

Rev. 13:11-18 "The Demonic Duo"

For the Children: The police sometimes use a method called "Hard-cop, soft-cop." They try to get information by sending one tough policeman to scare the person into talking; then they send another to be very kind and gently persuade him to talk. The devil uses this method too: he gets some people to try to scare us into acting sinfully, and others to gently persuade us to sin. We need to be on the lookout for these tricks, and try to listen only to what the Lord wants of us. **Questions:** How does the devil sometimes make sin sound right and proper? What is God's mark and what is Satan's? How can you know if you've got God's mark on you, not Satan's?

Introduction:

First Point: The Identity of the Beast from the Earth

- 1) **Beast in Lamb's Clothing:** Unlike the Beast from the Sea, the one from the earth looks harmless. He looks like a lamb with 2 horns – perhaps reminiscent of the "2 witnesses." He imitates Christ's authority, call to worship and signs (vss. 12-13)
- 2) **Dragon In Beast's Clothing:** The false lamb speaks like a dragon – showing his Satanic nature. This Beast represents Satan's use of false religion/ideology/philosophy to support the other Beast, the political powers
- 3) **Some Examples:** The Beast from the Earth represents a trend in the whole age. Notable examples include the religion of Caesar-worship supporting Roman government; Islamic religion supporting Islamic governments; the Roman Catholic religion supporting certain rulers ; false teachers within the church encouraging compromise with the secular culture upheld by the government

Second Point: The Activity of the Beast from the Earth

- 1) **A Deceptive Approach:** This Beast deceives. It looks noble, religious, Messianic – like Satan disguising himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). Only the unregenerate will be fooled into idolatry (v. 14). For the Lord's power is greater than that of the 2 Beasts combined, as well as Satan
- 2) **The Use of False Signs:** Even more than the other Beast, this one performs lying signs and wonders – fire & lightning from the skies (v. 13). False religion has often used tricks to make the gullible think that miracles are being performed e.g. the Baalists dealt with by Elijah
- 3) **Encouraging Idolatry:** This Beast of false ideology encourages people to worship the other Beast, the State it supports (vss, 12, 14, 15). This makes for a powerful combination, a "demonic duo"

Third Point: The Number of the Beast from the Earth

- 1) **The Mark Placed on the Unregenerate:** The Beast places his mark/number on hand or forehead of those who dwell on the earth (the unregenerate) - 666. This does not refer to literal numbers on social security cards etc, or to some individual whose identity can be calculated by substituting letters for these numbers. Like the mark placed on God's people, it is a symbol of ownership – either by God or Satan. The 3 sixes are symbolic, like the other numbers in Revelation: "6" is man's number because man was made on the 6th day; and because the unregenerate take after their master, Satan. He tries to imitate perfection (the number 7), but always falls short. The 3 sixes indicate intense effort to imitate perfection. To take this literally is like the Jews making phylacteries because of Ex. 13:9, 16; Dt. 6:8 etc
- 2) **Permitted to Harm:** The use of the number in trade (v. 17) symbolizes Satan's use of false ideology/religion etc, combined with government power, to harm believers economically if they refuse to compromise. They can also be killed by this duo (v. 15)
- 3) **Here Is Wisdom:** John's call for wisdom (v. 18) is not about mathematically calculating the identity of the Beast from these numbers. It is about using spiritual discernment to recognize these pressures whenever they occur in this age, analyzing our culture and faithfully resisting the mark of the Beast – as we wait to see the Lamb's victory unfold

Conclusion:

