

Revelation 13

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Beast from the Sea

13:1 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

I. Context

- A. Satan failed to stop God from saving mankind, so he attacked the church to stop man from coming to God. This failed because the church held to the truths of Jesus and overcame the lies of Satan. So Satan began to attack the individual Christians to discourage them from being part of the church and from going to God.
- B. In order to attack the Christians, Satan calls for help from all the non-Christian people in the world (the sea).
 - 1. The beast that arrives looks like the dragon (Revelation 12:3) showing it is motivated by the same things as Satan - to be an adversary to God and His people.
 - 2. It has seven heads - representing the entirety of people that oppose God's people.
 - a) These people intentionally blaspheme the name of God — which means they arrogantly defy God with their words and actions.
 - 3. It has ten horns - representing the entirety of powers (kingdoms and organizations) that oppose the Christian Church and God.

II. Notes

- A. Daniel 7:3 - Then four great beasts came up out of the sea, each different from the others.
- B. Daniel 7:7 - After this, as I watched in my vision in the night, suddenly a fourth beast appeared, and it was terrifying--dreadful and extremely strong--with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed; then it trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns.
- C. Daniel 7:8 - While I was contemplating the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like those of a man and a mouth that spoke words of arrogance.
- D. Daniel 11:36 - Then the king will do as he pleases and will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must be accomplished.
- E. Revelation 12:3 - Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven royal crowns on his heads.
- F. stood upon the sand of the sea - Some make this sentence a separate verse, and insert it as the closing verse of Revelation 12. It is true that the sentence has a connection with that chapter, but it is also closely linked with what follows - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. The sea represents the great, restless mass of human kind; or, as it is expressed in [Revelation 17:15](#), "peoples and multitudes." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- H. The individuals, like larger and smaller waves, make up this great ocean-like mass of men, swayed by impulse or passion. Out of the sea rises a wild beast. The word is not the same as that used in [Revelation 4:7](#) (see Note there), but is a word which implies the predominance of the beast nature. Whatever power rises is one which rules not by love or right, but by fear and wilfulness. It is the great force of the world-power, which in every age has been antagonistic to the power of right. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- I. The wild beast is always the figure of the kingdoms of this world—*i.e.*, the kingdoms which are founded on passion or selfishness. They are seven in number, as the beast had seven heads. We read afterwards of seven mountains. These world-powers are spoken of as mountains for their strength and stability; as heads of the wild beast because, though separate, they are inspired by the dragon spirit, the spirit of utter enmity to the rule of the Righteous King. The seven kingdoms, or heads of the wild beast, are more distinctly explained in [Revelation 17:10](#). There we read that five are fallen, one was in possession of power, and the seventh had not yet arisen. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- J. The heads carry the names of blasphemy. The spirit of arrogant self-sufficiency characterised all the world-powers. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- K. The beast has, besides seven heads, ten horns, which are explained further on ([Revelation 17:12](#)) as “the kings which have received no kingdom as yet,” but which, when they rise, will draw their strength from the dragon and be members of the wild beast. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

13:2 *And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.*

- I. Context
 - A. Satan is attacking Christians through worldly opposition.
 - B. This worldly attack was symbolized by a beast which contained all the elements of the four empires of Daniel's vision: (Daniel 7)
 - 1. Leopard - Babylon
 - 2. Bear - Persian
 - 3. Lion - Greek
 - 4. Un-named beast that destroyed the others - Rome
 - a) John's beast combines these symbols to show that this is not a progression of empires, but a combination of all world governments controlled by Satan and opposed to God.
 - C. Satan uses the world Governments to attack Christians.
- II. Notes
 - A. Daniel 7:4 - *The first beast was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and given the mind of a man.*
 - B. Daniel 7:5 - *Suddenly another beast appeared, 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. So it was told, 'Get up and gorge yourself on flesh!'*
 - C. Daniel 7:6 - *Next, as I watched, another beast appeared. It was like a leopard, and on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.*
 - D. Hosea 13:7 - *So I will pounce on them like a lion; like a leopard on the path I will lurk.*
 - E. The wild beast combined the features of three wild animals: the leopard, the bear, the lion. In Daniel's vision ([Daniel 7:4](#)) the kingdoms were described: the first, like a lion; the second, like a bear; the third, like a leopard or panther. Here all these features are combined, because the wild beast is a representative of all forms of world-power, which have been swift to shed blood: like a leopard leaping on the prey, tenacious and relentless as a bear, and all devouring (their throat is an open sepulchre) as a lion. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
 - F. It is through this succession of world-powers that the dragon carries on his war. The wild beast becomes the vicegerent, so to speak, of the prince of this world. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- G. In this description, it is observable that John has combined in one animal or monster, all those which Daniel brought successively on the scene of action as representing different empires. Thus in [Daniel 7:2-7](#) the lion is introduced as the symbol of the Babylonian power; the bear, as the symbol of the Medo-Persian; the leopard, as the symbol of the Macedonian; and a nondescript animal, fierce, cruel, and mighty, with two horns as the symbol of the Roman. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. Satan claimed, in the time of the Saviour, all power over the kingdoms of the world, and asserted that he could give them to whomsoever he pleased. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- I. This beast unites in itself the God-opposed characteristics of the three preceding kingdoms, resembling respectively the leopard, bear, and lion. It rises up out of the sea, as Daniel's four beasts, and has ten horns, as Daniel's fourth beast, and seven heads, as Daniel's four beasts had in all, namely, one on the first, one on the second, four on the third, and one on the fourth. Thus it represents comprehensively in one figure the world power (which in Daniel is represented by four) of all times and places, not merely of one period and one locality, viewed as opposed to God; just as the woman is the Church of all ages. This view is favored also by the fact, that the beast is the vicarious representative of Satan, who similarly has seven heads and ten horns: a general description of his universal power in all ages and places of the world. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

13:3 *I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;*

- I. Context
 - A. Satan attacks Christians through government powers - persecution.
 - B. John saw the empires in the form of heads on a beast controlled by Satan. One of these heads was killed and then resurrected.
 - 1. Most likely this is in reference to the Roman empire being destroyed and then rebuilt as the "Holy" Roman empire, led by the papacy.
- II. Notes
 - A. Revelation 17:8 - *The beast that you saw--it was, and now is no more, but is about to come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. And those who dwell on the earth whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet will be.*
 - B. Revelation 17:11 - *The beast that was, and now is not, is an eighth king, who belongs to the other seven and is going into destruction.*
 - C. The phrase "wounded to death" means properly that it received a mortal wound, that is, the wound would have been mortal if it had not been healed. A blow was struck that would be naturally fatal, but there was something that prevented the fatal result. John does not say, however, by whom the wound was inflicted, nor does he describe further the nature of the wound. He says that "one of the heads" - that is, one of the seven heads - was thus wounded. In [Revelation 17:9](#), he says that "the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." In [Revelation 17:10](#), he says, "there are seven kings." And this would lead us to suppose that there were "seven" administrations, or forms of dominion, or dynasties, that were presented to the eye of John; and that while the number "seven," as applied to the "heads," so far identified the power as to fix its location on the seven "hills" [Revelation 17:9](#), in another respect also the number "seven" suggested forms of administration of dynasties, [Revelation 17:10](#). What is meant by saying that one of these heads was wounded to death has been among the most perplexing of all the inquiries pertaining to the Book of Revelation. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
 - D. as it were wounded to death; when the Roman empire was like a burning mountain cast into the sea; when Rome itself was taken, sacked, and burnt... And his deadly

wound was healed; by the setting up of ten kingdoms in it, the kings of which gave them to the beast, to antichrist, the pope of Rome, and so the empire came to have an head again, a governor, though of another kind: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

- E. This is the other place that pertains to the description of the beast of Rome: that besides that natural dignity, and breadth of the Roman Empire, which was eluded to in the two former verses, there was added this also as miraculous, that one head was wounded as it were to death, and was healed again as from heaven, in the sight of all men. - [Geneva Study Bible](#)

13:4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

I. Context

- A. Satan attacked Christians through persecution by governments and organizations that opposed Christ.
- B. The people were blindly following the leaders of their countries - and in so doing became followers of Satan and opposed the Church.
 - 1. Classic example: The German people who blindly followed Hitler and allowed for the Holocaust.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 15:11 - [Who among the gods is like You, O LORD? Who is like You--majestic in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders?](#)
- B. Isaiah 46:5 - [To whom will you liken Me or count Me equal? To whom will you compare Me, that we should be alike?](#)
- C. The word "worship" - προσκυνέω proskuneō - is not always, however, used in a religious sense. It means, properly, "to kiss"; to kiss toward anyone; that is, to kiss his own hand and to extend it toward a person, in token of respect and homage... The word may be used here to mean that homage or reverence, as to a higher power, was rendered to the "dragon"; not strictly that he was openly worshipped in a religious sense as God. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- D. Who is like unto the beast? - That is, he is to be regarded as unequalled and as supreme. This was, in fact, ascribing honors to him which belonged only to God; and this was the manner in which that civil and secular power was regarded in the period here supposed to be referred to. It was the policy of rulers and princes in those times to augment in every way possible the respect in which they were held; to maintain that they were the vicegerents of heaven; to claim for themselves sacredness of character and of person; and to secure from the people a degree of reverence which was in fact idolatrous. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. Possibly worshipping in this latter clause is not to be understood of a Divine adoration, but a civil subjection; people, upon the driving out of these their enemies, generally gave themselves up to the obedience of their emperors and the bishops of Rome, commanding them idolatrous worship; - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

13:5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

I. Context

- A. Satan used world powers to oppose the church. This could happen because the people of these nations blindly followed their leaders.
- B. God allows His church to be persecuted by these nations and leaders. During this time the leaders speak arrogantly against God.

II. Notes

- A. Psalm 12:3 - [May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things.](#)

- B. Daniel 7:8 - While I was contemplating the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like those of a man and a mouth that spoke words of arrogance.
- C. Daniel 7:11 - Then I kept watching because of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. As I continued to watch, the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.
- D. Daniel 8:14 - He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be properly restored."
- E. Daniel 11:36 - Then the king will do as he pleases and will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must be accomplished.
- F. Daniel 12:13 - Blessed is he who waits and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.
- G. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 - Let no one deceive you in any way, for it will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness--the son of destruction--is revealed.
- H. Revelation 11:2 - But exclude the courtyard outside the temple. Do not measure it, because it has been given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for 42 months.
- I. Revelation 11:3 - And I will empower my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."
- J. Revelation 12:6 - The woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place for her to be nourished for 1,260 days.
- K. The 5th verse tells us that the liberty to speak and work **was given** to him. There is consolation in the words: he has no power beyond what is given; behind his reckless and apparently irresistible power there stands the veiled but real power of God. "Thou couldest have no power" (the saints may take up their Lord's words) "against me, except it were given thee from above." He speaks great things, and blasphemy. **And there was given him authority to act** (literally, **to do**) forty-two months. Again the familiar period, the limited time of the world-power. - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**
- L. The beast is said to have a mouth before, like the mouth of a lion, **Revelation 13:2**; but now he was moved and stirred up by the dragon, the devil, to open it, not only in a cruel and voracious way, but in a haughty, lying, and blasphemous manner: and this was given him, it was at the instigation of Satan, and by divine permission; his coming, speaking, and acting, were after the working of Satan, but not without the will of God; who, as he gave up many to a judicial blindness, to believe his lies and blasphemies, gave up him to speak them, - **Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible**

13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

- I. Context
 - A. Satan attacks Christians through world powers, who speak arrogantly against God.
 - B. This arrogance against God is seen in direct attacks against the Church and the individual Christians.
- II. Notes
 - A. Psalm 73:9 - They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongues strut across the earth.
 - B. Daniel 7:8 - While I was contemplating the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like those of a man and a mouth that spoke words of arrogance.
 - C. Daniel 7:25 - He will speak out against the Most High and oppress the saints of the Most High, intending to change the set times and laws, and the saints will be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time.

- D. Daniel 11:36 - Then the king will do as he pleases and will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must be accomplished.
- E. Revelation 7:15 - For this reason, 'They are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.'
- F. Revelation 12:12 - Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea; with great fury the devil has come down to you, knowing he has only a short time.'
- G. Revelation 15:5 - After this I looked, and the temple--the Tabernacle of the Testimony--was opened in heaven.
- H. Much of the beauty of the thought is lost by the translation "them that dwell;" the word is **tabernacle**. The saints, to whom the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and who have a tabernacle of witness in this wilderness world, can yet tabernacle their spirits where their treasure is, in the heaven, according to that word: "our citizenship is even now in heaven" ([Philippians 3:20](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- I. And his tabernacle - Literally, his "tent" - σκηνὴν skēnēn. This is the word which is commonly applied to the sacred tent or tabernacle among the Hebrews, in which the ark was kept, and which was the seat of the Jewish worship before the building of the temple. It is thus used to denote a place of worship, considered as the dwelling-place of God, and is in this sense applied to heaven, [Hebrews 8:2](#); [Hebrews 9:11](#); [Revelation 15:5](#). It seems to be used here in a general sense to denote the place where God was worshipped; and the meaning is, that there would be a course of conduct in regard to the true church - the dwelling-place of God on the earth - which could properly be regarded as blasphemy. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. And them that dwell in heaven - The true worshippers; the members of the true church, represented as dwelling in this holy tabernacle. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

13:7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

- I. Context
 - A. Satan uses world powers and organizations to persecute the Church and to speak arrogantly against God.
 - B. Satan doesn't just use words to persecute the church - he uses violence. He is trying to force the Christians to submit to him and deny God - or die.
 - 1. And this persecution is world wide - not just in certain churches.
- II. Notes
 - A. Daniel 7:21 - As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and prevailing against them,
 - B. Daniel 7:25 - He will speak out against the Most High and oppress the saints of the Most High, intending to change the set times and laws, and the saints will be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time.
 - C. Revelation 5:9 - And they sang a new song: "Worthy are You to take the scroll and open its seals, because You were slain, and by Your blood You purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."
 - D. The conquest is not a conquest of their fidelity; it is rather that the beast so far succeeds that they must suffer or submit. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

- I. Context

- A. Satan is attacking Christians world wide. They must submit to him and deny God - or die.
 - B. A division will be set up - those that worship Satan and those that worship God.
 - 1. Satan will conquer the world, but he will not conquer the Christian.
- II. Notes
- A. Psalm 69:28 - *May they be erased from the book of life and not listed with the righteous.*
 - B. Matthew 25:34 - *Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*
 - C. Luke 10:20 - *Nevertheless, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*
 - D. Revelation 3:5 - *Like them, the one who is victorious will be dressed in white. And I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and His angels.*
 - E. This is the climax of his triumph: he, or it, is worshipped; but the saints, though conquered, conquer; they do not worship after the fashion of the deluded or self-seeking. A stronger tie binds them to a better allegiance; their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
 - F. There is some doubt about the connection of the words "from the foundation of the world." Some connect them with the word "written": this would express that the names were written "from the foundation of the world" in the book. Others connect them with the word "slain": this expresses that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. For the former view, the similar passage in *Revelation 17:8* is cited; but, on the other hand, the phrase "from the foundation of the world" is connected in other parts of the Bible with certain aspects of the work of Christ (*1Peter 1:19-20*, and *John 17:24*), and it seems more natural to take the words in their simple order. Whatever view we take, the verse proclaims that the security of God's saints is based on the eternal love of God. "An eternal deliverer is the only refuge from this great world-tyranny; "the strength of the tempted is in Him who is the same in love and righteousness through all the ages. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

13:9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

- I. Context
- A. Satan will conquer the world, but he will not be able to conquer the church.
 - B. This warning goes out to everyone that will pay attention.
- II. Note
- A. Matthew 11:15 - *He who has ears, let him hear.*
 - B. Mark 4:23 - *If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.*"
 - C. Luke 8:8 - *Still other seed fell on good soil, where it sprang up and produced a crop--a hundredfold.*" As Jesus said this, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
 - D. Revelation 2:7 - *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will grant the right to eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God.*
 - E. Revelation 2:11 - *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.*
 - F. an echo of his Master's words from the lips of the beloved disciple—calls marked attention to the warning words of the next verse. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

13:10 If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

- I. Context

- A. Satan will conquer the world, but he will not conquer the church.
 - B. The church is warned to endure and persevere without fighting back.
 - 1. Those that fight back will be destroyed - you can't fight fire with fire without getting burned.
 - 2. The only way to conquer this opposition is through peaceful resistance - to endure and trust that God will protect them.
 - a) This builds strength of faith
 - b) and wakes up the world to a better way — allowing for freedom from Satan's clutches.
- II. Notes
- A. Genesis 9:6 - *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man his blood will be shed; for in His own image God has made mankind.*
 - B. Jeremiah 15:2 - *If they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' you are to tell them that this is what the LORD says: 'Those destined for death, to death; those destined for the sword, to the sword; those destined for famine, to famine; those destined for captivity, to captivity.'*
 - C. Jeremiah 43:11 - *He will come and strike down the land of Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword.*
 - D. Matthew 26:52 - *"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him. "For all who draw the sword will die by the sword.*
 - E. If we read the verse thus, it is generally understood to be a caution to the suffering saints that there is nothing for them but to endure, just as Jeremiah told his countrymen that those who were for death must go out to meet it, and those who were for sword or captivity must face them ([Jeremiah 15:2](#)). But is not this a warning to them that the way of the Church's victory lay through suffering captivity and meeting sword, and that the temptation to take the sword or seize the weapons of their foes would be fatal to their true success? The spirit of the words reminds them that their weapons are the weapons of faith and patience, of truth and righteousness; and they must accept the tribulation, as their Lord did His cross, because thus it must be. At the same time, their very doing so is a witness to their foes that "all those who take the sword will perish with the sword;" and that the sword, from which the saints do not shrink, will assuredly turn against those who use it. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

The Beast from the Earth

13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

- I. Context
- A. Satan will attack the Christians with external powers (governments, organizations and people) that will oppose the church and try to keep people from finding God. The church will not resist, but will grow strong through the persecution.
 - B. Satan will start another attack.
 - 1. It will be from the land
 - a) The first beast came from the sea - a foreign attack from outside the church.
 - b) This attack comes from a land - from inside the church.
 - 2. This beast looks like the lamb, but speaks like the dragon.
 - a) It is false teachings that lead people in the church away from God.
- II. Notes
- A. Daniel 8:3 - *Then I lifted my eyes and saw a ram with two horns standing beside the canal. The horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one grew up later.*

- B. For the understanding of this portion of the vision we must notice the contrasts and resemblances between this and the former wild beast. They are both wild beasts: they both have horns: they both have a dragon-like inspiration ([Revelation 13:11](#)): they both tyrannise over men; but, on the other hand, the second beast is less monstrous in appearance: we read only of two horns, and we hear nothing of seven heads. He somewhat resembles a lamb; he rises from the earth, and not from the sea; his power lies in deception ([Revelation 13:13-14](#)) as well as violence; he seems to possess more supernatural power: yet the whole of his work is directed to magnifying the first beast ([Revelation 13:12](#)). Do not these features lead to the conclusion that the principles which the second wild beast supports are the same as those on which the former wild beast acted, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- C. There is an appearance of gentleness about him, but he spake as a dragon; the voice betrayeth him. He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. The spirit of the adversary is in him ([John 3:31](#); [John 8:44](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. "ascending from the land." The former was represented as rising up out of the sea [Revelation 13:1](#); indicating that the power was to rise from a perturbed or unsettled state of affairs - like the ocean. This, from what was more settled and stable - as the land is more firm than the waters. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- E. out of society civilized, consolidated, and ordered, but still, with all its culture, of earth earthy: as distinguished from "the sea," the troubled agitations of various peoples out of which the world power and its several kingdoms have emerged. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- F. the Imperial alter ego or the second beast, a monster from the land (identified afterwards with the traditional "false prophet," - [Expositor's Greek Testament](#)
- G.

13:12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

- I. Context
 - A. Satan attacks the church from the outside (oppressive governments) and from the inside (false prophets).
 - B. The false prophets had the same purpose - to draw people away from God.
- II. Notes
 - A. It will be seen by this that we must not look upon the second wild beast as a successor, but rather as a supporter, of the first. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
 - B. The same amount of power; the same kind of power. This shows a remarkable relationship between these two beasts; and proves that it was intended to refer to the same power substantially, though manifested in a different form. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

13:13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

- I. context
 - A. Satan attacks the church from the outside and from the inside.
 - B. These false prophets will be very convincing - even doing things that seem like only God could do.
- II. Notes
 - A. Exodus 7:11 - But Pharaoh called the wise men and sorcerers and magicians of Egypt, and they also did the same things by their magic arts.

- B. I Kings 18:38 - Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water in the trench.
- C. Matthew 24:24 - For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that were possible.
- D. Luke 9:54 - When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do You want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?"
- E. Revelation 11:5 - If anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouths and devours their enemies. In this way, anyone who wants to harm them must be killed.
- F. Revelation 16:14 - These are demonic spirits that perform signs and go out to all the kings of the earth, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God, the Almighty.
- G. Revelation 19:20 - But the beast was captured along with the false prophet, who on its behalf had performed signs deceiving those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. Both the beast and the false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.
- H. Revelation 20:9 - And they marched across the broad expanse of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them.
- I. He pretends, like other false prophets, to show great signs and wonders, and even to call for fire from heaven, as Elias did, 2 Kings 1:11-12. - Benson Commentary
- J. In this respect he perfectly resembles St. Paul's man of sin, 2 Thessalonians 2:9; or rather they are one and the same character, represented in different lights, and under different names. It is further observable, that he is said to perform his miracles in the sight of men, in order to deceive them, and in the sight of the beast, in order to serve him: but not in the sight of God, to serve his cause, or promote his religion. - Benson Commentary
- K. the representation here is, that the power referred to by the second beast would found its claim on pretended miracles, and would accomplish an effect on the world as if it actually did work miracles. - Barnes' Notes on the Bible
- L. "maketh even fire." This is the very miracle which the two witnesses perform, and which Elijah long ago had performed; this the beast from the bottomless pit, or the false prophet, mimics. Not merely tricks, but miracles of a demoniacal kind, and by demon aid, like those of the Egyptian magicians, shall be wrought, most calculated to deceive; wrought "after the working (Greek, 'energy') of Satan." - Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

- I. Context
 - A. Satan will attack the church with false prophets that are very convincing - even performing "miracles".
 - B. These false prophets will be very convincing and very popular. They will entice men to focus on themselves and the world - and lose focus of God. This will be so subtle that some Christians will believe that they are focused on Christ, when they are not.
- II. Notes
 - A. Exodus 7:11- But Pharaoh called the wise men and sorcerers and magicians of Egypt, and they also did the same things by their magic arts.
 - B. 2 Thessalonians 2:9 - The coming of the lawless one will be accompanied by the working of Satan, with every kind of power, sign, and false wonder,
 - C. Revelation 2:10 - Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Look, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will suffer tribulation for ten days. Be faithful even unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

- D. Revelation 3:10 - Because you have kept My command to endure with patience, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.
- E. Revelation 12:9 - And the great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him
- F. Revelation 13:3 - One of the heads of the beast appeared to be fatally wounded. But the mortal wound was healed, and the whole world marveled and followed the beast.
- G. He leads astray: this is the key to his success, he deifies the spirit of worldliness; but he does it by deception and subtlety: there is an appearance of wonderful power: he can work lying wonders. When men lose the sense of duty,—the will to ask, “Is it right?”—they become an easy prey to some specious deception. This is the reason that, both in the old and new dispensations, a caution against “immoral marvels” is entered (see [Deuteronomy 13:1-3](#); [Matthew 24:24](#); and [2Thessalonians 2:9](#)); mere greatness, either of achievement or of miracle, is no guarantee of a good cause. The motto “Might is right is the motto of worldliness; “Right is might” is the motto of faith, and those who hold it cannot worship the beast, even though the stroke of his death-wound is healed. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- H. he deceives by employing false signs, and he deceives by inducing men to believe that the worship of the first beast is allowable. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)
- I. Thus the second beast - self deceit - beguiles men. They accept exhibitions of power external to God as evidences of an independence and self sufficiency which do not exist apart from God, forgetful of the fact that this power is derived from God: it is given by him. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

13:15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

- I. Context
 - A. Satan will attack the church with false prophets that will be so convincing that they will cause even the strongest Christians to focus on things of the world and not on God.
 - B. These false prophets used these “miracles” and other tricks to make the people believe that the message was from God - but then forced these people to follow them or be punished.
 - 1. A note: Jesus never forced people to follow Him and He never shed blood. Rather, He shed His own blood for even those that would not follow Him. When a church or Christian leader forces his views and practices on his disciples, he is not acting in Christ’s name.
- II. Notes
 - A. Wisdom can give a semblance of life to the most doomed cause; and the bulk of mankind read only with their eyes, and not at all with their thoughts. The image of the Roman emperor was, in ancient days, made an object of worship. Christians suffered rather than by such an act of worship prove disloyal to Christ: like their spiritual ancestors, they refused to worship the image which the world-power had set up; they were willing to render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar’s, but the homage which belonged to God they refused to any but their God. These are but types of those who have refused, though tempted by specious eloquence and sagacious subtlety, to offer homage to any mere world-power; for the golden image is ever set up upon the plains of this world: its glitter and its vitality survive the storm and the conflict of the ages: it speaks, and men hear and adore, for they walk by sight, not by faith; and it needs no imperial or papal edict to doom to social death and failure those who refuse to shape their conduct by considerations of self-interest, and who are sure to be treated as

fanatics because they follow right and conscience and Christ. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- B. That is, that image of the beast would be naturally powerless, or would have no life in itself. The second beast, however, had power to impart life to it, so that it would be invested with authority, and would exercise that authority in the manner specified. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. "False doctrine will give a spiritual, philosophical appearance to the foolish apotheosis of the creaturely personified by Antichrist" - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- D. he breathed into it, and animated it; he gave this new religion a sanction, he confirmed and established it, and obliged all in his dominions to embrace and acknowledge it; and this he did by his decrees and canons, and those that refused were delivered over to the secular power, which he also exercised under another consideration: - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- E. "Christ did not do this; nor have His prophets nor apostles taught, nor have kings now become Christian understood this, that they should kill, and think that the service of Christ is to be advanced by bloodshed. For the true God does not wish compulsory, but willing service. Therefore also in this, nay, even especially in this, he will show to those who have understanding, and who are strong in reason, that he is in truth Antichrist, that he is in truth not Christ; but that, in accordance with his name, he is opposed to Christ. It is Christ who shed His own blood. It is Antichrist who shed the blood of others." - [Bengel's Gnomes](#)

13:16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,

I. Context

- A. Satan attacks the church with false prophets that force people to conform or be punished.
- B. Just as the followers of Jesus were sealed (Revelation 7) to show that they belonged to Him, Satan will put a seal on those that follow him.
 - 1. This will not be a physical mark, but will be seen in the attitudes of his followers - in their actions (right hand) and beliefs (forehead).
 - a) It will become evident who follows Jesus and who does not.

II. Notes

- A. Galatians 6:17 - [From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.](#)
- B. Revelation 7:3 - ["Do not harm the land or sea or trees until we have sealed the foreheads of the servants of our God."](#)
- C. We have read of the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads ([Revelation 7:3](#)): we shall hear of it again ([Revelation 22:4](#)); the power of evil also has its mark or stamp. As slaves received a brand or mark in their flesh, betokening to whom they belonged, so in the spiritual conflict there is on the side of good and of evil a brand or mark. St. Paul spoke of such marks in his own body that proved him a slave of Jesus Christ ([Galatians 6:17](#)). In the same way the subtle false prophet, the abettor of world-power, seeks to impress a mark on all, on the penalty of complete social exclusion. It is utterly unnecessary to take this brand of evil literally, any more than we took the seal of Christ literally. That seal we understood as spiritual, in the faith and in the character; this evil brand we must interpret in like manner. It surely means the acquiescence in character and action to the principles of this tyrannical world-power: - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. the right hand is the symbol of toil and social intercourse; the forehead is the symbol of character, as time is ever writing its awful tale upon men's brows. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- E. an allusion either to the custom among the Romans of imprinting marks upon their servants and soldiers, by which they might be known to whom they belonged; servants had them in their foreheads (i), and soldiers in their hands (k); or to the usages of the Jews in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God, and their obedience to it; or to the practices of the Heathens, in putting the mark of the god they worshipped upon their bodies; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

13:17 and *he provides* that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

I. Context

- A. There will be a distinction between those that follow Jesus and those who follow Satan.
- B. Under these false prophets - who are forcing people to conform to their false doctrines - basic needs will become a form of coercion ("Do what we say or don't eat").
 - 1. Satan will use commerce to control people
 - a) Only people that follow him can get jobs (I.E. - in John's day, trade unions were tied to an idol - you had to be willing to worship that idol to be part of that trade).
 - b) This could also be seen in things like taxes - in which the government taxes (or gives tax relief) for certain items to control behavior (such as on cigarettes).

II. Notes

- A. Galatians 6:17 - [From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.](#)
- B. That is, this mighty power would claim jurisdiction over the traffic of the world, and endeavor to make it tributary to its own purposes. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. the mark, or the name—Greek, "the mark (namely), the name of the beast." The mark may be, as in the case of the sealing of the saints in the forehead, not a visible mark, but symbolical of allegiance. So the sign of the cross in Popery. The Pope's interdict has often shut out the excommunicate from social and commercial intercourse. Under the final Antichrist this shall come to pass in its most violent form. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- D. [no man might buy or sell](#)] Such disabilities seem to have been actually imposed, at least in the Diocletian persecution, by requiring business transactions to be preceded by pagan formulas - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- E. [the number of his name](#)] In Hebrew and in Greek, letters were used for numerals, every letter having its own proper significance as a number. Among the Jews (and to some extent among early Christians, especially heretics) this suggested the possibility of finding numbers mystically corresponding to any word: the numerical value of all the letters might be added together, and the sum would represent the word. This process was called by the Jews [Gematria](#), a corruption of the Greek [Geometria](#). Ridiculous as were many of the attempts made to find mystical meanings in the words of Scripture by this process, it remains true that a Jew of St John's time would probably mean, by "the number of a name," the number formed by Gematria from its letters: - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)

13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

I. Context

- A. Satan attacks Christians through false prophets, by forcing them to conform or starve.
- B. The "mark" of the beast can be seen in the number 666
 - 1. Six is the number of man (which is a possible translation of "number of a man")
 - 2. three is the number of God
 - a) 666 would be a way of saying "man attempting to be God"

(1) This is a world in which God is not welcome - a “golden age” of humanism.

II. Notes

- A. The verse surely implies that the understanding of this name and number is attainable; it warns us that **wisdom** and **understanding** are needed, but it as certainly leads us to believe that to wisdom and understanding a solution of the problem will be granted. - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**
- B. The clause “It is the number of a man,” has been rendered “For number is of man.” The number, then, is the combination of three sixes; there is a wisdom and understanding which may grasp its import, and that import is to be guided by the principle that it is the number of a man, or that number is of man - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**
- C. I am disposed, therefore, to interpret this “six hundred and sixty-six” as a symbolical number, expressing all that it is possible for human wisdom, and human power, when directed by an evil spirit, to achieve, and indicating a state of marvellous earthly perfection, when the beast-power has reached its highest development, when culture, civilisation, art, song, science and reason have combined to produce an age so nearly resembling perfection—an age of gold, if not a golden age—that men will begin to say that faith in God is an impertinence, and the hope of a future life a libel upon the happiness of the present. Then will the world-power have reached the zenith of his influence; then will only a wisdom descended from above be able to detect the infinite difference between a world with faith and a world without faith, and the great gulf which the want of a little heaven-born love can fix between an age and an age. - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**