

## The Glory of Christ Over Counterfeits (Revelation 13)

Please turn to Rev 13. Last week we saw how Christ is glorified over Satan, the high point of Revelation, the hallelujah chorus of victory at His coming. Satan can't defeat Christ but he goes after Christ's family to the end, Rev 12 ends there. **13:1** *I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.*

<sup>2</sup> *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.* <sup>3</sup> *One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.* <sup>4</sup> *And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"* <sup>5</sup> *And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.* <sup>6</sup> *It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.* <sup>7</sup> *Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,* <sup>8</sup> *and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.* <sup>9</sup> *If anyone has an ear, let him hear:* <sup>10</sup> *If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.* <sup>11</sup> *Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.* <sup>12</sup> *It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.* <sup>13</sup> *It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,* <sup>14</sup> *and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.* <sup>15</sup> *And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.* <sup>16</sup> *Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,* <sup>17</sup> *so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.*

<sup>18</sup> *This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.*

Rev 13 isn't a passage I'd be as naturally drawn to in preaching, if I wasn't committed to preaching the whole counsel of God. Part of me would rather skip to Rev 19 when Jesus defeats His enemies as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, or skip ahead to heaven in chapters 21-22 when evil is eradicated. I think part of it is I know some people are drawn to chapters like this for the wrong reasons, to satisfy curiosities, not to see Christ. But another part of me just doesn't like to dwell on the reality of evil, the ugly beastly nature of Satanic spiritual forces, thoughts of worse to come, persecution to come? Still *all* Scripture is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training.

Many Christians prefer to avoid texts like Rev 13 altogether, but everyone who has an ear, v. 9 says *'let him hear.'* Christ wants us to hear this as much as in the gospels when He says the same thing as v. 9. Rev 1:3 begins with a blessing on all who hear what's in Revelation, and the key of this section is at the end of 13:10: *'...This is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints'* Rev 13 is a challenge to explain, but it's more, it's a challenge to *endure*.

This isn't for prophecy buffs, this is for persevering believers in John's times and all times. It's not just for the future; it's for the faith of saints who have read it in the past and present. Some would see this chapter as not really for the church which they see will be long gone years before Rev 13, others see this was only for Jewish Christians before 70 AD, but most Christians in history and especially in persecution have seen Rev 13 as being for them. It isn't irrelevant to generations before the very end, or only indirectly applied, v. 9-10 make clear John's original readers needed to hear and directly apply this, and this call for them to endure is rightly applied from then till the end.

We're not to be scared of Revelation, it's written to help us not fear, keeping our focus on Christ. Many avoid this book and miss its blessings, but others are obsessed with it and miss its blessing focusing on speculations of details You might be obsessed or imbalanced IF (my apologies to Jeff Foxworthy):

- if you're eager to talk about computer chip implants, but not Christ
- if you're interested in hearing about antichrist, not so much Christ
- if you get nervous leaving a park temporarily when they ask you if you want a stamp on your hand so you can get back in the park later
- if at one time in life bar code scanners made you even more nervous
- if you're even more suspicious of anyone with the first name Nicolae
- hope is built on nothing less than Left Behind books & Moody Press
- you love bad prophecy movies or most prophecy preaching on TBN

I remember, growing up, a SS teacher showed supposed pagan symbols and marks on dollar bills as a possible expression of v. 17 since you can't buy or sell without dollars. But he also warned there were rumors of cards one day that could be used by your right hand in place of paper money, these cards will have symbols on them which may be the mark of the beast, the rumor was. I'm sure some people today say it's the cell phone, it connects hand to head, and we're tracked by them and can hardly do anything without them. I know people worry they'll accidentally take the mark or somehow worship the beast and lose their salvation, but beloved, v. 8 makes clear whoever's name is in the Lamb's book of life will not worship the beast or be lost. The book of life was written before the foundation of the world, your name is in it if Christ is your Lord, and every Christian in that book is saved to the end. Don't freak out about or focus on man's books, put your faith in God's book.

Let's not focus or fixate on the number 666 in v. 18, either, a numbers game -some said Ronald Wilson Reagan (6 letters in each name, 6-6-6, recovered from near deadly head wound, his later CA address was 666 St. Cloud Dr.)<sup>1</sup> -some said Obama (day after 2008 election Illinois pick 3 lottery # was 666) -John F. Kennedy...received 666 votes at the 1956 Democratic Convention, died of a head wound or Pope John Paul II recovered from a serious wound -Timothy Paul Jones points those out and adds "Mikhail Gorbachev...was a world leader with a mysterious birthmark on his head; maybe it looked like a six if you started at it long enough...[or for those into numerology he says you can make many names work if you use different languages and number values, even] Barney the Dinosaur... 'cute purple dinosaur' in ancient Latin<sup>2</sup> -Some of you wondered why you dislike Barney so much, maybe that's it?!

But look at v. 18 seriously and carefully: *This calls for wisdom* [not for wild speculation or weird ideas]: *let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man...*[not 'number of a name'] The text doesn't say this is a human's *name*, it says '*the number of the beast.*' 'Beast' in Hebrew numbering is 666.<sup>3</sup> v. 18 goes on to say the number of the beast *is the number of a man* not a *name of a man*. Beasts in the background text of Dan 7 are kingdoms-this beast is the kingdom of man and/or its king. What does '6' have to do with *the number of man*? Man was created on day 6 but God finished creation on day 7, so some say 6 is man's number, 7 is God's? More relevant to the immediate context a number 6 may symbolize one less than complete or perfect: the 6th seal in Rev 6 stops short of the 7th that's completed 2 chapters later, and the 6th trumpet stops short of the 7th trumpet completed later in Rev 11:15 when God's perfect kingdom comes.

Turn to Rev 16 for a 3rd time there's a pattern of 6 before God completes it. Rev 16:1 calls for 7 angels to pour out 7 bowls of wrath, i.e., perfect wrath, God's wrath, and v. 2 says it's for those with the mark of the beast on them. v. 12 says the 6th angel poured out the 6th bowl (that's 2 sixes) and in v. 13 *'I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits ...'*

[the 3rd time God brings a 6th judgment, these 3 come out]

Then in v. 17 the 7th angel of God pours out the 7th bowl of wrath and God says *'It is done,'* in other words, it's complete with the 7th, perfect judgment. The dragon that Rev 12 ends with and the beast Rev 13 starts with, and the 2nd beast who's called *'the false prophet'* in the rest of the book, there's 3 of them who share unclean spirits, Satan's unholy nature, like *an unholy trinity*

Let's consider today: 1) The Counterfeit Trinity - an explanation  
2) The Concept in History - some applications today

6-6-6 may simply symbolically be a way to say Satan falls short of God on all 3 counts, there will be 3 strikes against Satan in his final imperfect tries. The *Holy Trinity* in the context of chapters 4-5 is in 7s: God the Father on a throne around 7 torches (4:5) and God the Son as a lamb with 7 horns with 7 spirits to represent God the Holy Spirit in the same text (5:6, a *seven-fold Spirit* of God). The symbols for God there are 7-7-7, Satan's best is just 666.

[A counterfeit trinity is *an* explanation that gives a big picture of Rev 13]

Rev 13:18 may not be so much about names as it is about number-symbols of Satan's beast and best efforts falling short of God. It fits a book written to 7 churches symbolized by 7 lampstands with 7 stars for 7 representatives (a perfect representation of the church Christ builds that hell's gates can't stop). God's scroll is sealed 7 times, showing His control over history, not Satan, and 7 thunders, 7 angels, 7 plagues will end the one whose # symbol is 666.

But let's set aside numbers and notions from outside Scripture and consider:  
- Rev 12:3 describes Satan as a dragon with heads, horns, crowns, and that's also how the beast is described in Rev 13:1 that Satan calls up from the sea. It shows us they share the same nature even as God the Father and Christ do  
- In 13:1 the beast's *'10 horns'* may counterfeit Christ's *'7 horns'* in Rev 5 as if to say the beast wants to appear greater and mightier than Christ Himself?  
- in v. 1 it also mentions *diadems* like Jesus in 19:12 wearing *many diadems*  
- in the middle of v. 2 the *lion's mouth* is like Rev 5, Jesus the lion of Judah  
- when v. 2 ends saying Satan *'gave his power...throne and great authority'*  
those are all terms God gave to Jesus just a few verses earlier, Rev 12:5, 10

- in v. 3 there seems to be an imitation of Christ's death and resurrection, it even uses the same words in the original of Jesus coming to life (2:8, 13:14)
- the beast seems to have been slain like the Lamb John sees as if slain, 5:6
- end of v. 3 says many *marveled* and *followed* (like Jesus, Mt 8:10, 4:19)
- when v. 4 says they worship the dragon and the beast He gave authority to, it's instead of worshipping God and the Son He gave authority to (Rev 4-5).
- in v. 7-8 his authority draws many of every tribe to worship (Rev 7:10-11)
- at the end of v. 4 men marvel and say '*who is like the beast...?*' It's an echo of Mt 8:27 '*the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be?"*' (of Jesus, NKJV)

See, the devil is a counterfeiter and a copycat corrupter of the truth of God. He gives a beast in v. 5 a haughty blasphemous mouth maybe even claiming he is God, like Paul says the antichrist '*opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God ... The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders and with all unrighteous deception ... strong delusion ...*' (2 Thess 2 NKJV)

[Paul calls him '*the man of lawlessness*' - the beast is embodied in a man]

Here in Rev 13:6 his blasphemy is against God and His name (maybe even claiming God's name for Himself) and against His dwelling, which it says is those who dwell in heaven. NASB '*His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.*' That's another word for temple in the Scripture, the tabernacle, God's dwelling, but it's not some rebuilt temple in Jerusalem but the blasphemy may be even higher and haughtier, God's very people. In Paul's letters God's temple means God's people wherever His Spirit dwells.<sup>4</sup>

If the dragon is evil counterpart to God the Father and the beast counterfeits God's Son, the other beast in v. 11-18 is like a corruption of God's Spirit. In John 14-16, the same author as Revelation wrote of Jesus promising another helper like Him who would speak like God and cause men to glorify Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Here in v. 11 is another helper of the false god of this world who speaks like him (v. 11 ends with '*like a dragon*') and causes people in v. 12 to glorify or worship the beast. This 2nd one's goal is to draw attention to the beast in the same way the Holy Spirit's goal is to draw attention to our beautiful Savior. God's Spirit is truth, but this beast in v. 11 is a false prophet deceiver, v. 14.

If you look at v. 11 it says this one has '*two horns like a lamb.*' He looks like the Lamb who is Jesus, but it says he speaks as a dragon. Satan wants to be like God and Christ. That seems to be his original sin and man's original sin was falling for the invitation '*God knows when you eat you will be like Him.*'

Just a few verses before that temptation, God's Spirit in Genesis 2 breathed into the man made in his image so he could speak and worship God. Here in v. 15 there's a counterfeit giving breath to something created in the image of the beast so it can speak and compel all to worship the beast instead of God. Like the Spirit he does miracles in v. 13-14 with a goal to deceive by signs.

The last counterfeit is the mark of the beast in v. 16-17, like in the ancient world a slave could have a mark on the forehead to show who their owner was. It's a parody of God's mark 2 verses later in Rev 14:1 where the true Lamb has His own marked out with His name on their foreheads. It's not a physical sign there, it's a spiritual seal as Rev 7 calls it. In Eph 1:13 the seal of those God owns is the Holy Spirit. The beast marks/seals those he owns. What will the mark of the beast be? D.A. Carson wisely says since the 2nd century Christians haven't been sure except people who shouldn't be sure.<sup>6</sup> The bottom line: Satan counterfeits the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Counterfeit Trinity is an explanation - the basic big picture not to miss. Now 2ndly and finally: **The Concept in History - what's the application?**

Before we ask how that might apply to our day we need to ask what this meant to the original audience? There's many applications but interpretation comes first. The final culmination of Rev 13 seems to be the final antichrist. The word *anti-Christ* can mean '*against Christ*' but it can also be translated '*instead of Christ*,' or '*in the place of Christ*,' so it's not hard to see why most in church history have seen anti-Christ in this chapter in every sense of the word. In v. 5 his mouth blasphemes the Lord and his reign is for 42 months.

Augustine wrote: 'This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the book of Revelation and by Daniel ... that last persecution ... till the mortal world come to an end, and pass into that kingdom in which there shall be no death ... he who reads this, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of Antichrist shall fiercely ... assail the Church before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign...that is to say, 3 years and a half. Sometimes in Scripture the same thing is indicated by [42] months.'<sup>7</sup>

Here's a key question of interpretation before we get to application: Is the antichrist in the world today? Is the antichrist alive in our time? I'd say yes. Turn back to 1 John 2 and I want to show it to you biblically why I say that. 1 John and 2 John are the only books in the Bible that use the title antichrist.

John who wrote about the beast in Revelation wrote of the antichrist earlier: 1 Jn 2:18 *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come* [past tense with continuing results in the Greek grammar]. *Therefore we know that it is the last hour.*

Are we in the last hour of Revelation? The author of Revelation writes yes because many antichrists have come in the past and continue to, that's how we know we're living in the last hour. You ask "what about *the* antichrist"? ... <sup>22</sup> *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies* [that's a present tense verb] *the Father and the Son*

He who denies Christ and denies God presently is the antichrist. Look at 4:3 *'every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already ...'* antichrist is now in the world in the first century and his spirit is to come.

Look at 2 John verse 7 for the last time the word antichrist is used in the NT *For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist* [to John antichrist is coming but many have come, denying Jesus] [it's not just non-Christians in general, the antichrist is a deceiver]

Now go forward to Rev 17 where John's other title, the beast, is past/future: Rev 17:8 ***The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*** <sup>9</sup> *This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains...*

This explains the 7 heads of the beast in Rev 13:1 and we can go back there. The 7 mountains or 7 hills was how the nation of Rome was referred to in their days, like saying 'the 50 States' today is a way to refer to our nation. It seems in chapter 17 the beast is associated with an empire but an emperor is so inseparably joined to it, 'the beast' could refer to the empire or its leader. John writes probably around 95 AD of the beast that *was* (past tense) and it also *is to come*. 1 John says many antichrist have come and his spirit is now. [2 Thess 2:7 says the mystery of the antichrist *'is already at work'*]

The antichrist/beast concept in history *was* and *is to come*, final future form: - in 13:15 having to worship the image of the beast or be killed is an image of a past beastly king who *was* and put up his image but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't worship and were ordered to be killed by fiery furnace

- the same book, Daniel 7 has a vision like v. 2 of a leopard, a bear, a lion, a beast with 10 horns persecuting saints 3.5 years till Christ's kingdom comes
- Rev 13 combines the images of past evil empires into 1 final culmination
- in Ancient Rome, tattoos or brands were put on those devoted to one god
- in 217 BC a pagan king Philopater I forced 'Jews to be registered...then to be branded with the...sign of Dionysius. Those who refused were executed. The purpose of such a mark [as background to v. 16] is to signify both the rejection of former loyalties and...absolute acceptance of a new allegiance'
- in v. 6 the blasphemies against God's name and His tabernacle, that *was* in a past tense what Antiochus Epiphanes did to the OT tabernacle/temple, the sacrifice of a pig in the Jewish holy place was an abomination of desolation, and his sacrilegious blasphemy put an altar to Zeus on God's temple mount
- in John's life 'emperor Gaius (Caligula) had threatened to set up a statue of himself in the Jerusalem temple because the Jews [rejected him as] divine'<sup>8</sup>

[in 70 AD the temple was desecrated and destroyed by Rome]

But in Mark 13 Jesus spoke of the antichrist abomination as a future person: Mk 13:14 '*...when you see the abomination of desolation standing where **he** ought not to be (let the reader understand)...[Jesus says "he," an individual abomination, but He also mentions many false Christs and prophets before the end in v. 22] For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.*<sup>23</sup> *But be on guard...*

[that's not just for before 70 AD]

Many antichrists and false prophets will arise (same word and order as v. 1 and v. 11 of Rev 13), and same words for signs to deceive, and then Jesus says in Mk 13 He'll come on the clouds to gather His own, just like Rev 14.

There will be a final antichrist and false prophet before Jesus comes, but He said there will also be many, just like the Rev 17 beast *was* and *is to come*. What's the application Jesus gave? *Be on guard, keep awake ... you do not know when the time will come* (v. 33). He says '*endure*' (v. 13, Rev 13:10b).

This teaching was to be directly applied by 1st century disciples of Jesus. It has direct application to us in the 21st century not knowing when the end is. Jesus calls every generation hereafter to be on guard, alert, awake, endure, as the spirit of antichrist is always with us, the beast *was* and also *is to come*

[it's rising - more died for Christ in 20th century than all others combined]

In John's day they thought Nero was the final one. He was called a beast for murdering his mom and persecuting Christians, it was even some 42 months as v. 5 describes (64-68 AD). He was a blasphemer of blasphemers like v. 6 and even 'had coins minted on which he was called "almighty god...savior."



Nero's portrait also appears on coins as the god...Those who worshipped the emperor received a certificate or mark of approval (...same word in 13:16).<sup>9</sup> He warred against Christians like v. 7. But he was slain like v. 9 by a sword committing suicide. Some feared he'd rise from the dead like v. 3 but didn't.

Some have taught the final antichrist will actually die and be resurrected by Satan. That seems to be a newer idea since the 1970s, even dispensational writers in the 1960s and earlier taught this isn't a man dying and rising, it's the reviving of an empire (Walvoord, Pentecost, 1967 *New Scofield Bible*). When Nero died, Rome seemed to die of anarchy and civil war, its recovery 'under Vespasian was a marvel to all--the beast of the empire had survived the mortal wounding of one of its heads...' It seems to be the historic view<sup>10</sup>

[only God can raise the dead, Satan may fake but can't make life]

Domitian, the emperor when John wrote Revelation, called himself the *Lord and God*, and brought back to life the emperor cult, a revived and organized force to enforce worshipping him as emperor, much like in v. 15. In the year 112 AD, Pliny wrote to Emperor Trajan that he'd 'executed Christians who had refused to offer wine and incense before a statue of the emperor...They were expected to take part in the guild feasts as well as...temple ceremonies ...this had economic repercussions for to refuse to do one's civic...religious duty could cost you not only your status in the community but your job as well, and possibly your life (as Antipas in Pergamum [died in Rev] 2:13).'<sup>11</sup> In 135 AD Emperor Hadrian imposed Jupiter worship on the Temple Mt.<sup>12</sup> 'in the reign of Emperor Decius, those who did not possess the certificate of sacrifice to Caesar could not pursue trades...reminding one of [Rev] 13:17'<sup>13</sup>

When Islam arose in history, some in the middle ages wondered if the false prophet image might apply to Mohammed who was certainly anti-Christian, and images fit of Arab empire followers persecuting, imposing Sharia law.<sup>14</sup> To this day the barbaric killing of radical Islam shows the beastly nature of those like the Islamic State of Iraq/Syria, and like v. 17 those not marked as Muslims in areas devoted to the false prophet are unable to buy, sell or live. In 1930s Germany, the mark of Hitler's party fit the bill of v. 17's imagery. Christians 'resisting Nazi totalitarianism made abundant use of Rev 13 ... Stalins, Maos, and Pol Pots [or brutal beastly persecutors like North Korea] ...we may find many evil rulers whose behavior provides analogies...Satan does not know the time of Jesus' return [so] he must always have antichrists in waiting, so that we will know which is the final one only by when Jesus comes and wipes him out. Until then, the spirit of lawlessness continues in the world (2 Thess 2:7) and we continue to experience many antichrists.'<sup>15</sup>

Think of 1930s Japanese ordering Christians to worship at Shinto shrines. In Communist countries the dual beast can be state-religion or anti-religion. One writes:<sup>16</sup> ‘this tendency for world leaders to arrogate themselves divine powers and to pretend that their actions are answerable to no one (like “the lawless one” of 2 Thess 2) is seen everywhere today ... [and the other side] also is seen today where the idol of too many Christians is the dollar sign and so many in our churches put economic success ahead of following God’

[there will be a final manifestation, but there's present temptations before then]

Christians in the US who refuse the mark of political correctness, and the party line of being for gay marriage and for abortion, find it harder to buy and sell, get or keep jobs in the public square, run Christian businesses. Just ask the many photographers and bakers who because of biblical convictions on marriage may lose everything for refusing to wear the pro-LGBT badge. Ask an Atlanta fire chief fired last month on that issue.<sup>17</sup> Ask a KY ministry losing millions because they'll hire only Christians. Ask ministries fined for not funding beastly abortion for staff. Ask any not displaying a liberal card. The test of next few years is what will mark the church's ultimate allegiance

[will we compromise or cave into pagan assimilation and allegiance?]

In the dark ages the Roman Catholic church revived ancient pagan practice and persecution of those who wouldn't worship its images or take its marks, so many saw the beast less in govt, more in the church, the papacy (popes). A 15<sup>th</sup> century Pope taught a Pope “judges all men, but is judged by none ... I have the authority of the King of Kings. I am in all and above all ... what can you make me but God? ... every creature [must] be subject to me.”

...Pope Leo XIII in 1894 claimed: “We hold the place of Almighty God on earth.” His [20<sup>th</sup> century] successor, Pius X, likewise boasted: “The Pope ...is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.” On April 30, 1922, Pope Pius XI said, “...I am the Holy Father, the representative of God on earth, the Vicar of Christ, which means that I am God on the earth.”<sup>18</sup> If that's not blasphemy like v. 6, I don't know what is! In the lamb horns of v. 11 some point to lamb's wool palliums worn by bishops, or abbots wearing a miter with two points--they were even known as *goruti* (‘horned ones’).<sup>19</sup> Luther said the Pope was the beast. Catholics said no, Luther was the beast!

The false prophet and false teachers come as evangelicals, too. Jesus warns they come in sheep's clothing, lamb-like. They like Christian TV channels and Christian bookstores. There are false miracles and healings being done in the name of Christ, don't forget Peter Popoff the CA huckster popped off. What's the best way to know counterfeits? Know the truth. Know Jesus, my friends. Don't focus or fixate on antichrist, focus on Christ and His gospel.

Put away other books if you need, get to know Christ the author of this one. Study Christ in John's gospel, Hebrews, or Colossians (the new SS class). Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author of faith, who endured so we can endure. To arm yourself for suffering and persecution, we need to put on His armor.

Do you know Christ? If not, may this be the day you come to know Christ as Lord. Turn from your sins, turn from self, from substitutes to the Savior. Everything in Rev 13 Satan tries to do, our sovereign Lord actually does, is. He *deserves* all worship, as image of the invisible God. He truly speaks for God. He gives life, breath to all. Jesus is the true lamb and true lion that all nations will bow before. He will slay the beast. His authority isn't given and only 42 months; King Jesus has inherent authority, His reign will never end. Let's all give Christ, Christ alone, our ultimate allegiance, of heart and hand.

The beast has a limited number, Christ's saved multitude can't be numbered. Jesus is a perfect 7, His forgiveness is unlimited, 70x7, uncountable graces. We can't sell Him anything or buy our way to God, it's only by the marks on His hands as He literally died for us and literally rose again. By believing in Him we can know our names have been marked in the Lamb's book of life.

The world may mark us out as being intolerant, discriminators, haters, we'll not win man's applause or fame, we won't gain much riches, silver or gold. But Christ is better, and I pray we can truly say 'I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold, I'd rather be His than have riches untold, I'd rather have Jesus than man's applause, I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause.' Christ is better than any future king of a vast domain, Christ is better than worldwide fame. I pray we would rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Christianity Today*, Feb. 3, 1989, p. 40, says his Los Angeles home had to be changed from 666 to 668 St. Cloud Drive.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Paul Jones, *Rose Guide to End Times Prophecy*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> Craig Keener, *Revelation*, p. 355-56: 'to "calculate" ...looks like a technical invitation to *gematria*. In this period many Jews and some early Christians practiced *gematria*, interpreting words according to the numerical value of their constituent Hebrew letters ... Names often appear as numbers in graffiti recovered from the Roman empire [and Sibilline Oracle, etc.] ... "Beast" (*therion*) can be transliterated into Hebrew as "TRYVN" which also comes out to 666; the number "of the beast" is not surprisingly literally the "beast"!

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21; but some think 2 Thess. 2:4 uses physically.

<sup>5</sup> John 14:16 "the Father...will give you another [Greek *another of the same kind*] Helper"; 15:26 "He will testify about Me..."; 16:14 "He will glorify Me."

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=214091225420>

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, "The City of God," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 433-44, 443.

<sup>8</sup> Section from Grant Osborne, *Revelation: Baker Exegetical Commentary*, p. 493-94, 518.

<sup>9</sup> C. Marvin Pate, "A Progressive Dispensationalist View of Revelation," in *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, p. 159.

<sup>10</sup> Steve Gregg, ed., *Revelation: Four Views*, p. 338, cites variations within the other 3 main views that all relate to Roman empire, historicists see more religiously as Roman Catholic Church reviving old paganism, some dispensationalists like Ryrie are cited as seeing a resurrected individual [contra Pentecost, *Things to Come*, p. 335-36, who gives 5 reasons why antichrist won't be a resurrected individual, and Walvoord's *Revelation* commentary].

<sup>11</sup> Osborne, p. 516, 521.

<sup>12</sup> Barry Horner, *Future Israel*.

<sup>13</sup> Pate, p. 159.

<sup>14</sup> David L. Jeffrey, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Keener, p. 342-345.

<sup>16</sup> Osborne, p. 507-8.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.sermonaudio.com/new\\_details.asp?ID=41469](http://www.sermonaudio.com/new_details.asp?ID=41469)

<sup>18</sup> Steve Gregg, citing various historicist authors in p. 342-44.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>20</sup> Rhea Miller, "I'd Rather Have Jesus."