

14. Warriors of the Dragon: The Beast out of the Sea and the Beast out of the Earth (Revelation 13)

The war turns away from the woman and her ascended male child. The enraged dragon makes war against her offspring. There is no question as to whom the offspring are. They are those who obey God's commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17). In this chapter, the beast coming out of the sea joins the dragon in his evil effort to overcome these offspring.

The Beast out of the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10)

Rev 13:1-4: 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea.

And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his 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 astonished and followed the beast. 4 Men 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 make war against him?"

This passage reconnects to the deposition of the dragon after his challenge in heaven. The loud voice in the previous chapter had said, "But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you." From the two provinces of the devil's influence will come two beasts—one of the sea and one of the earth.

Isaiah described the monster out of the sea in Isaiah 27:1:

27:1 In that day,
the LORD will punish with his sword,
his fierce, great and powerful sword,
Leviathan the gliding serpent,
Leviathan the coiling serpent;
he will slay the monster of the sea .

From that early time, God promised to punish the monster with His great and powerful sword—the word of God. Because God gave us His complete Revelation, we can see the end of the beast from this vantage point of his beginning. Rev 19:15-16 and 19-21 teach:

15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

In verse two, the heads and the crowns demonstrate the beast's power, throne, and great authority: "The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority." It is important to remember, in reading these very symbolic passages, that in symbols the meaning runs from the concrete (the known) to the abstract (the unknown). Verse 4 says that the dragon gave the beast his great authority. The extent of the power and authority of the beast is in the numbers 7 and 10. Seven represented fullness and 10 represented completeness. The actual numerical value has no meaning in and of itself. Revelation 17 will discuss the nature of the beast and its influence in detail. The beast itself is a total and complete entity or being, just as the devil. Revelation 17 will describe the beast as one who once was, now is not, and will come up out of the abyss to his own destruction, which gives the beast the ability to sustain itself against adversity. The beast of the sea and the beast of the land are here until they are thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur (Revelation 19:20).

The beast resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. His power, throne, and authority came from the dragon. This is an allusion to Daniel's dream where he saw four great beasts, each different from the others, come up out of the sea. (See Daniel 7:2-8:1). Where the Daniel vision has four separate beasts, three of which are represented by a lion, a bear, and leopard, respectively, this beast is a combination of the four. His physical powers complement his delegated power of principality and dominion and great authority. If anything, the beast is a combination of all the Daniel images. If this is true, this beast exceeds any imagination of power and authority of the Daniel beast. Therefore, the beast's kingdom is not one or a series of earthly kingdoms. It is that kingdom spoken of at the sounding of the seventh trumpet—the kingdom of the world in Rev 11:15:

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

As such, it is all-inclusive of world principality, power, authority, and might. In truth, the beast has all the power, throne, and great authority of the dragon; however, both are subject to the will of God. This power will last until the victory of Jesus, when the Lord, himself, will apply all authority given to him in Matthew 28:18. At that time, the Lord will deliver the end to the beast and the false prophet. The dragon's gives his power to the beast; God gives His to a Lamb.

3 One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. Fatal wound in one of the heads (represents a principality or domain) stopped the beast at one point. His dominion ended, but the fatal wound had been healed. The past perfect tense makes the action of the wounding begun and completed in the past. The healed or resurrected beast stands to the dragon as the Lamb stands to God. This explains the phrase: the beast as one who once was, now is not, and will come up out of the abyss to his own destruction. The beast clearly has a past, a present (at the time of this writing), and a future. Verses 11-18 presents more facts regarding this fatally wounded but alive beast.

The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. 4 Men 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 make war against him?" The scope of is in Ephesians 6:12-13 reveals the scope of the devil's influence. However, it also shows the scope of the devil's kingdom by delegation to the beast. Their kingdom is literally the kingdom of the world: "but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph.6:12)."

One can see the power of the beast from Nimrod's Babylon and Nineveh to the kingdoms of this present world (See notes on 13:11). The answer to the question of who can make war against the beast, is found in Daniel's vision:

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, 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 peoples, nations and men 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. Daniel 7: 13-14

Revelation 11:15 states the fulfillment of this promise: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." The perfect tense verb placed the occurrence of the kingdom of the Lord at a time preceding John's vision. At the time of John's writing, the kingdom of the Lord was an accomplished fact. The kingdom had come.

Daniel further describes these events:

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

26 "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him." Daniel 7:21-27

13:5-8:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

The God limited the beast to the intermittent and symbolic time of forty-two months. This is the fifth time this figure has appeared in different forms (Revelation 11:2, Revelation 11:3, Revelation 12:6, Revelation 12:14, Revelation 13:5). Each time it limits the influence of the dragon against the followers of the Lord:

- 2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. Revelation 11:2
- 3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. Revelation 11:3
- 6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. Revelation 12:6
- 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Revelation 12:13-14
- 5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. Revelation 13:5-6

This limitation also exists in Daniel's vision where it is said that this entity, the beast in Revelation will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change God's law and times. He will literally fight for his life and his dominion:

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 saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time [three and a half years or 42 months.]. Daniel 7: 24-25

Paul also describes the beast and his nature in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7: "For that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God [NASU]." Paul speaks twice about one holding back the man of lawlessness. "You know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time," Paul writes and adds, "7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way [NASU]."

At the point that the lawless one is revealed, Paul explains, "The Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming." The full manifestation of the beast will

be revealed fully when Lord Jesus comes. The Revelation reiterates this passage by Paul almost exactly at the time of the destruction of the beast (man of lawlessness): “

20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. Revelation 19:20-21

The false prophet of this passage is the second beast of Revelation 13. He will be the one to whom the dragon delegated the power of lying miracles, signs, and wonders in 2 Thessalonians 2:9:12:

9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness [NASU].

The power of second beast (the false prophet) is the first beast (the man of lawlessness), and the power of the first beast is the dragon (the serpent, the devil, Satan). This reveals a trinity of evil and destruction.

Paul stated twice that the man of lawlessness was held back. Indeed, the Revelation speaks of binding even Satan for a period (Revelation 20:1-2). Of this, Christ prayed, “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.” John 17:11-12.

6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he 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 book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

The beast directed his verbal attack against heaven and God. The power, authority, and influence of the beast was unlimited. He not only could make war against the saints, but he could conquer them.

The beast won the battle for the inhabitants of the earth—all whose names have not been written in the book of life—leaving only the saints with hope. Even though people worship the beast now, they do not fully understand the horror to which they have committed themselves. They will be shocked when they find out: “The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.” Revelation 17:8.

The expression, the book of life, becomes a central figure, used 6 times in Revelation. Those whose names are written in the book of life may know that whatever the assault by the beast, they will be victorious.

- The Lord will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. Revelation 3:5
- The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast. Revelation 17:8
- 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Revelation 20:12
- 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:15
- 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Revelation 21:27

That the book of life belongs to the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world shows that God's eternal purpose was complete in the Lord's sacrifice on the cross. God determined it that way, and it happened that way. At the time of John's writing, Jesus had laid down his life for the whole world. John summarizes in his letter:

18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true — even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:18-20.

13:9-10: 9 He who has an ear, let him hear.

*10 If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity he will go.*

*If anyone is to be killed with the sword,
with the sword he will be killed.*

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

We have just seen that the lamb was slain from the creation of the world and that the inhabitants' names were or were not written in the book of life from the creation of the world. God determined His plan before the foundation of the world, and the Lamb fulfilled it upon the cross. God also determined His plan for man before the foundation of the world, and man fulfills it by dressing in white and not soiling their clothes (Revelation 3:4-5). The choice to hear or not hear is the basis of the free moral agency of man. Paul addressed this issue:

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:11-14

To follow the path of the beast is to be captive made by it. Nothing will help. To struggle with the beast requires endurance and faithfulness. We must be patient as the Lord's eternal purpose in Christ unfolds. John has previously written in Revelation 2:10, "10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."

The rest of the chapter will introduce a second beast out of the earth. We have two beasts, one from the sea and one from the earth. They are both entities and beings of immense proportions. The second beast, who later will be called the false prophet (Revelation 16:13), receives the power and authority of the first beast. Their influence and purpose display totally, fully, and single-mindedly against the Christ, the lamb. Yet, they work in two different ways.

In ascertaining who or what these beasts are, consider these parallel passages of John:

- 18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. 2 John 2:18.
- It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — he denies the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22.
- 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1 John 4:1-3.

- 7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 2 John 7.

By the time of John's first letter, the spirit of the antichrist was underway. The second beast, the false prophet, played a crucial role.

The Beast out of the Earth (Revelation 13:11-18)

This part of the Revelation explains how the first beast received his wound and what happened after that. Also described for us is the influence of the dragon through the second beast. From the time shortly after the flood, the armies of men and paganism marched in lock step across the world. The Old Testament is the story of a small remnant of Jews who held together against all odds until the Messiah came. The devil's influence was great and the first beast was in almost complete control. Government and idolatry worked hand in hand. Hence, the ten horns, seven heads, and ten crowns of the first beast. As we have seen, it held the power, throne, and great authority of the dragon, so great was its fullness and completeness. It was a world without redemption.

The beginning of the account of this influence appears in the genealogy of Noah in Genesis 10:8-12:

8 Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." 10 The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar. 11 From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah 12 and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

As Nimrod's kingdom spread, so did the influence of the Babylonian Sun-god, which is now considered to be Baal of the Old Testament.

The Babylonian Bel-Merodach was a Sun-god, and so too was the Canaanite Baal whose full title was Baal-Shemaim, "lord of heaven." The Phoenician writer Sanchuniathon (Philo Byblius, Fragmenta II) accordingly says that the children of the first generation of mankind "in time of drought stretched forth their hands to heaven toward the sun; for they regarded him as the sole Lord of heaven, and called him Beel-samen, which means 'Lord of Heaven' in the Phoenician language and is equivalent to Zeus in Greek." Baal-Shemaim had a temple at Umm el-Awamid between Acre and Tyre, and his name is found in inscriptions from the Phoenician colonies of Sardinia and Carthage. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

2 Kings 17:7-20 summarizes the influence of Baal, and therefore the beast, on Israel:

7 All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods 8 and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. 10 They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 11 At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger. 12 They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this." 13 The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

14 But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. 15 They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became

worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do," and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.

16 They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. 17 They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

18 So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, 19 and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. 20 Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

The Lord's answer, in Zephaniah 1:2-2:1, prophesies the end of Baal and therefore the influence of the beast:

2 "I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

3 "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

4 "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place every remnant of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests— 5 those who bow down on the roofs to worship the starry host, those who bow down and swear by the LORD and who also swear by Molech, 6 those who turn back from following the LORD and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of him. 7 Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. 8 On the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all those clad in foreign clothes. 9 On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit.

What follows in Zephaniah 1:10ff is an almost exact description of the destruction of Babylon found in Revelation 18. This passage is also the last time, of 80 times, that Baal is mentioned in the old Testament; and it is mentioned only once in the New Testament (Romans 11:4) and that in reference to the 7,000 who did not turn to Baal in 1 Kings 19:18.

Therefore, the first beast influenced the growth and spread of idolatry and paganism in the world from the flood until the Christ. It was only after the victory of Christ on the cross that the influence of paganism diminished. Christ executed the wounding of the beast out of the sea and binding of the dragon that ancient serpent who is the devil or Satan (Revelation 20:1-2). At the time of Jesus' coming the devil, and by extension, the first beast controlled the entire world. Even Israel had departed from the ways of God. Jesus pronounced his woes upon the Jews in Matthew 23. When he confronted Christ, the devil had authority over all nations: "5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours.'" "8 Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" Luke 4:5-8.

However, by the time Paul wrote Romans 13:1-3: "For there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves." The wounding of the first beast had occurred by the time of Paul's writing.

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

Turning now to the second beast out of the earth, we find one, who in contrast to the first beast, has only two horns. His power and authority rests on deceit and not might. Therefore, he has two horns like a

lamb, but he speaks the words of the dragon. Of course, the Revelation has already revealed the true Lamb of God. Jesus warned us about this imposter and his ilk in the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of his ministry in Matthew 7:15, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." Of these wolves, Paul told the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-31, "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them." Paul also spoke of the deceitful nature of what was to come: "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." 1 Timothy 4:1-2. We cannot doubt that this deceit is the work of the dragon. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Paul describes the nature of the deceit confronting the faithful: "13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve."

12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.

When the first beast was wounded, the dragon's authority did not diminish. It was given to the second beast to exercise on behalf of the first beast. Using his deceit, the second beast made the earth and the inhabitants worship the first beast. This was a straight trip back to paganism and idolatry.

Verse 14 will tell us that the first beast was wounded by sword. The sword must be the one that comes out of the mouth of the Lamb of God. It is clear in Revelation and entire New Testament that the word of God is the instrument of this warfare against the dragon and the second beast. In his very nature, the Lamb was the word of God. John wrote in John 1:11:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning." The Hebrew writer describes this word, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12-13. The Revelation speaks clearly:

- These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword." Revelation 2:12.
- In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword Revelation 1:16
- Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." Revelation 19:15
- The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, Revelation 19:21

John teaches that Jesus received the unlimited spirit of God in John 3:34-35: "For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands." Jesus, while on the earth had power over demons, nature, sin, and death. Jesus could even command the dragon, the tempter. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus commanded the tempter with scripture when he said, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" And again in Matthew 4:7, he said, "Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" However, in Matthew 4:10, he added a command when he said, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Later, when talking to Peter, Jesus commanded, "Get behind me, Satan!" Mark 8:33. Jesus wounded the first beast by the sword out of mouth, the word of God.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 describes the great and miraculous signs of the second beast: "9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing."

14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. The second beast used the signs and wonders to deceive the people. The main sphere of the first beast's influence was direct; now he is served through the second beast and worshippers commanded by the second beast. Christ described the image of the beast in all its wickedness and in its representation of a new idolatry that influenced the world beyond the paganism of old Babylon. In the Sermon on the Mount, he taught against the extreme opposite of God and personified Money (mammon) as an idol: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." Matthew 6:24. Paul called greed, idolatry in Colossians 3:5. Peter prophesied of a coming religion advanced by false teachers in 2 Peter 2:12: "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up," he wrote. After describing them thoroughly and conclusively, Peter connects them to the beast; "12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish."

Peter concludes with a description of the aims and purpose of these followers of the beast:

13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. 14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed — an accursed brood! . . . Blackest darkness is reserved for them. 18 For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are

15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

The influence of the image of the beast is world-wide with the power to kill those who do not follow.

16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

The mark—the name of the beast is a slave mark—identifies the slave with the master. We have just studied where Peter called them all "slaves of depravity (2 Peter 2:19)." Paul described these slaves in Romans 6:15-17, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" Peter called them, "Slaves of depravity — for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him (2 Peter 2: 18-19)." The idea of a mark on sinners originated as early as with Cain in Genesis 4:15-16: "Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him." The Lord used a mark on the forehead to designate the righteous in Ezekiel 9:3-6:

Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side 4 and said to him, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it."

5 As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. 6 Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark .

18 This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

It is man's number speaks to the imperfection of the number six. Seven was thought to be the perfect number of fullness, as used of the seven-fold spirit of God, seven churches, seven stars, etc. Six is an imperfect number, and therefore, the number of man. The number 666 aptly describes the triad of evil:

the dragon—who is the serpent, the devil, Satan—the first beast—who is the man of sin, the antichrist—and the second beast—who is the false prophet.

From the time of Nimrod to Jesus, the first beast worked through the kings to allow paganism to control the kingdom of the world. After Jesus received all authority—a death blow to the first beast—the second beast worked through paganism to control the kings and the kingdoms of world. However, just as with the first beast, the second beast's influence will be short lived. Indeed, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, loud voices in heaven declared: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11:15.