

Chapter 13

This chapter of John's book, in my opinion, is the most difficult of all the chapters. It is very symbolic and little explanation is offered by John as to the nature of the symbols that he uses. The chapter introduces, in symbolic fashion, the wicked nations of the earth that follow Satan. It speaks of the power that such nations have over the world, and how they rule mankind. This chapter is probably best known for the infamous number **666**. Such is the number used by John to identify the wicked nation of the adversary during John's time. As one begins to understand this chapter, one will find that the wicked nations of the earth rule with greed, force, and lust. It is easy to see such nations in our present world.

Verse 1: The King James version of the Bible recounts John's words as, "***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***". Fortunately, the prophet Joseph Smith corrected the translation, making it much easier to comprehend. The Joseph Smith Translation for this verse reads, "***And I saw another sign, in the likeness of the kingdoms of the earth; a beast rise up out of the sea, and he stood upon the sand of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns; and upon his horns ten crowns; and upon his heads the name of blasphemy***". We learn that the image that John is going to be speaking of, represents, or is likened to, the kingdoms of the earth. The image that John chooses to represent the kingdoms of the earth is that of a beast. Beasts can be used to represent carnalness, evil, and violence.

This beast rose up out of the sea. The sea is used symbolically to represent the people of the earth. Note that the beast did not come from heaven, or God, but rather from terrestrial man, carnal in nature. We are told that the beast stood upon the sands of the sea. The biblical references using the term "*sands of the sea*" references large masses of people. One example is found in the Old Testament, "*And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many (Joshua 11:4)*". Another example can be found in the Book of Mormon as we read, "*The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea (Mormon 1:7)*". There are many other examples of such symbolism throughout the scriptures. John is

quite possibly conveying the idea that the beast, or the wicked kingdoms of the earth will stand upon many people. This would represent the beast being supported by, and at the same time having control over, a large mass of people.

Again, we see John's use of the symbolism of heads, horns, and crowns; however, this time the symbols are presented slightly different from his previous use of them. The first time he used the symbols together, they were used in conjunction with the dragon, or the devil. We were told that the dragon had seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns. This time the symbols are used in relation to the beast and we are told that the beast has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns. John does not make any inferences to the fact that the symbols have a different meaning when referring to the beast rather than the dragon. The heads could represent seven hills or mountains in that John uses this definition for the symbol later on in his work (Revelation 17:9); however, in verse 3 of this chapter, John speaks of one of the heads being wounded even unto death. This could lead us to conclude that the symbol of the head might have another definition, since wounding a physical mountain might not be possible. Keep in mind that quite often symbolism is used to relay multiple meanings. The heads might realistically have several interpretations that are all correct. For instance, the heads might mean that a wicked kingdom of the devil is or was built on seven mountains, while at the same time it might mean that Satan's kingdom is controlled by seven leaders. Taking it one step further, the number seven might also be figurative. Seven indicates completeness. The symbolism might read that Satan is exercising complete control or leadership over the earth, as it were. In the Old Testament the term "heads" is usually used in reference to leadership. One example reads, *"And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens (Exodus 18:25)"*. The Doctrine and Covenants refers to world governments as heads under Satan's control, it reads, *"That we may not only publish to all the world, but present them to the heads of government in all their dark and hellish hue, as the last effort which is enjoined on us by our Heavenly Father, before we can fully and completely claim that promise which shall call him forth from his hiding place; and also that the whole nation may be left without excuse before he can send forth the power of his mighty arm (Doctrine and Covenants 123:6)"*.

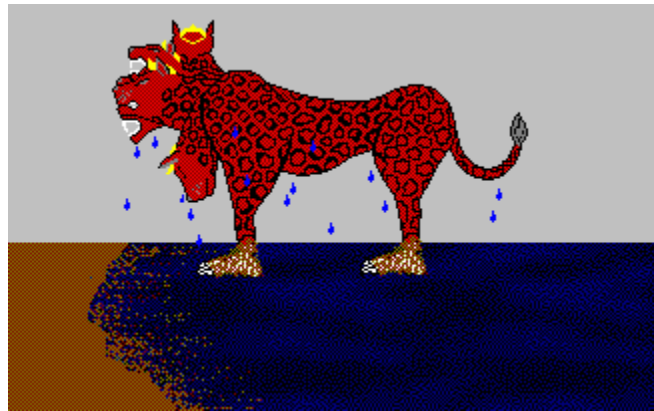
The horns of the beast represent rulers and kings (Daniel 7:8), while the Crowns represent rule and dominion.

Finally, John says that the beast, or rather the kingdoms of the earth, had upon their heads the name of blasphemy. Blasphemy is the act of irreverence to God or anything sacred. The symbolism behind

being upon the forehead shows where one's allegiances are. Having the name of God on one's forehead indicates devotion to God. Having the name blasphemy upon the forehead indicates just the opposite, a direct opposition to God.

Verse 2:

John helps us to understand the nature of the beast by painting us a picture using symbols. He says, "***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***". Such an image might look something like the following;



John says that the beast was like unto a leopard. The symbol of the leopard refers to wildness, aggression, eager to battle, and being full of pride. The beast is said to have the feet of a bear. Feet are the foundation of the body, they support the whole; therefore, the foundation of the beast must be built upon the symbol of the bear. Bears symbolize mortal sin and gluttony. They are often associated with the adversary. Being a ferocious animal, the bear represent danger, and aggression.

Finally, we are told that the beast has a mouth as the mouth of a lion. The mouth is often used to symbolize the whole. The lion is often used to represent royalty, power, dominion, and strength. We might deduct that the wicked kingdoms of the earth will reign over man with great strength. They will enforce their laws with aggression and power. They will be full of pride, and built upon sin and the things of this world.





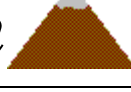


With the beautiful descriptive symbols used by John, his last statement in this verse is almost obvious before reading it. The source of power exercised by the wicked kingdoms of the earth comes from the adversary himself. It is he that leadeth man off the path of exaltation, leading mankind to seek after the things of this world. It is he that leadeth man to exercise unrighteous dominion over their brethren, giving man power, and authority, and the seat of rulership. How surprising it will be when mankind finds that the authority and power of the adversary is naught, and the day shall come when the true Lord of the castle shall return. Then all power and authority, as the earth supposes, will fall at His feet.

Verse 3:

As John saw the wicked nations of the world, symbolized by the seven headed beast, he saw one of the **"heads as it were wounded to death"**. We find that one of these heads received a crushing blow. This blow represents a defeat in the Adversaries kingdom. Only in one other book in the standard works do we read of the wounding of a head. The Psalmist wrote, *"He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries (Psalms 110:6)"*. He also wrote, *"But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses (Psalms 68:21)"*. The term head is typically used to symbolize a nation's capital or center, a king, or a ruling party.

Since we are not told specifically what or who the heads represent, it is difficult to determine what John meant when he said that the beast's **"deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast"**. One theory on the wounded head says the head represents the roman emperors, Nero and Domintian. *"The former started the pogroms against the Christians, and the latter resurrected them, as it were, thus negating Nero's death (Opening the Seven Seals, Richard D. Draper, page 143)"*.

Another theory is that the seven heads represent seven mountains. This is based on John's own definition for the seven heads, which he gives in chapter seventeen (17), verse nine (9). Since Rome is built on seven mountains, or hills, one might deduct that the Roman Empire is John's beast, or at least a type thereof. Previously, we discussed that it would seem impossible for a mountain to be wounded; however, let us look at the seven mountains and some facts surrounding them. The Seven mountains of Rome are as follows;

<i>Mountains or Hills of Rome</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Details</i>
1st 	<i>Palatine</i>	The most important of the seven hills. It is the traditional location of the earliest Roman settlement. It was also the site of many imperial palaces, including ones built by Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian.
2nd 	<i>Aventine</i>	One of the seven hills in ancient Rome. it was turned over to the Plebes for settlement in 456 BC. The Plebes were the common people of Rome.
3rd 	<i>Caelian</i>	The most south eastern of the seven hills. It was densely populated until a fire broke out on the hill in AD 27 and devastated Rome.
4th 	<i>Esquiline</i>	This hill is the traditional site of Nero's golden house and Trajan's hot baths.
5th 	<i>Viminal</i>	This hill is best known for the baths of Diocletian which were built at it's base.
6th 	<i>Quirinal</i>	Not much is known of this hill during the meridian of time; however, during the sixteenth century a papal palace was constructed on this hill. During the years 1870-1946 AD, this hill served as the residence for the Italian kings.
7th 	<i>Capitoline</i>	This is the highest of the seven hills. It was the historic and religious center of the city.

Since the hill or mountain "*Caelian*" was a densely populated area, and it burned in the year AD 27, devastating the great Roman Empire, one might consider this as the wounding of one of the seven heads. Many considered this great fire to be detrimental to the Empire; however, the empire rebuilt and survived. One can see that the wounded head could be a mountain after all.

A more general theory might be that the seven heads represent all of the wicked nations of the world, and though individual nations face defeat and at times fall, they always seem to rise again. For example, the wicked Babylonians fell, only to be replaced by the equally wicked Assyrians. The wicked nations continue to flourish during the time allotted them by the Father, and the world. They who don't understand the fullness of the Father's plan, marvel at the greatness of the nations of the world.

In trying to understand John's symbols, remember that quite often symbols are used to represent multiple meaning. The symbols might represent things during John's time, while at the same time symbolizing things in the future.

Verse 4:

This verse addresses the power and authority of the beast. John tells us that the world, or rather those that are of the world, "**worshipped the dragon**", or the devil, who "**gave power unto the beast**", which is the representation for the wicked nations of the world. They worship him who gives them their supposed greatness.

It is important for us to understand that the devil does have power; however, his power is limited according to the plan of God. In the Old Testament, we read of a very righteous man named Job. Satan was desirous of tempting Job, that he might lead him from the Father. Before he could do so he inquired of the Lord, "*And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD (Job 1:12)*". Satan had power to tempt and torment Job, but it was subject to the powers of heaven. Likewise, Satan has power to give unto the wicked nations of the world; however, the power is only good as long as the powers of heaven permit it to be so.

Because the world does not understand the fact that Satan's power is inferior to that of heaven, and they see the great things that the wicked nations of earth do with the power, "**they worshipped the beast**". The wicked world is so taken by the power of the adversary that they wonder, "**saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him**"? Satan has convinced the world of their own greatness. So full of pride are they that they cannot comprehend any superior force. How great shall their sadness be when the words of Nephi are fulfill and "*the kingdom of the devil, which shall be built up among the children of men, which kingdom is established among them which are in the flesh.....*" and are "*built up to get gain, andpower over the flesh*" shall "*fear, and tremble, and quake; they are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble; and this is according to the words of the prophet (1 Nephi 22:22-23)*".

Verse 5:

Quoting the Lord, the prophet Isaiah wrote of the world and said, "*this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no*

*understanding (Isaiah 29:13-16)"? Isaiah saw the pride of man. He knew that they would speak as though they were God, and teach as though they worshipped God, but as Isaiah said, they have no understanding. They do not understand that man is nothing without the Lord. They do not understand that every thing we have, every power we exert is given of the Lord, and yet John writes "**there was given**" the wicked nations of the world "**a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months**".*

Peter counseled the early church and warned them about speaking or acting like the world, *"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage (2 Peter 2:18-19)".*

Though the world shall be allowed to continue to speak their will for a season, there will come a time when the Lord shall take away that power. *"The kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider (Isaiah 52:15)".* All mankind will eventually come to an understanding of their relationship to God. They will comprehend their nothingness, and the omnipotence of God.

John says that the beast was allowed to speak "**great things and blasphemies**" for the space of "**forty and two months**". Such a space represents three and one-half years. In my short time on earth, I have experience several periods of time that equal three and one-half years, and I have witnessed the wicked nations speak great things and issue all manner of blasphemies. Obviously, the space of time that John is speaking of is longer than three and one-half years. I think the answer lies in the symbolism of the number forty-two. Forty-two represents the number seven multiplied by six. Satan, and his power on earth are allows to tarry for six of the seven dispensation of the earth's probationary period.

$$7 \quad x \quad 6 \quad = \quad 42$$

The seven dispensation of the earth, or the seven seals.
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Satan is free for six dispensations, as he is bound for the millennium
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The number forty-two might be a symbolic representation for Satan's reign upon the earth.

Verse 6: For the duration of earth's teletial existence Satan and his forces shall open their mouths and issue ***"blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven"***.

They will blasphemy God as they *"draweth nigh unto"* Him *"with their mouth, and honoureth"* Him *"with their lips; but their heart is far from"* Him. *"But in vain they do worship"* Him, *"teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9)"*. They will blasphemy the name of God as they commit all manner of iniquity in His Holy name.

They will blasphemy His tabernacle as they deny the need for it's holy ordinances. In days of old, Moses was commanded to *"build a tabernacle"* that a place might be made so as *"those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was (Doctrine and Covenants 124:38)"*. The wicked world denies the need for the saving ordinances of God. They deny the need for further light and knowledge, and worse yet they ridicule the Lord's tabernacle before the world. We have all seen this in publications, and movies like *"The God Makers"*, where men of the world who have failed to follow the straight and narrow path have blasphemed the Lord's tabernacle.

There are even those that deny the presence of God, and blasphemy our eternal existence. They deny the fact that they are children of the most high. They deny the blessings from on high.

Jesus taught of those that spoke out against the Father and all that is His, when he said, *"Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man (Matthew 15:16-20)"*. Those that have spoken blasphemies against the Lord shall one day know and feel the words that the Lord uttered unto Ezekiel when he said, *"And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them (Ezekiel 35:12-13)"*.

Verses 7-8: The prophet Enoch was given much the same vision as John was. He too saw Satan and his angels come down to the earth after being cast out of heaven. Enoch said, *"behold, the power of Satan was upon all the face of the earth. And he saw angels descending out of heaven;*

and he heard a loud voice saying: *Wo, wo be unto the inhabitants of the earth. And he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness; and he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced (Moses 7:24-26)*". Satan and his army rejoiced because power was given them to tempt man. For a period, Satan and his following are given power. ***"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. 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"***. Satan was given power over the whole earth, over every single person, nation and kindred, who was not written in the book of life. The book of life is a symbolic book in which those that are worthy servants of the Lord have their names symbolically written in. In other words, Satan has power over all those people on the earth that don't follow the voice of God.

We should be very aware of Satan's power, but we should also understand that the Lord is in full control of the earth's destiny. The fall of Satan was an important part of the Lord's plan. It was important that Satan be given power over the earth during our probation that we might be fully tested. Let us not misunderstand *"the time cometh speedily that Satan shall have no more power over the hearts of the children of men; for the day soon cometh that all the proud and they who do wickedly shall be as stubble; and the day cometh that they must be burned (1 Nephi 22:15)"*. Knowing that Satan has been given power over the earth for a short spell, and knowing that the power of God is greater than that of the adversary's, there is but one way for us to overcome Satan in the war he has waged for our soul. That way is through the power of the Savior. By following His teachings, and putting His name symbolically upon our foreheads, we become worthy of His protection and guidance. Only through and by Him can we hope to win the war with the adversary. Paul taught the colosians that it is Father, through the Savior, *"who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colosians 1:13)"*. This is the reason why John calls the symbolic book of life, ***" the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"***. The Lamb is a symbol used to represent the Savior. The Savior said that He was *"prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem" His " people....(Ether 3:14)"*. The only way we can be included in the book of life is through the Savior of the world. Only He has the power to write our names in the book, for it is His book. He was foreordained to make the Sacrifice necessary for the book to exist and therefore, only He is worthy to write our names in it.

Verses 9-10: *"If any man have an ear, let him hear. 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".* Most equate this warning with the commandment that thou shalt not kill. The Law of the Lord, given in the Old Testament, taught that, *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man (Genesis 9:6)".*

I believe that the Lord is trying to teach something much deeper here. Paul taught, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7)".* Satan would have us believe that we can commit all manner of iniquity and reap exaltation. Such a doctrine is of the devil, and that is why Paul warned the saints that they be not deceived. God would that every man know that as he sows so shall he reap. In other words, we shall receive our eternal reward according to our works.

Verse 11: From the very beginning Satan, who was then called Lucifer, aspired to become the only begotten of the Father; however, he desire much more than that. In the Pearl of Great Price we read that *"Satan cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me (Moses 1:19)".* Satan was obsessed with having all the power and glory of the Father, to the point that he was willing to defy Father to get it. Since that time he has become the great imitator. He roams the earth posing as the God of this earth. Proclaiming himself as the almighty.

As John watched the vision that was unfolded before him, he saw *"another beast coming up out of the earth"*. Like the first beast, it too represents the wicked nations of the world. The fact that it arose from the earth indicated that it came from the same carnal and worldly ideals as the first. However, this beast was different from the first. This one *"had two horns like a lamb"*. The symbol of the lamb has been reserved for that of the Savior; however, John doesn't actually say he saw a lamb, but rather a beast having two horns like a lamb. The great imitator, the devil himself, has brought forth nations of the world that have a form of godliness, yet deny the power thereof. They have two horns which represent leaders or leadership that appear to be divine in nature, yet their thoughts and actions are those of the devil. This is symbolized by John saying that *"he spake as a dragon"*. The number two symbolizes opposition and opposing side. For example, light and darkness, good and bad, and day and night. The fact that the beast wore two horns might indicate his opposition to God.

Many would theorize that the first beast, with seven heads, is the great Roman Empire, which is built upon seven mountains. They further theorize that the second beast is the Roman church, who claimed divine authority, and represented itself as the Lamb. The two

horns are said to be the two popes that came to be after the church was divided into the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek orthodox Church. Though this theory might actually be true, the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church are just types that existed in John's time. In other words, the first beast and the second beast exist in the modern day world, in other forms and nations. They represent the two major tools that the adversary used to lead men away from God. The first beast represents Satan's tool for leading men astray by force, greed, power, and open rebellion. The second beast is the same as the false prophet. It represents another of Satan's tools for leading men astray. The false prophet uses lies, deception, half truths, and false witness to lead men astray.

The great prophet Isaiah prophesied of the adversary's kingdom and compared the wicked nations of the world to a symbolic head and the false prophet to a symbolic tail. He said, *"For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed (Isaiah 9:13-16)"*.

The false prophet is not new to the world. Jeremiah prophesied of his time and said, *"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof (Jeremiah 5:25-31)"*? Likewise, Ezekiel said, *"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain (Ezekiel 22:25-27)"*. Micah spoke of false prophets during his time, requiring money for divine help, *"The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us (Micah 3:11)"*.

Understand this of the false prophets, *"They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them (1 John 4:5)"*. If we are to distinguish between false prophets and true prophets, we must not be of the world. That is, our lives must be patterned after heaven. I think we could equally say of the true and

living prophets that, ***"They are of the Lord: therefore speak they of the Lord, and the Lord's people heareth them"***.

The following table might be used to aid in understanding this verse;

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Possible Symbolic Meaning</i>
<i>Horn</i>	<i>Power, Authority, and Dominion; sometimes used to symbolize kings</i>
<i>Beast</i>	<i>The wicked Nations that follow Satan</i>
<i>out of the earth</i>	<i>given of, or from the world; carnalness; not given of God</i>
<i>Two</i>	<i>Opposition; Opposing Parts</i>
<i>Lamb</i>	<i>Jesus Christ</i>
<i>Dragon</i>	<i>Satan, or the Devil</i>
<i>Spake as a Dragon</i>	<i>preached lies, issued blasphemies and all manner of falsehood.</i>

Verse 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"***. With this verse John was shown that the two beasts work together to bring about the plans of the adversary. In John's time, the great Roman Empire aligned itself with the Catholic church, that its' sins might be justified before the people in the name of God. Such a devious plan has the adversary created on earth, that he might deceive its' inhabitants to worship the beasts and all that they stand for. Many who would have never considered following the first beast and his image, are deceived to do so because the second beast, or the false prophet, teaches that it is the will of God. The very same reasoning is used in modern society. It is often heard, do this, or do that. Do not be concerned, it is God's will. Modern society justifies its' sins by calling the false prophet to teach of their acceptability.

Verses 13-14: John says that the false prophet will deceive many by great works and signs. He says that the false prophet will bring about ***"great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 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"***.

This verse brings to mind the days of Moses. The priest of pharaoh brought about great signs and miracles, by Satan's power, to

deceive and lead many after them. As the story goes they imitated the miracles of God; however, their imitations were always inferior, and they were limited in the power they had; whereas, Moses had no end to his power (Exodus 7:10-11). As Paul taught the Thessalonians of the last days he said, "*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: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)*".

The false prophets might bring to pass healing, like one sees on television, or many other manifestation of so called miracles. They might even be perceived as bringing fire down from heaven, but they will never equal the power of heaven. Satan and his forces might have power, but their power will eventually be taken from them, whereas the power of God is eternal.

The other parts of this verse, with all their symbolic imagery, are reiterations of other verses in this chapter.

Verse 15: Satan "*had power to give life unto the image of the beast*". An image is a likeness or representation of something. In this case, the image of the beast is the things that the wicked nations of the world stand for and represent. Satan is said to have power to give life to those ideals. That is, he made them known. He made them glamorous, and he made the desired.

Satan also made "*the image of the beast....speak*". Can't we see that just by turning on our televisions, or looking at bill boards along the highway? All that the beast stands for is made known to us. The beast tries persuade and lead mankind to worship such images or ideals. The beast communicates his ideals through society, mass media, false religions, and even through friends and family.

What is the image that Satan is portraying? It is worldly gain, pleasure, wealth, social status, and all manner of pridefulness. It is all of the things of this world that Satan would have us trade for our exaltation.

John says that "*as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed*". In John's time this was literally the case. The Christians that would not follow the ways of the Romans were hunted down and murdered. We have even seen it in our time, as the early saints were driven and murdered. Today, the saints find persecution and ridicule from society for the beliefs that they know are true. The saints are those that refuse to worship the image of the beast, and are thus classified as misfits in society. They are different and strange, and persecuted for being so.

Verses 16-17: John teaches and cautions us that the wicked nations of the world **"causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 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"**. Because of the symbolism used it might not be obvious as to what John is saying.

First of all, John says that the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the slave and master will all be subject to the world. Satan is no respecter of persons. He doesn't care who you are, whether you are a king or a peasant, he does not want you to fulfill your mortal probation.

John then teaches that the beast would have all mankind receive a mark in their right hand and in their foreheads. The right hand symbolizes oaths and covenants, while the head symbolizes ones devotion and direction in life. The mark of the beast represents his image, or the ideal that he represents. What John is actually saying is that Satan and the wicked nations that he controls wants all mankind to commit and devote themselves to the things of this world and the precepts they teach.

John continues by teaching that the beast and the dragon teach mankind **"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"**. John is really saying that Satan and the world would have us believe that all things are gained with money. He would also have us believe that for us to be successful in this world, and obtain material wealth, we must devote ourselves to the world and the things for which it stands for.

Woe, unto those that accept such a doctrine. Timothy taught the saints of his time that *"the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (1 Timothy 6:9-10)"*. There are those that have been falsely taught that one can buy ones way into heaven through tithes or the purchasing of repentance for one sins. To those individuals *"thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money (Isaiah 52:3)"*.

We must all understand that *"we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out (1 Timothy 6:7)"*. We came to this world to gain light and knowledge to return home to Father, money never has, nor ever will fit into the divine plan. Satan teaches that if you want bread, or fulfillment in life, you must buy it. You must include yourself in his great secret and join the ranks of the world. Christ teaches that to *"every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye*

spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness (Isaiah 55:1-2)".

Because of the teaching of the world, in which we live, it is easy to become confused and disoriented. On a daily basis, we deal with the image of the beast. We buy and sell, but hopefully we do not take upon us his mark. Hopefully, we can live in this world and not of this world. As the saints of God we must understand what the Lord told Isaiah when he said, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9)".*

Verse 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".* This verse contains probably the best known of John's prophetic symbols, and at the same time the most puzzling. The infamous **666**. This mystical number has puzzled students and scholars alike. It is most fitting that one is required to have wisdom and knowledge to understand the number of the beast. Most commentaries and publications that deal with Johns' writings simply refuse to address this portion of scripture, most probably for the fact that they have nothing more than possible speculation to offer in response. I do not propose to have the answer to the mystical number; however, I will venture to present possible insight into it's meaning. No firm conclusions about the number of the beast can be drawn from this commentary.

One theory as to the meaning behind the mystical number **666**, could be that the number was used to encrypt a word. Keep in mind that this work of Johns' was written not only for our eyes, by was more specifically sent to the seven churches of the old world in the form of a letter. John was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos, under Roman decree. If the number **666** is actually an encrypted word, it could possibly be used to hide the word from Roman eyes. This practice was called **gematria** by the Jews, and was common in the ancient Greek and Hebrew world, since they used letters of their alphabet as numbers.

The Greek Alphabet and corresponding numerical value

Greek Letter	Greek Upper Case	Greek Lower Case	Modern Alphabet	<i>Greek Numerical Value</i>
Alpha	α	α	A	1
Beta	β	β	B	2
Gamma	γ	γ	G (N)	3
Delta	δ	δ	D	4
Epsilon	ε	ε	E	5
Stigma	Ϟ	ϟ	V	6
Zeta	ζ	ζ	Z	7
Eta	η	η	H (E)	8
Thela	θ	θ	Q (TH)	9
Iota	ι	ι	I (Y)	10
Kappa	κ	κ	K	20
Lambda	λ	λ	L	30
Mu	μ	μ	M	40
Nu	ν	ν	N	50
Xi	ξ	ξ	X (KS)	60
Omicron	ο	ο	O	70
Pi	π	π	P	80
Koppa	Ϡ	ϡ	v	90
Rho	ρ	ρ	R (RH)	100
Sigma	σ	σ	S	200
Tau	τ	τ	T	300
Upsilon	υ	υ	U (W)	400
Phi	φ	φ	F	500
Chi	χ	χ	C (KH)	600
Psi	ψ	ψ	Y (PS)	700
Omega	ω	ω	W (O)	800
Digamma	Lost Letter	---	---	???
Sampi	Lost Letter	---	---	900

Many believe that due to the great persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire, that John's 666 is given to identify the Roman Emperor as an ideal type for the symbolic beast. The Roman Caesar's at and around the time of John's mortal life were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian. If gematria was used in John's 666, the numeric value of the Roman Caesar's names and other words associated with them are as follows;

Caesar Augustus

(Greek - Αυγουστζ, From the Latin Translation - σεβαστοζ)

originally Octavain (Greek - Οχταβαινσ)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 27 B.C. to 14 AD.

A	υ	γ	ο	υ	σ	τ	ζ		Total	
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		↓	
1	400	3	70	400	200	300	7		1374	
Σ	ε	β	α	σ	τ	ο	ζ		Total	
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		↓	
200	5	2	1	200	300	70	7		785	
Ο	χ	τ	α	π	α	ι	ν	υ	σ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
70	600	300	1	6	1	10	50	400	200	1638

Caesar Tiberius

(Greek - Τιβεριοσ)

Ruled the Roman Empire from August 19,14 AD. to March 16,37 AD.

T	ι	β	ε	ρ	ι	ο	σ		Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		↓
300	10	2	5	100	10	70	7		504

Caesar Caligula

Originally Caesar Gaius or Caius

(Greek- Γαιοζ)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 37 AD. to 41 AD.

Γ	α	ι	ο	σ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3	1	10	70	200	221

Caesar Claudius

His full name was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus

(Greek - Κλαυδιζ)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 41 AD. to 54 AD.

K	λ	α	υ	δ	ι	υ	ζ		Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		↓
20	30	1	400	4	10	70	7		542

Caesar Nero

(Greek - Νερω(ο)ν or Νερω(ο)ν Καισαρ, from the Hebrew - נֶרֶוֹן קֶסַר)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 54 AD. to 68 A.D

N	ε	ρ	ω	ν	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
50	5	100	800	50	1005

N	ε	ρ	ω	ν	K	σ	ρ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
50	5	100	800	50	20	200	100	1325

N	ε	ρ	ω	ν	K	α	ι	σ	α	ρ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
50	5	100	800	50	20	1	10	200	1	100	1337

N	ε	ρ	ο	ν	K	σ	ρ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
50	5	100	70	50	20	200	100	595

N	ε	ρ	ο	ν	K	α	ι	σ	α	ρ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
50	5	100	70	50	20	1	10	200	1	100	607

Caesar Galba

Originally Servius Sulpicius

(Greek - Γαλβα)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 68 AD. to 69 AD.

Γ	α	λ	β	α	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
3	1	30	2	1	37

Caesar Otho

Originally Marcus Salvius

(Greek - Οθο)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 69 AD. to 69 AD. (Committed Suicide)

Ο	θ	ο	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓
70	9	70	149

Caesar Aulus Viteillius

(Greek - Αὐλῦς)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 69 AD. to 69 AD. (Murdered by Titus Vespasian)

A	υ	λ	υ	s	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
1	400	30	400	200	1031

Caesar Titus Flavius Vespasian

(Greek - Τίτυς or Τείταν)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 69 AD. to 79 AD.

T	ι	τ	ο	ζ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
300	10	300	70	7	687

T	ε	ι	τ	α	ν	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
300	5	10	300	1	50	666

Caesar Flavius Vespasianus Titus

(Greek - Τίτυς or Τείταν)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 79 AD. to 81 AD.

T	ι	τ	ο	ζ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
300	10	300	70	7	687

T	ε	ι	τ	α	ν	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
300	5	10	300	1	50	666

Caesar Domitian

(Greek - Δομιτιαν or Δομιτιανῦς)

Ruled the Roman Empire from 81 AD. to 96 AD.

Δ	ο	μ	ι	τ	ι	α	ν	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
4	70	40	10	300	10	1	50	485

Δ	ο	μ	ι	τ	ι	α	ν	υ	σ	Total
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
5	70	40	10	300	10	1	50	400	200	1085

Romans

(Greek - Ρωμαϊκοζ ορ Ρωμαιοζ)

or

(Greek for Latinos - Λατεινοζ or Λατεινοσ)

Ρ	ω	μ	α	ι	κ	ο	ζ	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
100	800	40	1	10	20	70	7	1048

Ρ	ω	μ	α	ι	ο	ζ	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
100	800	40	1	10	70	7	1028

Λ	α	τ	ε	ι	ν	ο	ζ	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	7	473

Λ	α	τ	ε	ι	ν	ο	σ	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
30	1	300	5	10	50	70	200	666

The Roman Church

(Greek - ηε λετανα βασιλεια)

η	ε	λ	ε	τ	α	ν	α	β	α	σ	ι	λ	ε	ι	α	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8	5	30	5	300	1	50	1	2	1	200	10	30	5	10	1	659

The Italian Church

(Greek - Ιταλικά εκκλησια)

Ι	τ	α	λ	ι	κ	α	ε	κ	κ	λ	ε	σ	ι	α	<i>Total</i>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
10	300	1	30	10	20	1	5	20	20	30	5	200	10	1	663

In other commentary's which address the number 666 (Χξζ), the most common word derived from the number, in Greek, is "**Neron Caesar**". The numeric value of "**Neron Caesar**", when the numeric values for each letter are added together is said to be **666**. I find it difficult to derive the same number using gematria; however, it is said that Nero's name was actually spelt with a digamma letter in the

Greek alphabet which has long since been lost. If that is the case, it is possible that Nero's name is the 666 spoken of by John.

Another interesting point, is that other translations from the Greek (Revised Standard Version of the Bible), the number John relays as the number of the beast can be interpreted as **616**. This isn't surprising since the Latin translation uses "**Nero**" in the place of "Neron", which changes the numerical value to **616**.

If John was wanting to relay the message to the ancient church that the beast he spoke of for their time was Nero, the Roman emperor, it was probably in the best interest of the letter making it to the church that he encrypt the message. If a Roman Caesar had already banished John for his religious convictions, and I rather doubt that the Roman mail carriers were going to allow John to write negative propaganda against the emperor, and distribute it in a Roman territory. This might be an explanation for the mystical number.

We should also note that a possible spelling for the "Latinos" or the word used for the Roman people, could also result in the gematria "666". This could also logically fit with the given theme of the beast.

At this point, I would like to suggest my own theory. Caesar Titus is the most obvious gematria figure of "666". Using a Greek name for Caesar Titus, *Teitan*, the corresponding numeric values of the letters in the name result in the mysterious sum, 666. The person, or thing, that the number represents is the beast, or a type thereof. The beast we can recall had one head that was wounded unto death, and miraculously the head rose again. It is interesting to me that Caesar Titus was murdered by his predecessor Caesar Titus. The head was wounded unto death, yet was healed and lived again.

What did John mean by his mysterious number? I can't say for sure. Was it Caesar Nero? I would give great doubt to that since Nero had been dead for quite some time at the period during which John wrote Revelations. Was it then an encrypted message to reveal Titus or more so the Romans as the great beast? I would say that quite possibly that is the case; however, such a theory can't be proven at this junction. What is important for us to understand is that there are evil forces in the world today just as there were in John's day. We too have a "666" and, we must identify the beast in our time so that we are not mistaken and find ourselves following the adversary down the path of everlasting pain.