Four Things We Learn from Two Beasts

(Rev 13:8) 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.

No one but God knows the future. That’s a fact accepted by almost everyone. Notice that I said “almost” everyone.

* *In the 1870’s Milton Wright, a bishop of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ was outraged by a college president’s suggestion that “within fifty years men will learn to fly through the air like birds.” He was so angry that snapped back at the president saying, “Flying is reserved for angles and I beg you not to mention that again lest you be guilty of blasphemy----Here’s the kicker. Thirty-three years later—not fifty—His own sons Wilbur and Orville, launched their airplane at Kitty Hawk.*
* *In 1943 Thomas Watson, who was chairman of IBM said: I think there may be a world market for maybe five computers.*
* *In 1977 Ken Olson, founder and CEO of Digital Equipment Company said: “There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home.”*
* *In 1876 a Western Union internal memo said: “This telephone has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us.”*

Were these men right in their prophesies about the future? No but that didn’t stop them from trying. Man is so full of himself and his own wisdom he thinks he can predict the way things are going to turn out—but he can’t.

* *After WWI the president said this was the war to end all wars—but it didn’t.*
* *FDR on the night before America repealed the 18th amendment he went on national radio and said, “If America will appeal the 18th never again will liquor be sold by the drink in this great nation.”—he was wrong.*
* *On November 3, 1980 in my A.P. History class my teacher, Tommy Johnson said—“There is no way America is going to go to the poles and elect an actor to be our president—he was wrong.*

The future is too uncertain to know. Not even the devil knows the future. But even though the Devil doesn’t know the future it doesn’t keep him from thinking that he can know or at least control the outcome of history. Standing in the vanguard of eternity is the Antichrist soon to be ushered onto the stage of eternity.

1. If the devil solved the world’s problems, knowing he was the devil, the world would still follow him.

**(Rev 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.**

Warren Wiersbe says, *“The sea symbolizes the Gentile nations and from one of them Satan will bring forth his “Super Leader” the man was call Antichrist. Up to this point, Antichrist has headed a ten-nation European league; but now he is about to embark on a new career as Satan’s world dictator.”*

As we have said the Antichrist begins as a peacemaker and makes a covenant with the Jews to protect them for 7 years. Many scholars believe that this protection will allow Israel to rebuild the temple and resume the O.T. religious ritualism. At a certain point (In the middle of the final seven-years before the battle of **Har-megeddon** Antichrist will break that covenant, stop the ceremonies, and set up himself as god in the temple.

I think it is important to see the importance of God’s symbolic description of the Antichrist as “the beast.”

God does not see the anti-Christ as a man, but as a wild animal, under the control of Satan—he is “the beast.” [Yes he is a man but he is energized from hell. His power comes out of the pit. Just as Jesus is God in the flesh this antichrist will be Satan in a human body.]

* Notice first that it says that he has seven heads. Harmonizing scripture with scripture it is obvious that these heads represent seven mountains and since Rome was built on seven hills this is a veiled reference to that city.
* It says also that he has 10 horns—which represent ten kingdoms so it appears that, before he becomes the world dictator, he will head a “united states of Europe” which is a revived Roman Empire.

Notice the lineage of “the beast.”

**(Rev 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.**

To understand this verse we need to remember Daniel’s vision in Daniel 7:1-7. Daniel saw a lion with eagle wings which symbolizes the Babylonian Empire, a powerful bear which symbolizes the Medo-Persian Empire, and a leopard with four wings and four heads which symbolized the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great. (It is depicted as a leopard because of its rapid movement to conquer the world. It happened so quickly that its young leader Alexander wept because there were no kingdoms left to conquer and he had nothing to live for.)

But Daniel the ancient prophet saw one more kingdom—the one over which Antichrist would rule.

**(Dan 7:7)"After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.**

The Antichrist comes from a lineage of empires. That is his DNA. He will have the royalty of Babylon, the strength of Medo-Persia, the sophisticated wisdom of Greece. He will be a combination of Nebachenezzer, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Caesar, Charlemagne, Hitler, Mussolini and more.

Notice what it says, in verse 2, that the Devil gives this man “*and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority*.”As those historic worlds followed these historic leaders this world will follow this man Antichrist. This is his family legacy—He is simply “the beast.”

**2. The world is easily impressed**

**(Rev 13:3-4) 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; 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?"**

Please understand that when the Word of God calls this man “the beast” it is not describing his appearance; it is describing his character.

I believe the Antichrist will be a very appealing person. He will be handsome, charming, cleaver, intelligent he will be a darling in the eyes of the world. Remember he has solved civilizations old problems and brought a peace and harmony to the earth like the world never known before.

**And now he performs a miracle—a counterfeit resurrection.** I can imagine that after his death the world mourns but after this dramatic resurrection his propaganda machine will churn out news of this---just imagine what Hollywood could do with this.

It will be the masterstroke of Satan. The devil has always wanted to be God and everything that God has or has ever done he has tried to counterfeit it.

* There is a counterfeit church—the bible calls it the synagogue of Satan.
* There is a counterfeit revival—the bible calls it strange fire
* Here in this chapter there is a counterfeit trinity—
	+ The dragon (Satan)—the anti-father
	+ The beast—the antichrist
	+ The false prophet—the anti-holy spirit

The bible tells us that people will fall into the trap of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. In fact, in Matthew 24:24 Christ himself said, ***24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”***

Notice what Rev. 13:3, 4 says:

* The entire world was amazed and followed after the beast.
* The entire world worshipped him and his master.
* Who is like the beast?
* Who is able to make war with him?

**3. Given the choice the world will choose comfort over truth**

**Satan will be deified in the eyes of people.** **(Rev. 12:4) 4they 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?"**

**People will gladly tolerate blasphemy. (Rev 13:5-6) 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. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.**

**People will “overlook” the holocaust of Christians** **(Rev 13:7)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.**

The Antichrist is committed to annihilating those who support his opposition—God. He has an agenda to erase everyone who loves and believes in the true God. During this great tribulation believers will face firing squads, gas chambers, concentration camps, and guillotines. Many will be beheaded for the cause of Christ. This will be the devil’s last hurrah and “the beast” will drink his fill of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ.

**Obviously evil and wicked people will still worship him. (Rev 13:8-10)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. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 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.**

There is no question that against any standard of decency and morality this is one “evil man.” You don’t have to question whether or not he’s wicked—he’s wicked by any standard. Yet they worship him!!

**4. The world focuses on the wrong things**

**(Rev 13:11-12) 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. 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.**

Notice that this Antichrist has a powerful public relations agent who makes him popular and known to the world. **The first beast** comes out of the sea, which is considered the Mediterranean because **the first beast will come out of the Roman Empire** that surrounded the Mediterranean.

This second beast will come out of the earth or “land.” Now that’s important because so much of symbolism of the Bible indicates that this is referring to Israel. And although this “beast” coming out of Israel looks like a lamb the bible says that he has two horns and his voice is not of a lamb it is—here it is—a dragon.

* The dragon, we have seen, is the anti-God
* The first beast is the anti-Christ
* This second beast is the anti-holy spirit. (This is like a counterfeit of Acts 2)

As the true Holy Spirit causes believers to love and worship Jesus Christ this counterfeit “spirit” will cause the people of the earth to worship the anti-christ. I wonder if there will be some manifestation of wind, tongues of fire, languages—I don’t know and the bible doesn’t say but you have to wonder.

**(Rev 13:13-14) 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 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.**

Not only is the Devil “not” stupid he is also “not” powerless.

**(Rev 13:15)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.**

What kind of image is this that could speak? Is it a demon-possessed idol? Is it some animatronic robot?

I don’t think so. If John had seen a revelation of man landing on the moon he would’ve probably described it as a giant spider spewing smoke and fire—because he was using a first century vocabulary to describe a contemporary event. **I don’t think this is a supernatural act.** I think this image that is speaking that John sees could be something as simple as a television or a video on a phone. John is using a first century vocabulary to describe what he was seeing in the future.

**(Rev 13:16-18) 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, 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. 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.**

How many politicians have been elected into office because people voted their pocketbook and not their moral convictions? You see, the one who controls the wealth controls the world and that will be the last avenue in the conquest of Antichrist.

But what is this “mark of the beast?” Everyone has speculated.

* Sister Kelly was a street evangelist in Wallace, NC who in the 1970’s refused to take a number at the meat market to wait in line to be served because she thought that having to have a number to get food was of the kingdom of the antichrist.
* When grocery stores began putting IPC numbers on the shelves rather than pricing each individual item preachers preached that this was the mark of the beast.
* A few years ago, in some of the affluent communities of Florida they started implanting people with a “digital chip” that they could run over a scanner and access their bank accounts.

**What is the Mark of the Beast?** This number is 666. Six is the number of man and there are three of them because this is man showing himself that he is God.

Whatever it is, it will be required for buying and selling.