelation 13:5, NKJV).

The beast, the Anti-Christ, will be given great power and influence for 3 ½ years. He will be convincing (mouth speaking great things). Most of the peoples of the earth will be deceived by his answers to humanity's problems.

⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. (Revelation 13:6-7a, NKJV).

This beast, this Anti-Christ, will be open in his defiance of God. He will rant, rave, and rail against the holy things of God and against His people. Then the text is clear that the tribulation saints that come to Christ after the rapture will be martyred. The beast will be given authority over them to conquer them. This is a hard verse to read with the incredible suffering that it references, but we must remember that these are saints of God who will just be arriving in heaven early.

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. (Revelation 13:7b-8, NKJV).

V.8 This verse simply tells us that all who are unbelievers (whose names are NOT written in the Lamb's Book of Life) will fall in and worship him. The text tells us that those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life "from the foundation of the world" will not fall for the beast. I'll remind you that God doesn't determine beforehand whether we will be saved or not, but he foreknows all of it. God knows everything. That is the real meaning of "predestination," and those that will not follow the Beast are those that God knows will remain faithful to Him.

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. (Revelation 13:9-10, NKJV).

V.10 This is an odd verse, but it's basically saying that, for the believers at the time, what's going to be is going to be. Some have interpreted this as a call for the suffering endurance of the saints. It's hard to get our minds around this, but the fact of the matter is that some are called to suffer. This is very similar to the language which we find in the Book of Jeremiah.

² And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD:

***"Such as are for death, to death;
And such as are for the sword, to the sword;
And such as are for the famine, to the famine;
And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity." (Jeremiah 15:2, NKJV).***

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. 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. (Revelation 13:11-12, NKJV).

We then see some sort of "sidekick" to the "beast." This is one John will call the second beast or the false prophet. Some believe that this second beast will come out of the "land of Israel." He will look like a lamb, but he'll speak like a "dragon." I think this simply means he'll be a wolf in sheep's clothing. He looks like a lamb, but he acts like a dragon.

He'll be sort of a ringleader influencer in causing the world to treat the Anti-Christ like a god. He's promoter number one of the beast.

13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. (Revelation 13:13, NKJV).

This second beast will be able to do all kinds of signs and wonders. He'll even be able to call fire down from heaven onto the earth. I'm not exactly sure what that will look like or how that will happen, but it will be done in the "sight of man." This means people will see it going on.

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. 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. (Revelation 13:14-15, NKJV).



This second beast, this sidekick, will spearhead those on earth to make an image of the Anti-Christ. And this second beast, this false prophet, this sidekick, will have satanic power to cause the image to sort of come to life. It will speak, and it will watch to see who is worshipping and who is not worshipping. It will be a surveillance mechanism that will seek out and destroy whoever refuses to worship the Anti-Christ. As I read this, I thought of the EYE of SAURON in Lord of the Rings that is the mechanism by which evil surveils Middle Earth.

This is what Apostle Paul describes in the book to the church in Thessaloniki. ***9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, NKJV).***

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. (Revelation 13:16-17, NKJV).

This second beast will cause all to receive a mark on the right hand or forehead. It is only with this mark that a person will be able to buy or sell. Without the mark, a person will not be able to eat or survive. So, what is so important about a "mark?" Why would Satan put a mark on anyone? Why do you brand your cattle or expensive horses? Why do you tag your dogs? Marking something is an act of ownership. The "mark of the beast" is a way for Satan to mark those that are his. This is a satanic counterfeit of the marking that God performs on each person who believes in Christ. And what is the seal (the mark) that you and I have? We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of Almighty God.

*²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, ²² who also **has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts** as a guarantee. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, NKJV).*

Each of us already has a mark, and it is not a mark of the beast. It is a mark of Jesus. Satan will mark all of those that will belong to him. But no one will receive his mark without first giving themselves over to him.

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. (Revelation 13:18, NKJV).

This is the verse that has inspired many movies, books, discussions, and 246 million hits on Google. People shudder and dread this number. I don't know if you've ever noticed, but most elevators don't have a thirteenth floor. In reality, they do, but they just skip over it because of superstition. Thirteen is a number that is shunned, along with the number 666. I have often told you that seven is God's perfect number. Well, six is the number of man. It falls short of God's number. This is because man falls short of the glory of God. This should remind us of Romans 3:23 which says, *²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" See how scripture completes and explains itself?

Each of us falls short of who God wants us to be, but we have a remedy for that deficiency because "even while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

I said at the outset of this sermon that the calculation of this number will probably not be unveiled until the mark of the beast is mandated. At that time, many people will know it and see it, and in that moment, they will understand it.

I want to settle everyone's fears now. The mark of the beast doesn't yet exist. There is a time in the future the beast will come, but he will not be able to "mark" anyone without their knowledge and cooperation.

Timing of the Mark of the Beast

There are quite a few events that must happen before this event is triggered, and before the Anti-Christ can bring this about.

- The Anti-Christ must rise to power (verse 1).
- The Anti-Christ will be healed of a deadly wound (verse 3).
- People will openly worship the dragon (Satan) and the Anti-Christ (verse 4).
- The false prophet will perform miracles on behalf of the beast, including calling fire from heaven (verse 13).
- The false prophet will construct an image of the beast and cause it to speak (verses 14–15).
- The image of the beast will order the death of anyone who will not worship it (verse 15).
- The false prophet will order everyone to receive the mark of the beast (verses 16–17).

I believe that these events will take place *after* the rapture of the church. Since the Anti-Christ isn't yet on the world stage, at least openly, there is no mark to be taken yet.²

NO ONE CAN GIVE YOU THE MARK UNKNOWINGLY, AND NO ONE WILL TAKE THE MARK UNKNOWINGLY. THESE ARE BIBLICAL IMPOSSIBILITIES. This worship of the beast will be unmistakable, and people will have a choice of whether to worship him or not. People will have a choice to take the mark or not. It all comes down to a choice, and it comes down to a choice today. Let me ask you with all sincerity, have you chosen wisely?

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/unknowingly-take-mark-of-the-Beast.html>