

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.23.2022

## COUNTERFEIT TRINITY - Part 2

### I. INTRODUCTION

**MAIN POINT:** Even as Satan and his allies make war on the saints, believers never have to fear because they belong to the Lamb and conquer through endurance and wisdom.

#### Revelation 13:11-18

11 Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 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. 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, 14 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. 15 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. 16 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, 17 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. 18 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.

### II. THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH

#### ITS DESCRIPTION AND IDENTITY

- This second beast looks like a lamb with its two horns.
- Though it has two horns, the idea here is not about strength, dominion, power and rulership like the horns of the first beast.
- The imagery comes from Daniel 8 - in the vision of the ram with two horns.
- Its appearance is meant to convey a false sense of safety.
- Again, it's presenting a counterfeit Christ. It looks like a Lamb.
- The key to this beast is not in its appearance but in its manner of speaking, "*it spoke like a dragon.*"
- Rev. 12:9 Satan is "*the deceiver of the whole world.*"
- This satanically energized beast expresses itself in various manifestations throughout history deceiving people to embrace lies and falsehoods over and against the truth of the gospel.
- Its job is to bring convincing falsehoods and fabrications that anything other than the gospel are viable alternatives to truth and worship of God.
- This beast is referred to elsewhere in Revelation as the false prophet. (16:13)

- This suggests that the role of the second beast is primarily religious.
- True prophets lead people to worship God, false prophets lead people to worship false gods. In this case, to worship the state, and by extension, the devil, who is the puppet master behind the scenes.
- **G.K. Beale**, Revelation Commentary “*Whereas the first beast speaks loudly and defiantly against God, the second beast makes the first beast’s claims sound plausible and persuasive. False teachers within the church are encouraging compromise with the culture’s idolatrous institutions.*”
- The false prophet works to enthrone the state in the hearts and minds of the people so that their ultimate trust is placed on the idolatrous state.
- Jesus warned of false prophets:
- **Matthew 7:15** “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.
- **Matthew 24:24** For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.
- Together with the dragon and the first beast, they form a counterfeit trinity.
- **Rev. 16:13** And 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 like frogs.
- The dragon sends forth the first beast, a parody of the Father sending the Son, and the Son doing the work of the Father; the second beast is focused on causing the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast, a parody of the Holy Spirit who draws people to Christ.

## ITS TACTICS

- The methods of deception employed are to cause the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast.
- It employs signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the first beast to deceive the earth dwellers.
- vv13-14 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on the earth...”
- The second beast is a Satanic counterfeit of Moses, who performed signs, and of a true prophet Elijah, who also did signs like calling fire down from heaven. (Exod. 4:17,20; 10:2; 1 Kgs. 18:38-39; 2 Kgs, 1:10-14)
- These allusions to Moses and Elijah were also used of the two witnesses in chapter 11.
- The two witnesses represent the church in her role of testifying to Christ and preaching the gospel which convicts and judges sinners.
- The second beast is presenting a counterfeit witness as a spokesman for truth but it is a false prophet and a false teacher bearing a false witness.
- It is a counterfeit of the church and the Holy Spirit.
- This beast’s job is to pervert true worship as an accomplice of the beast, to persuade the earth to worship the beast.

## ITS OPERATION TODAY

- Examples:
  - Islamic led countries
  - Naturalism, materialism, and secularism
  - Marxism and Socialism
  - New religions— science, medicine and technology. “*Trust the Science.*”
  - Spiritualism and Pantheism

- Christian cults like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Relativism
- False Teaching and Teachers in Christendom
- **Warnings from Scripture:**
- **1 Timothy 4:1** Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,
- **2 Timothy 4:3,4** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.
- The first beast attacks with direct persecution and the second beast through deception.

## ITS ULTIMATE DESTINY

- We know the dragon and his allies will only operate this way during the duration of the tribulation, 42 months. It is a definite time period determined by the sovereign God of the universe.
- The dragon and his allies are already marked for destruction—their destiny is the lake of fire.
- **Rev. 19:20** And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.
- **Rev. 20:10** and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

## III. WHAT IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND 666

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, 17 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.

- All sorts of interpretations have been given to this seemingly cryptic reference to the mark of the beast and the number 666.
- Let's take a look at how this manifested in the first century to understand the meaning of the mark.
- Remember, this cannot mean something for us that it did not mean to the first century Christians that this letter was written to.

### EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA - Rev. 2:8-11

- **Rev. 2:9,10** "I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."
- Smyrna was a prosperous city in Asia Minor, the epicenter of wealth and culture. It was home to the greatest Greek poets like Homer, it had the largest theater in all of Asia.
- In such a prosperous city, how is it that the Christians were in such poverty?
- They were suffering intense economic and social hardship. They were destitute.
- Why was this happening to them?

- They were being slandered by the ethnic Jews of the city.
- Why would they do that?
- They hated that Christianity was growing numerically and in influence.
- They were only too willing to make Roman authorities aware of Christians in their city who weren't worshipping the emperor and encouraging them to oppress Christians.
- The Imperial cult that was central to city life in Asia Minor; Domitian, the current emperor, was to be worshiped as a deity.
- Every citizen of Smyrna had to annually burn a pinch of incense to Caesar on the altar and receive a certificate that you had done so.
- It was a declaration that Caesar is Lord and you were loyal to him and Rome.
- No certificate meant that you were in violation of the highest law and would face persecution.
- For Christians to be discovered without a certificate for their refusal to say "Caesar is Lord," would mean great trouble for them.
- These ethnic Jews would slander Christians, falsely accusing them of things, and because these Christians were not participating in the Imperial Cult that had permeated virtually every aspect of city life in Asia Minor, they were hindered from achieving any economic prosperity or greater social standing.
- Many would not be allowed to buy or sell things. By not forsaking their allegiance to Christ they faced economic hardship and could even face death.
- Does that sound like maybe what John is talking about regarding the mark of the beast?
- The Jews persecuted the Christians by using the Romans as the tools to bring about the suffering of Christians.
- This is a great NT example of the wicked state and false religion working in concert to bring about the suffering of the Church.

## THE MARK

- This is what the Mark of the Beast was all about; it's the state's political and economic stamp of approval given to those who meet its religious demands by worshipping the Emperor.
- The mark is figurative and symbolic, it is not a physical mark or branding that was placed on the followers of the beast. The mark is on the forehead or on the right hand. The mark is the name of the beast or the number of its name.
- This is just to show that it is a counterfeit, a parody, to the seal that is placed on those who belong to the Lord. We saw that in chapter 7. The servants of God are sealed on their foreheads. (Rev. 7:3) Additionally, we are told the number of those who are sealed is 144,000. (Rev. 7:4) In 14:1, the 144,000 have the Father's name written on their forehead.
- That was not a visible seal, it was symbolic.
- To say that the worshippers of the beast have his name written on their foreheads is to say that they are loyal and committed to the beast.
- This has OT allusions.
- **Exodus 13:9** And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.
- **Deut. 6:4-9** 4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- The forehead represented God's Word committed to mind and heart and on the hand the practical outworking of that commitment.
- The NT equivalent is the invisible seal or the name of God written on those who belong to the Lamb.
- Here's the point of the mark of the beast on its worshipers and the seal of God on the saints.
- The mark you wear determines the wrath you will endure.
- Those who have the mark of the beast are exempt from the beast's judgment and wrath.
- Those who have the mark of God are exempt from God's judgment and wrath.
- You take the mark of God and you escape the wrath of God but not the wrath of the beast.
- You take the mark of the beast and you escape the wrath of the beast but not the wrath of God.
- If you don't compromise with the world system, you will suffer now.
- If you compromise with the world system, you will suffer later.

## WHAT ABOUT 666?

18 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.

- All sorts of numerical schemes have been used to try to come up with a name that equates to 666.
- But are we being called to solve a riddle? No, we're already told the answer is 666.
- Remember, numbers in Revelation are symbolic.
- This is the number of the beast, and it is also the number of man, humanity (ESV says a man, however, the Greek doesn't have the definite article).
- *What do these numbers symbolize?*
- Seven - the number of completion, fullness, perfection. It is God's number.
- In Scripture, six is the number of mankind, man was made on the sixth day.
- Six is one short of seven. It's not quite seven, it is incomplete, not perfect, it misses the mark.
- The three sixes are used to intensify the sense of imperfection and incompleteness.
- It is a counterfeit trinity—666
- A cheap and false imitation of the One who is 777.

V18 "*This calls for wisdom...*"

- This is why there is a call for wisdom—to see the beast for what he is, not God, not the Lamb, not the Spirit.
- "*Let the one who has understanding...*"
- The problem with the counterfeit is that it can look like the real thing.
- And this is the challenge for us and why we are called to wisdom, understanding, and discernment.
- We need to test everything and hold it up to the real thing—Jesus Christ and His Word.