

What You Need to Know About Revelation's Blasphemous Beast and Its Life-Like Image

Note: This is Part 1 of a two-part series.

During the first half of the biblically prophesied future-tribulation period, about which Daniel, Jesus and Paul taught, there will be a forced mass-conversion to cause many worldwide to worship an image of a rising world leader. This unusual and unique idol will be constructed and established in the sanctuary of a great new Jewish temple in Jerusalem (see Dan. 9:27, 11:31-12:1-11; Matt. 24:15-21; 2 Thess. 2:1-4). It will have lifelike features and people will be required to worship it, as though it were God!

Daniel referred to this detestable image and event as the "abomination of desolation." Jesus quoted Daniel's term and said that this event will inaugurate "great tribulation, such as has not happened since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be."

Paul taught the Gentile converts in Thessalonica (2 Thess. 2:3-12) that this "great tribulation" will be the beginning of the "Day of the Lord," a long-prophesied time of God's judgment and wrath on unbelievers. But, that "Day" will not commence until two key events happen: first, some professed believers will rebel against God and cause a great apostasy or "falling away" from the faith; second "the man of sin," "the son of destruction," "the lawless one" will be "revealed," as though being hidden from view or discernment until that point in time.

The hoary-headed St. John the Revelator had great prophetic visions, which were interpreted by angels to him. He recounted what he saw and heard for us to learn and respond to, for our

own good and blessing (Rev. 1:3). In chapter 13, he relates a vision of a "beast rising out of the sea" (v. 1) which spoke "blasphemies against God" and against "His name and His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven" (v. 6).

In verse 7, this blasphemous beast was also granted "to wage war with the saints," who will yet be alive at the reign of the Antichrist. Many will be martyred in this season, as he "overcomes" the saints. But those who deny the Lord and those who never knew him will worship the beast. "All those names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb, who was slain from the foundation of the world" (v. 8b).

Verse 11 relates to "another beast rising out of the earth." Later called the False Prophet, he will become a miracle-working aide to the awe-inspiring first beast. He will cause those yet alive on earth "to make an image to the beast" (v. 14), which he was allowed (by deception or demonic manipulation), "to give breath to the image of the beast" so it could speak and to cause people to worship it—or be killed (v. 15).

Those who worshipped and lived were required "to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, so that no one may buy or sell, except he who has the mark" (v. 16-17), which is explained as "the name of the beast or the number of his name." We are not told the name of the beast, but verse 18 states that "his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

There it is: "666."

Perhaps no other series of numbers has caused so much speculation and suspicion for millennia among eschatological scholars and end-of-the-world-conspiracy-enthusiasts. No one knows what the mysterious 666 is, nor the actual name of the Antichrist. However, according to verse 18, those numbers can help the wise and discerning reader of Revelation to identify this man.

Whether that is even possible at this point in time or if we must wait for the Great Tribulation time to begin, at the conclusion of the seal judgments (Rev. 6), when the Antichrist is “revealed” and God’s “restrainer” steps aside (2 Thess. 2:3-7), we do not know. {eoa}

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