

*Book of
Revelation*
A VISION OF VICTORY

The Beast and His Mark

Revelation 13:1-18



Revelation wasn't written to satisfy our
curiosity about the future.

**It was written to strengthen our
faithfulness in the present.**



A DEFINITION

Apocalyptic literature **uses vivid symbols and images to reveal God's perspective on present realities and inspire faithful endurance.**

Revelation 13:1-4

¹ The **dragon**^[a] stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had **ten horns** and seven heads, with **ten crowns** on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of the heads of the beast **seemed to have had a fatal wound**, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. ⁴ People worshiped **the dragon because he had given authority to the beast**, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”

[a] Some manuscripts *And I*





Revelation 12:9

⁹The **great dragon** was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.



After being thrown out of heaven, **what will the enemy do?**

**The dragon will wage war through
counterfeit kingdoms.**

Revelation 13:1-4

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Daniel 7:1-8

(The Dream)

¹ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

² Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³ Four great **beasts**, each different from the others, **came up out of the sea**.

⁴ “The first was like a **lion**, and it had the wings of an **eagle**. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on **two feet like a human being**, and **the mind of a human was given to it**.

⁵ “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a **bear**. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’



Daniel 7:1-8

(The Dream)

⁶ “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a **leopard**. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had **four heads**, and it was **given authority** to rule.

⁷ “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and **it had ten horns**.

⁸ “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was **another horn**, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. **This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.**



Daniel 7:16+

(The Interpretation)

¹⁶ I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷ ‘The four great beasts **are four kings** that will rise from the earth...

¹⁹ “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying... ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up ...

²³ “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is **a fourth kingdom** that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ **The ten horns are ten kings** who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands **for a time, times and half a time**.^[b]

[b] Or *for a year, two years and half a year*

**Empires may change, but
every age has its beast.**

He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time. (Daniel 7:25)

Revelation 13:5-8

⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter **proud words and blasphemies** and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ **All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast**—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world. ^[b]

[b] *Or written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was slain.*





Political power always wants **religious devotion.**

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.. (Revelation 13:8)

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⁵ The beast **was given** a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ It **was given** power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it **was given** authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world. ^[b]

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THE “**DIVINE PASSIVE**”

a common Jewish literary device where God is not named directly but is understood to be the one ultimately permitting something to happen.



Daniel 7:11-14

¹¹ “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking **until the beast was slain** and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. ¹² (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but **were allowed to live for a period of time.**)

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,^[a] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. **His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.**

[a] The Aramaic phrase *bar enash* means human being. The phrase “son of man” is retained here because of its use in the New Testament as a title of Jesus, probably based largely on this verse.



Evil is real, but **it never has
the final say.**

A beast is terrifying, but its authority is **derived,
limited, and temporary.**

Revelation 13:9-10

⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear.

¹⁰ “If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity they will go.

If anyone is to be killed^[c] with the sword,
with the sword they will be killed.”^[d]

This calls for **patient endurance** and **faithfulness** on the part of
God’s people.

[c] Some manuscripts *anyone kills*

[d] Jeremiah 15:2



Revelation 13:11-14

¹¹ Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns **like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon**. ¹² It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ And it performed great signs, even **causing fire to come down from heaven** to the earth in full view of the people. ¹⁴ Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, **it deceived the inhabitants of the earth**. It ordered them to **set up an image** in honour of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.





The dragon creates an **unholy trinity**:

- Dragon > **counterfeit** Father
- First Beast > **counterfeit** Christ
- Second Beast > **counterfeit** Holy Spirit

Revelation 13:15-18

¹⁵ The second beast was given power to **give breath to the image of the first beast**, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶ It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their **right hands** or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ so that **they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark**, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight **calculate** the number of the beast, for **it is the number of a man.**^[e] That number is **666**.

[e] Or is **humanity's** number





Economic Participation in Empire

The Emperor's Image:

Every legal commercial transaction in the Roman marketplace required standard Roman currency.

To buy or sell anything, a person physically held the coin of Caesar in their **right hand**. Scholars note this as the most pervasive, everyday "mark" required for commerce.



The "Comet Denarius" of Augustus

Revelation 13:15-18

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GEMATRIA (Letter-Numbers)

Using ancient Hebrew and Greek numerical values for letters, 666 matches the name of the **Roman Emperor Nero** (נרון קסר *Neron Qesar*), an aggressive persecutor of early Christians.

Some early fragments, such as Papyrus 115 (~250 AD), record the number as 616 instead of 666, which also corresponds to an alternate (Latin) spelling of Nero's name.

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1 Kings 10:14-15

¹⁴ The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was **666 talents**, ¹⁵ not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the territories.

1 Kings 10:26-29

²⁶ Solomon **accumulated** chariots and horses; he had **fourteen hundred chariots** and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁷ The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig-trees in the foothills. ²⁸ Solomon's horses were **imported from Egypt** and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue at the current price. ²⁹ They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also **exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.**



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**Resist participation in this
deceptive and temporary empire.**

*...they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast
or the number of its name. (Revelation 13:17)*



In response to counterfeit kingdoms:

Recognise the beast.

Evil often looks impressive because it imitates God.

Refuse to worship the beast.

Empires always ask for ultimate allegiance.

Endure the beast.

Evil's authority is real - but temporary.