

59. The Book of Revelation—13:14-18

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Revelation Chapter 13 is probably the best-known Chapter in the book for no other reason than it talks about the infamous '*Mark of the Beast*'—"666".

In this Chapter we are introduced to two coming world leaders—one political and the other religious.

In verses 1-10 we are introduced to the first of these two leaders—a political leader likened to a '**beast**' that rises metaphorically out of the '**sea.**' (**verse 1**)—we know him as the Antichrist.

Then in verses 11 through 18 we are introduced to a second beast, a religious leader who rises up metaphorically out of the *earth* and will unite the world in a global religion—this second beast is called the '**False Prophet.**'

Jesus warned that there would be false prophets on the earth at this time (Matthew 24:11, 24)—but this one will be the greatest (worst) of them all!

He will have the "*character*" of a lamb (giving the appearance of gentleness, meekness and harmlessness)—but he will talk like the dragon (like Satan—the father of lies!).

Revelation 13:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

Satan will give the Antichrist and False Prophet supernatural powers to 'authenticate' their false gospel as the truth—even mimicking some of the miracles that the Two Witnesses did during their ministry (supernaturally manipulating fire).

Revelation 13:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Now listen, idolatry has been around since man was first created (it pretty much started in the Garden of Eden when man began to worship him/herself).

Idolatry was a sad Chapter in Israel's history when the children of Israel embraced idolatry and through it brought the judgment of God upon the nation.

God spoke of the emptiness and the utter foolishness of idolatry throughout this period when the nation made images out of wood, stone, gold, and silver to then bow down before the image to worship it—

Habakkuk 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all.

Isaiah 44:9-20 (NLT2)

⁹ How foolish are those who manufacture idols. These prized objects are really worthless. The people who worship idols don't know this, so they are all put to shame. ¹⁰ Who but a fool would make his own god— an idol that cannot help him one bit? ¹¹ All who worship idols will be disgraced along with all these craftsmen—mere humans— who claim they can make a god. They may all stand together, but they will stand in terror and shame...¹³ ...the wood-carver measures a block of wood and draws a pattern on it. He works with chisel and plane and carves it into a human figure. He gives it human beauty and puts it in a little shrine. ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars; he selects the cypress and the oak; he plants the pine in the forest to be nourished by the rain. ¹⁵ Then he uses part of the wood to make a fire. With it he warms himself and bakes his bread. Then—yes, it's true—he takes the rest of it and makes himself a god to worship! He makes an idol and bows down in front of it! ¹⁶ He burns part of the tree to roast his meat and to keep himself warm. He says, "Ah, that fire feels good." ¹⁷ Then he takes what's left and makes his god: a carved idol! He falls down in front of it, worshiping and praying to it. "Rescue me!" he says. "You are my god!" ¹⁸ Such stupidity and ignorance! Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see. Their minds are shut, and they cannot think. ¹⁹ The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, "Why, it's just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a piece of wood?" ²⁰ The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes. He trusts something that can't help him at all. Yet he cannot bring himself to ask, "Is this idol that I'm holding in my hand a lie?"

And so, idolatry has been around for a long time—even John the apostle said:

1 John 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

However, the idolatry that the False Prophet will lead the world into will not be like anything that came before it. As I have been saying for years, I don't believe this 'image of the beast' will be some kind of advanced animatronics that the False Prophet will make and have the people of the world bow down to—sophisticated technology won't do it.

My family and I have been to Disney World, and I concede that they have come a long way in perfecting these robots that look and act like real people.

Some of you have sent me a video of a giant moving statue ten stories tall that they believe could be what is in view here in Revelation 13:14:

"A company in Ireland is hoping to bring the world's tallest moving statue to 21 cities in 2021...called "The Giant." It's a programmable, moving statue that's 10-stories tall and covered with millions of LED pixels that allow it to take the form of any person..."

Now as incredible as this robot statue is (or will be)—I don't believe it's what's in view in Revelation 13:14-15.

The image spoken about in Revelation 13 isn't going to be a robot of some kind (although it might start out that way)—this image will become a sentient being, a living thing not just a sophisticated robot.

"But Phil, I thought you said earlier in our study of Revelation that Satan didn't have the power to give life or bring someone back from the dead—so how can Satan give the False Prophet the power to give life to this image?"

Well, this might not be an example of the devil ‘creating’ life—it could involve the transfer of existing life from a person into some kind of *avatar*.

There are scientists that have been working for years to be able to merge the human consciousness with a machine—a process called the ‘singularity.’

Many of you have heard of something called “*Cybernetic transhumanism*”—combining the human body with a machine (the word *cyborg* is short for ‘cybernetic organism’) something made popular in the early 1970’s by the TV series ‘Six Million Dollar Man’ and later on with the movie “*RoboCop*”.

Those were examples of cybernetic organisms—but the fusing of the human consciousness with a machine or a robot called the ‘singularity’ is much more advanced and at this point is still only a fantasy.

I believe it is entirely possible that this will be the message the Antichrist will preach to the world during the Tribulation Period.

A message that man’s consciousness can be ‘downloaded’ into a robot or machine to give him or her the ability to live forever in a mechanical avatar containing incredible strength as well as having a super-computer for a brain connected with every other person on the planet (via some kind of internet) giving mankind the ‘collective-consciousness’ they’ve always dreamed of.

If you’ve ever watched the TV series ‘Star Trek: Next Generation’ you’ll remember a race of aliens called the ‘Borg’. (Explain)

Could this technology be used by the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period and be the basis for his new religion—that man can become a god (just like the Antichrist) by having his or her consciousness downloaded into a robot.

Revelation 13:12-15 (NKJV)

¹² And he [the False Prophet] exercises all the authority of the first beast [Antichrist], in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast...¹⁴ telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image [robot?] to the beast...¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Could this be some kind of robot that they are able to infuse with human consciousness and intelligence so that it actually comes alive (not just turns on like a machine)? And does the Antichrist demonstrate this to the world by downloading *his* consciousness into this image (possibly a robot of some kind) and then declaring himself to be God?

If so, could this image be the prototype of a super race that will have incredible power and intelligence—a race of people that will be the perfect combination of man and machine who will live forever as gods upon the earth (or at least that’s what they’re led to believe)?

I mean could this be the message the Antichrist will preach to the people of the world and why they so enthusiastically follow him and destroy all those who oppose him?

I will give you another perspective of what may be going on here in Revelation 13:12-15.

Verse 15 could be translated, “*He was granted power to give spirit to the image of the beast...*”

This is interesting because the first commentary we have on the book of Revelation, written by Victorinus in the early church, says of this verse:

"He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles"

Of course, to those who rejected the *"love of the truth that they might be saved"*—this will validate the Antichrist's claim that he is God because only God can give life.

If the people of the world will follow and worship him—they will be given 'eternal life' in that when they die, the Antichrist and False Prophet will be able to bring them back to life—over and over again—eternally!

Revelation 13:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

In the ancient world, such marks (tattoos or brands) were commonly given to slaves, soldiers, and devotees of religious cults. God sealed with a mark on the forehead the 144,000 to preserve them from His wrath against the unbelieving world (7:2–3)—and here the false prophet marks the *unsaved* to preserve them from Antichrist's wrath against God's people.

The mark will signify that the person bearing it is a worshiper and loyal follower of the Antichrist—whose loyalty will be rewarded by being allowed TO LIVE!—to buy basic necessities:

One man who had lived under Bulgaria's communist regime remarked:

"You cannot understand, and you cannot know that the most terrible instrument of persecution ever devised is an innocent ration card. You cannot buy and you cannot sell except according to that little, innocent card. If they please, you can be starved to death, and if they please, you can be dispossessed of everything you have; for you cannot trade, and you cannot buy and you cannot sell, without [the government's] permission."

Life under totalitarian governments in our time provides a faint glimpse of what is to come.

Revelation 13:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. In the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, letters have numerical equivalents—and therefore every word including every name, if the numerical equivalent of those letters were added up—would equal a number.

Because of this, I don't think there's another verse in the Bible that has generated more in the way of speculation as has Revelation 13:18 with regard to whose name adds up to the number "666" and is therefore the 'Antichrist'.

Over the centuries, there have been many attempts to associate the names of historical individuals with the number 666—maybe you have heard some:

➤ *"This person is the Antichrist!" "How do you know that?" "Easy, you take his age divided by his shirt size and add in his height—and bingo! It equals 666!"*

People throughout the centuries have identified all kinds of people who they believe to be the Antichrist through some tortured mathematics—

Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and a host of others have been proposed to be the Antichrist, based on some sort of convoluted mathematical rendering of the letters in their name. All such speculation is futile since the Antichrist is still to come—and therefore the number 666 cannot be associated with any individual (historical or current) without opening the door to error or even heresy.

The Church Father Irenaeus cautioned against speculating about the identity of the person associated with the number 666 until that person arrives on the scene.

Daniel 12:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Revelation 13:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Here is wisdom...

Henry Morris—

“The concluding verse of this amazing Chapter of Revelation is most intriguing. It is as though John were posing a puzzle, a challenge that would help people determine the identity of the beast. Once the tribulation begins, however, there will be no question as to his identity, since it is he who will make the seven-year covenant with Israel. Therefore, John evidently intended this clue for his initial readers in the seven churches of Asia, and therefore for all other believers before the Church is raptured prior to the beginning of the tribulation...

All of this suggests that whenever a particularly popular leader begins to figure prominently in world affairs (especially if he is anti-Christian in his thinking and counsel), Christians would be well advised to “count the number of his name.” Then, if that number turns out to be “666” they should be extremely careful not to be influenced by him and try to warn others of his possible satanic associations.”

So, for right now we can't be sure who the Antichrist is using gematria (letters equaling numbers) since the names of many people throughout history and up to the present day have names that add up to “666”.

The generation that is alive when Antichrist is revealed will know right away who he is—gematria being one of numerous ways that believers at that time will be able to confirm what world leader is truly the Antichrist.

Of course, one of the main ways will be Daniel 9:27 which prophesy's that the Antichrist, when he comes to power, will make a covenant with the nation of Israel.

So, let's fight the urge in trying to figure out who this guy is, since many of us believe he is alive right now and just waiting for his 'que' to make his appearance on the world stage—which I don't believe will happen until after the Rapture of the Church takes place.

What I'd like to focus for the rest of our time tonight, is not trying to figure out *who* the Antichrist is by using the number “666”—but the idea of not being able to buy or sell without his number.

Revelation 13:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

One author and commentator had this to say—

“Besides the constant threat of death, refusing to take the mark of the beast will have dire practical consequences in daily living: no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark. Antichrist's

empire will maintain strict economic control over the world. Food, clothing, medical supplies, and the other necessities of life potentially in demand in the devastated earth, which has felt the judgment of God (6:5–6), will be unobtainable for those without the mark. Currency will probably vanish, to be replaced by controlled credit. Instead of a credit card, which can be lost, people will have a mark in their forehead or hand. Scanning people’s foreheads or hands would identify them to a central computer system.”

This was written back in the 1980’s and back then we all believed that Revelation 13:16-17 was speaking of computerized credit possibly linked to a barcode system.

For those of you who are old enough to remember, barcodes first appeared on products in grocery stores in 1974. So, in the early 1980’s the technology was still fairly new and all of us prophecy buffs back then were sure this was the technology that the Antichrist was going to use (back in the 80’s I saw a book that had the head of a person on the cover, and on that person’s head there was a barcode tattooed on their forehead!).

Most of us believed that Revelation 13:16-17 was speaking of credit card technology which could be adapted and ‘tattooed’ onto someone’s head or hand and then scanned to buy or sell various items like food. Back then we all thought, *“Here we go! This is it! Jesus is coming back soon!!”*

Since then, technology has advanced to the point where scientists have developed micro-chips the size of a grain of sand that can contain all of your personal information.

This chip could then be easily placed under a person’s skin (forehead or hand) so that the chip is always with that person and can never be lost or stolen (a great solution to the problem of identity theft)—and then scanned to buy or sell.

Now these chips have GPS capabilities so that those who have one of these chips embedded in their body can be tracked anywhere in the world in real time (talk about government control!).

One thing about the mark of the beast that has always troubled me is—why can someone who commits murder we’ll say or who is even a mass murderer can come to Jesus, receive Him as their Savior and be saved—whereas the Bible says if anyone takes the Antichrist’s mark they can never be saved? (Revelation 14:9-10)

Is taking a number a worse sin than committing murder?

Well, many believe (like me) that this could be some kind of electronic linking together with the Antichrist that would make a person “one with him” (a part of his collective consciousness).

Anyone who **willingly received his ‘mark’** (chip?) would 'link with the Antichrist and that would sever their free will making it impossible for them to ever repent and receive Jesus as their Savior once they take this mark.

Please understand, no one will be deceived into taking the mark of the beast—they will all know exactly what they are doing.

Now all of this is going to fall under the heading of the one-world government the Antichrist is going to bring about and lead. That when he comes on the world scene and brings the world together in a global government—he will also create a central electronic banking system which will be linked to this mark—but a system that will be controlled not by banks but by his government.

This is a system that communist China has incorporated—and one that our leaders are salivating to enact in our country—a centralized governmental financial system where the government not only tracks our every purchase but also controls the flow of all money and how it is spent.

This system will not be like digital currency today and electronic banking that we are all used to.

People think this new system that is coming is going to be like their electronic banking now (no big deal)—a debit or ATM card linked to their bank account—wrong.

This is about the Federal Reserve creating what is called “*FedCoins*” (a system that will eventually be ‘absorbed’ into the one-world government of Antichrist).

I can just hear the Feds enthusiastically promoting this system to its citizens:

“Just download the app onto your phone and the Federal Government will deposit the FedCoins into your account.” (O how convenient!)

Now this means that not only will the Federal Government be able to track *what* you buy and *where* you bought it and *how much* you spent on it—they’ll have the power to authorize or reject each of your purchases as well. This will be a system where the government issues every person a number and without that number you won’t be able to buy or sell anything without their approval—sound familiar?

Every transaction you make will go through the Federal Reserve which, if it approves the transaction, will pay the store or restaurant or whatever seller (private, retail or commercial) the purchase price of the merchandise in FedCoins.

This means every purchase you make will be recorded on the Federal Reserve Ledger for your account. When this system is finally enacted cash will be done away with (it will be worthless and obsolete). Using or even owning gold will be illegal (probably confiscated by the government—as FDR confiscated gold back in April of 1933).

Under this new financial system, the Federal Government would also be in control of the flow of credit and who gets that credit.

This will be based on your ‘*social score*’—the system that China uses to punish and reward those who support the Chinese government or are dissidents against it.

So, depending on a person’s politics the government would assign them a “social score” (where “10” would maybe be the highest) and based on your social score (your politics) that would determine who would be first in line for credit to get a house loan, a car loan, a business loan, a student loan etc.

In this system the government will reward and punish people based on their politics and whether or not they were in line with the government’s goals and objectives (no doubt Trump supporters would be at the bottom of the list for loans).

Things that would lower a person’s social score would be:

- *Buying too much alcohol*
- *Buying a gun*
- *Buying an SUV instead of a Prius (if you’d even be allowed to buy a gasoline powered car in those days)*
- *Donating to the wrong political party or candidate*
- *Getting banned on social media or blocked on Twitter for saying the wrong things (things the government didn’t like)*
- *Whether a person criticized FedCoins or the government in some way*

All of these things and many others would reduce your social score thus hindering your ability to get a loan to buy a house or start a business or go to college etc.

This will be a system where political allies are rewarded, and enemies are punished. This is the same system that I believe the Antichrist will enact when he rises to power.

I believe this will all be tied to the “Great Reset” (global communist takeover plan) which I believe the Antichrist will enact to launch his new global government.

And by the way the Pope working hand in hand with other world leaders like Barak Obama is working to bring about a great reset in the church as well as in the governments of the world.

We’ll save this for our study on Revelation Chapters 17 and 18.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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