

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Who Owns You?



Brief Title

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

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Preface

◆ The government (Beast) plays a big part in our lives. Turn the radio on you are forced to engage the latest shenanigans in Washington D.C.

Big government is not your friend (Napolitano). It is your enemy because it seeks to control you, number you, use you, steal from you, and then throw you away like paper trash in some euthanasia program.

Christians have been trained by worldly propagandists to vote, protest, march in the streets, and shout political slogans trying to make the government better. But, it never will improve. The Beast can only bruise, blister, and butcher. Social action is vain.

The apostle wants Christians to understand man's hope is not in a better government, but in the blood of the Lamb.

Follow the Lamb and you will be victorious over this monster.



Disclaimer

This book is not anti-government, but it may be anti-corruption in government.

Because the present political climate is pro-Zionism, pro-lawlessness, pro-censorship, antichrist, and antichristian: and, because government employees and government media is more sensitive than a step-mother about criticism, it is necessary to warn government officials of the this work may offend you. So what? Tuffin' up.

Public Notice

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The Beast Out of the Sea

1. Introduction to the Beast Out of the Sea

◆ Two cows were talking. One said to the other, “Do you know what they are going to do with us? They are going to load us in trucks, take us to a killing pen, shoot us in the head, cut us up, and eat us!” Stunned, the other cow said, “They wouldn’t do that!”

Two Americans were talking. One said to the other, “Do you what they are going to do with us?” They are going indoctrinate us with lies in the public fool system, make idiots out of us, brand us with a number (666-66-6666), give us a NOM DE GUERRE, steal 40 % of our wages, make us slaves on the government plantation, spray toxins into the air to make us sick, shoot us with harmful drugs to sterilize us, and jab us with deadly poisons to shorten our lives. Stunned, the other American said, “They wouldn’t do that!”

Government has no conscience, sentience, or feeling. It is a Beast!

Christians and Government

When our message is opposed we are often shocked and chagrined – but never more so when that opposition comes from a government or from people in positions of authority – like a grenade thrown into the calm of our thoughts.

We are tempted to sheepishly capitulate to political policies. This was true of the Christians in the first century. Many of the people in Asia Minor heard the gospel message and experienced the blessings of salvation. But, they were traumatized by the reports of Peter’s crucifixion, of Paul’s execution, and the cruel death of leading apostles. But, when politicians in Asia Minor sought to gain the favor of the Caesar by

demanding political conformity of their citizens to the emperor cult, Christian devotion was tested beyond measure. They faced tough choices: worship Kurios Caesar and live, or confess Kurios Christ and die. Would they be a people who “loved not their lives unto the death?”

Purpose of Revelation 13

One of the central themes of the Book of Revelation is the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. John writes to let his readers know that Satan has rallied his forces and is now at work through the Roman government. He does not want his readers to be shocked by the coming persecution, but to be ready to declare loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. St. John wants his readers to love Christ more than their own life, for he knew some would be asked to make the ultimate sacrifice.

St. John writes in code in order to prevent the enemy from understanding the communications if intercepted . . . but in order for the Christians to understand that Rome has taken on the killer instincts of a Beast — that government was not their friend — that government often interferes with individual liberties, taxes excessively, punishes non-conformist mercilessly, and can be a problem rather than a solution (Ronald Reagan)

The Beast and Modern Governments

Likewise, modern day Christians need to understand that governments often take on the characteristics of the Beast. Satan uses government agencies, government policies, and government power to crush devotion to King Jesus.

In the minds of social engineers the “Pledge of Allegiance” must replace the “Lord’s Prayer;” devotion to the State must replace love for Christ; statutory law must take precedence over the Ten Commandments; the “Good news that you can be all you can be,” must replace the message that “you are a sinner in need of a Savior;” public education must replace Christian home schooling. And, when this happens, Christians will face

opposition to their message and values. But, Christians can be a powerful witness for Christ if they are prepared for the conflict.

In the minds of the early Christians the Roman theater was "enemy-occupied territory"

Interpretative Perspectives

Some expositors see this vision as something that is futuristic – something always future to our time. Ladd (1972), for example, saw this vision as representing the struggle between the end-time saints and the Antichrist. This may be true, but one has to ask "What possible meaning could a futuristic interpretation have upon the struggling saints in Asia Minor?"

Revelation was written to the seven churches, **not** to American Protestants.

Such an irrelevant view does nothing but prepare Christians to do the moon-walk across the stage during political oppression of our time – kind of like teaching believers to ride a bicycle under water to survive political floods.

The problem with this view is that the Beast controlled by Satan is always in the future and never a present reality to be reckoned with today. Consequently, Christians have failed to resist anti-God forces working through their own government. Rather, the political propaganda of our time teaches Christians to doubt Scripture and to believe that divorce, Sodomy, and tranny insanity is normal.

Foolish Presumptions

It appears that many Christians believe the government will come up with a number and call it "the Mark of the Beast." Until then, Christians don't have to worry about applying this passage to their comfortable lives. What nonsense! Government officials aren't that stupid. The government will never call one of its numbers (ID, Social Security, Real ID Act, Digital ID et al.) the "mark of the Beast." They just number you and control you.

Government covers over its sins with sophisticated rhetoric: "Social Security," "Real ID Act," and PIV cards. Moreover, the programs are not private and not secure; nor is the "Affordable Care Act" very affordable. Using phrases like the "the war against terror" permits government to wage war lawlessly against anyone they deem a terrorist — all without proof of claim or evidence of wrong doing.

Recently, President Donald trump bombed fishing boat near Venezuela. Without proof, he called the operators of these small boats "narco-terrorists" — a political *nom de guerre* designed to capture support for his killing atrocities.

First Century Perspectives

Some expositors see this vision as typifying only the conditions existing in the first century.

Any proper interpretation must include an application to the first century saints.

But, the difficulty with this view is that it buries the meaning of the passage in past history and robs present day saints of needed application to fascists states in modern times. Unfortunately, this perspective has produced mealy-mouth Christians that can't discern evil nor the antichrist character of their government.

A Symbolic or Futuristic Approach

John employed apocalyptic imagery as code language to communicate his warning about Rome to the seven churches; that is, he used giant metaphors (symbols) to stir the human imagination.

Therefore, it seems proper to take a symbolic view of the passage and view the Beast as evolving civil political structures who are controlled by ungodly men that oppose the gospel until Christ returns; that is, the chapter warns believers to beware of all rancid, rebellious States arising in history that oppose the gospel; that is, when modern governments take

on the characteristics of the Beast, they must be opposed by Christians. The vaxxine death-jab of 2002, war drums against Iran and Venezuela (2025), and the slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza (2023-2025) come to mind.

Moreover, any futuristic approach to this book that consigns Revelation to some alleged future tribulation period robs the book of meaningful application to monstrous government actions during our time.

A Duel Perspective

It seems reasonable to combine preterism (first century application) and a symbolic-futuristic¹ perspective when interpreting this chapter.

John intended his work be read by the first century churches. Without a doubt, John's readers understood the Beast as present day Rome. Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of the first century mind; that is, interpreters of this chapter must ask the question, "What did Revelation 13 mean to the original readers?" "How would they have interpreted this passage?"

But, the spirit of Rome lives on and will continue to persecute the rest of the woman's offspring in the unfolding events of history. Christians in various parts of the world are battling evil concentrated in government citadels and will continue to battle the Beast of godless governments until Christ returns in glory.

¹ By "futuristic" we mean future to John's time, not out time.

“Christians face significant persecution globally, with serious incidents reported in countries like North Korea, Somalia, Nigeria, Eritrea, and Yemen, involving killings, church attacks, imprisonment, and violence from both state and non-state actors” (GAI).

Yes, this chapter must be interpreted in light of the original readers, but its lessons must be applied to our time. When cities like Rome or Washington D.C. take on the characteristics of the Beast, Christians must resist and prepare for conflict.

Connecting Chapters

In John’s first vision (12), he saw a dragon pursuing a woman and her offspring. The dragon is a mythological figure that is a symbol of Satan. He has, is, and always will be the great enemy of God’s people. John has prepared his people to expect persecution. *But, up to now in the book, they have not understood the means of that persecution.* John announces that persecution will come from the Roman State! This is what John wants his people to understand.

In the vision of the two Beasts, he informs his readers that the Roman government is an enemy of Christianity. St. John informs the seven churches not to be surprised by this opposition, but prepare to face resistance to their faith from Rome! John wants his readers to develop a faith that reasonably opposes fascist tyranny.

Thomas Jefferson: “When the people fear the government, tyranny has found victory. The federal government is our servant, not our master!”

John wants Christians in every generation to recognize when governments take on the characteristics of the Beast and prepare for conflict.

To relegate this passage to some distant, future eschatological end-time scheme robs modern Christians of needed application to present tyrannical States (and schemes) today!

Has not the United States, Inc. become increasing more predatory and controlling? Has not D.C. banned the Lord's Prayer and Bible reading and the Ten Commandments from the classroom? Has not the truth about God's creation been replaced with myths about evolution? Do not State officials execute punitive statutes against those who speak against abortion, or Sodomy, or unconstitutional taxation?

Why are Evangelicals so positive about their imperialistic, antichrist government?

Robert A. Heinlein: "There is no worse tyranny than to force a man to pay for what he does not want merely because you think it would be good for him."

The Interpretive Challenge

Interpreting this passage is a challenge. The fundamental rule of interpretation is to interpret every passage of Scripture literally, but in a symbolic vision the presumption is always towards the figurative. The message is literal, but the symbols are not.

Our job, then, is to interpret the symbols correctly to the best of our knowledge according to first century sensitivities. And, then to apply it to our times the best we can — to illuminate and not confuse.

2. The Beast and His Followers

◆ The apostle shares his vision of the beast threatening the seven churches.

The First Beast

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

I stood: In his vision, John was in heaven. Now, he is on the earth and stands by the sea. Like a dream, his location suddenly shifts. The cosmic battle between the mythological, red dragon and the seed of the woman (chapter 12) has moved from heaven to earth (13:1). The dragon makes the Beast come up out of the sea.

Apocalyptic imagery: This image is much like a giant political cartoon you find in newspapers depicting dancing elephants and donkeys. The job of the interpreter is to properly identify the message behind the symbolism.

This political entity is presented in mythological imagery. The Beast has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns. On his heads are blasphemous names.

Use of term “**blasphemy**” informs us that everything about this political system is antichrist, anti-God, anti-humanity, and antinomian.

Apocalypticism is universal. Consider how Scandinavian countries use giant squid cartoons to represent sea monsters gobbling up men.

The sea: The vast ocean is a symbol of the restless, agitated sea of global politics. Out of this turbulence arises a grotesque monster — a creature without a heart — a symbol of government without a conscience. That is, it can wage war and kill.

A Beast: He saw (aorist) a Beast coming out of the sea. The seven heads represent multiple governments, agencies, departments, and divisions (executive, parliaments, courts, military, etc);

The “**ten crowns**” represent ten kings of century-perfected authority; and

The “**horns**” represent political military powers; that is, imperialistic governments of Babylon, Greece, Egypt, Persia and others became war-machines without moral sensitivity.

The Beast’s association with **the hideous dragon** in chapter twelve is obvious. The monster is Satan’s instrument to enslave men and crush the gospel message. Satan, who took the form of a serpent to tempt the first man and woman, has now become a huge, hideous red dragon who takes the form of a colossal Beast to control the rest of humanity. The difference between the dragon and the Beast is the difference between spirit and form. The dragon is Christ’s archenemy, Satan. The Beast is the body or tool of Satan; i.e., human institutions, particularly human government that is governed by madmen.

John interprets the symbols for us.

The **seven heads** are seven kingdoms.

The **ten horns** are 10 kings (Chapter 17).

Possibly, John’s creature is related to the great kingdoms that dominated God’s people in ancient Israel. Some see the seven heads as the adversarial kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. **Caird** (1966) understands the seven heads as seven Caesars. Julius Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, and Titus were officially declared divine. **Futurists** see this creature as the future super Antichrist. Certainly the Caesars took on blasphemous names such as *augustus*, *theo* (god), *kyrious* (Lord), and *soter* (Savior). There is no doubt, however, that the manifestation of the Beast in John’s day referred to Rome and its militaristic State.

The **seven heads** appear to represent multiple manifestations of opposition. **The Beast** was before John’s time, was present in John’s time, and will be present until the end of this age — “behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (17:8). This monster represents the political institutions that harness their energies to squash the gospel. In

Hezekiah's day, the Beast was Assyria. In John's day, it was Rome and the present form of political power that opposed Christians in Asia Minor.

In our time, the Beast may manifest itself in those governments and institutions that oppose Christianity. Bolsheviks, Zionists, Communist China, and Islamic governments in the Middle East are obvious instruments of the Devil which could be easily labeled as "the Beast."

Today, lusty kleptocrats sit in positions of power in Congress, in the courts, and on the boards of education. When an entire nation culls Scripture reading in the class room, and replaces it with humanism, evolution, and gender-bender fantasies is not Satan working through the system?

Why are Christians so cooperative with godless humanistic regimes in America and England and Germany — like pouring oil on the fire men fear? Omnism in England comes to mind.

Empires have horns that kill.

In the fall of 2025, Pete Hegseth, Secretary of War / Defense, a moral midget and puppet of Donald Trump, called for "no rules of engagement" — a reference to his personal military push to remove what he calls overly restrictive, politically correct guidelines, advocating for "maximum lethality" and "common sense" maximum killing by troops. The secretary promised to "untie the hands of our war fighters" by empowering them with more authority to kill civilians or politically designated "enemies" at will and less legal red tape (rules of engagement) — a contrast to the international rules of war — International Humanitarian Law (IHL), 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Protocols.

This view is like feeding a pet rattlesnake. One day its gonna bite you.

Revelation 13:2 And the Beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The Beast: The animal imageries are similar to that of Daniel's vision (Daniel 7) where he saw four Beasts representing the political powers of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. As Daniel's friends experienced persecution from the Babylonian State, the Christians in Asia Minor would face persecution from the Roman State.

Leopards are known for their speed; **bears** for their powerful claws; **lions** for their ripping teeth; and **dragons** as the kings of terror.

Daniel's big message inform us that God's people will be subjected to the Godless acts of the anti-God forces until the kingdom of God arrives in history.

John wants his readers to know that the difficulties they were experiencing from human authorities in the Roman Empire were due to Satan's influence over human institutions. Behind the punishing political policies of Rome was a demonic spirit, the red dragon, Satan himself.

The monster John describes is empowered by Satan (the dragon). He appears to have absolute authority on earth. The Beast is an entity or an institution, **not** a living soul—a political system with tyrannical powers.

To John there were many antichrists. Rome was just another form of the Beast. Whatever or whoever the Beast is, the imagery is set in direct contrast to the Holy Trinity. The inhabitants of heaven worship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The inhabitants of Earth worship the unholy trinity: Satan, the first Beast, and the second Beast. The spirit is Satan; the form is human exploitive institutions.

Because this image expresses a general principle of satanic opposition, we may expect throughout history multiple manifestations of satanically inspired political regimes. The Beast, therefore, represents despot rulers that demand absolute allegiance by its citizenry. Before us is a State that seeks total subjugation of the total man to total government. A military police state like the United States comes to mind.

Revelation 13:3-4 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the Beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the Beast: and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?

Wounded: One of the strange aspects about this monster is the wound in his head that was healed. Is the mortal wound representative of physical death or political death?

Interpreters disagree on what John means by this wound. Preterists understand this phenomenon to be the **Nero-revivus myth**. Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D. A rumor arose that this infamous emperor survived, was alive, and hiding in the empire seeking the time and place to take revenge on Rome. Rome seemed to survive all threats. It was amazingly resilient.

Futurists take this wound literally and propose a future Antichrist who will appear to rise from the dead. When President John Kennedy was assassinated, many dispensationalists entertained the idea that John F. Kennedy was the Antichrist and that he was the one who was going to recover from a literal head wound.

One of the problems with the futuristic view is that it would have no application and provide no comfort to John's audience . . . nor any application to modern men who interpret Revelation as the arrival of some alleged, hazy seven-year tribulation period dominated by a super antichrist.

Another view is that "one of the heads" experienced political death . . . and then recovered. Authoritarian nations seem to live and die, then reappear in history. Consider the story of Robin Hood and the return of King Richard the Lionheart.

John may have a particular nation or Caesar in mind. We do not have enough information to be dogmatic. Whatever is meant by the wound that

was healed (ἐθεραπεύθη), this healing appears to be in juxtaposition to the resurrection of our Lord.

The response of the world was **wonderment** (ἐθαυμάσθη). How could anyone venerate such a hideous monster? He not only terrorizes people into submission, his counterfeit healing attracts worshippers – possibly a political miracle.

By **worship** (προσεκύνησαν), John means allegiance, loyalty, veneration, and servitude. Every ancient municipality wanted to contract with Rome. Thereafter, Rome expected allegiance.

This political monster exercises political power, captures the loyalty of men, and diverts them from devotion to Christ to allegiance to the State. His power is convincing. Few feel they can successfully resist his tri-lateral powers.

“I pledge allegiance to the United States of America . . . “

Possibly, John is referring to emperor worship. Rome always struggled with factions. The emperor cult united the provinces. Early gladiators would say, “Hail Caesar, we who are about to die salute you!”

To the early Christians, this political allegiance was a subtle heresy: *to worship the emperor was to worship the dragon*. Likewise, those who put their trust in government will be crushed under an elephant of disappointment (Psalm 118:8-9).

Have you noticed what a big part government plays in American life? It’s as if the media has made a god out of the State? Politicians and media personalities view the State as the solution for ALL man’s problems. Many have an idolatrous view of government talking about it day and night. When all hope is in Washington D.C., idolatry reigns. Statism reigns. Satan reigns.

The way the Beast captures men is through business offers, contracts, franchises, and agreements. Accept a benefit and sign a government

document “under penalties of perjury” like a 1040 Form and you are trapped.

In modern times, governments offer franchise benefits like social security, student loans, and health care for those who volunteer to contract with them. In a day of tax plunder and the impoverishment of Americans, these social-programs are difficult to decline.

Revelation 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Speaking great things: One of the unique features of this Beast is his oratory skills and his ability to attract a following. Before us is a rhetorical bayonet charge from a logocrat. His policies are not anti-religious, but they are anti-gospel. With the help of the media, government is able to capture hearts and minds.

“**Blasphemes**” refer to hostilities against the truth. Possibly, the apostle wants his readers to wake up and recognize State propaganda and the Rome’s ability to alter public perception by its deceptions; and, to shift devotion away from Christ to allegiance to the State. The system of paying taxes to the feds before one pays tithes to the church comes to mind.

John wanted his audience to know that Satan was now empowering his progeny—the Roman Empire. The masses in the empire appear to offer blind allegiance to the Beast much like Americans do to their own imperialistic government in the District of Columbia.

Forty-two months equals 1260 days. Futurists see this as the 3 1/2 year reign of a future, super antichrist. William Hendriksen sees this as the gospel age (p. 147). Another view understands the 42 months as representing a limited time. Every evil political system has an end. All face limitations. It is not the will of God that humanistic governments permanently succeed. The State’s authority is limited. Satan’ ability to

persecute the church is limited. Historically, Rome's persecution of Christians was not universal. During Domitian's reign (81-96), his persecutions were limited in scope.

There can be no doubt that the Beast is Rome! But, the Beast morphs and governments of every age take on certain characteristics of Rome; that is, when Christians find themselves under secular, humanistic regimes which oppress and silence the gospel through Roman civil law (statutes), the counsels of this chapter must be applied.

"The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws" — Tacitus.

"Laws control the lesser man. Right conduct controls the greater" — Mark Twain.

"The more laws and restrictions there are, the poorer the people become" — Lao Tzu.

"When governments become corrupt, they often create excessive laws to maintain control and manipulate the people rather than to serve justice."

"Let me issue and control a nation's money and I care not who writes the laws" — Mayer Amschel Rothschild.

[Note: Because modern governments seek citizen loyalty to the State, contemporary Western governments are about supporting inclusion. They want all people to express allegiance to the State: Republican and Democrats, capitalists and socialists, blacks and whites, men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals. Consequently, modern officials love omnism which embraces inclusion and hate the gospel which embraces exclusion (John 14:6).

“Governments do **not** hate religions that claim to be a way to God, but they hate the gospel that claims to be the only way to the Father” (Stockton).

Revelation 13:6-7 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

The word “**blaspheme**” refers to insulting speech—lies, disputation, and slander. St. John wants his readers to know that Rome opposed God’s law-order.

Tabernacle: The word “tabernacle” is a code term referring to the church – the church militant on earth; and, the church triumphant is heaven.

The object of this hostility is God’s true dwelling and God’s true people (Christians). Government has to compete for the affections of the people, and religion is often viewed as a fierce competitor of the State – especially for Christians who tithe. Slander is an effective tool—a covert operation to destroy the people’s trust in Deity. Slander Christ, His gospel, and Christians . . . and the simple gobble up the lies like a dog on puke.

In reference to the early Christians, Francis Schaffer said they were not put to death because they were Christians, but because they were deemed *atheists*. Because the early church would not worship Caesar, Christians were labeled “non-believers.” Furthermore, because Christian churches would not incorporate and surrender to the jurisdiction of Caesar, Christians were suspect, labeled criminals, and then persecuted.

The Beast demands absolute allegiance and when the saints confessed another king, King Jesus, Rome labeled them as traitors and a threat to the empire (Acts 17:6, 7). The charge of treason strikes fear into all. The Beast is imperialistic and covets universal dominion. It demands

undivided loyalty by all kindreds, tongues, and nations. Treason to God and a violation of the First Commandment was not a crime; but, treason to a Caesar was a capital offense.

This hostility can be seen in our day in secular countries where they have banned the Bible or where Moslems demand a pure Islamic State and the application of Sharia law. According to one source, there are over 50 countries today where owning and reading a Bible are prohibited. Governments are run by clerics and mosques are funded by the State. Dissension is not allowed. Conformity is required. Preaching of the gospel is forbidden. Conversion is a crime. Churches are burned. Christians are beheaded. Saudi Arabia is as hostile to Christians as Rome ever was.

Even in America, there are humanistic, Zionistic elements in our society attempting to eradicate every reference to God in public life. Under the guise of anti-Semitism, Christian opposition to political tyranny is brutally punished. All the government has to do is announce to the media that they are investigating a “radical, right wing, Christian anti-government” church, and every household immediately sympathizes with the State. One pastor was ordered to take cultural sensitivity classes after he visited a nursing home and asked an atheist woman if she would mind if he prayed for her. In March 2009, the Missouri Independent Analysis Center labeled Christians, homeschoolers, constitutionalists, and people who flew the American flag as “domestic terrorists.”

The State will not attack Christianity directly. When the State wants to silence politically active pastors, slander is the government’s weapon of choice. And, it works!

To the early Christians, Rome’s war against “the atheists” meant that Christians had to choose between allegiance to Rome or allegiance to Christ. They could not be neutral. To submit was to treason to Christ. The choice was between loyalty to Jesus and risk offending the State, or pledging allegiance to the State and risk offending their Lord.

Even today, believers have to make this same choice as Beastly governments wage war against kingdom proclamation.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

To “**dwell upon the earth**” refers to worldly men who are at home on the Earth.

“**Worship**” means loyalty to the State. The Beast is popular. He has a following. He has the majority vote. Rome's democracy conquered all. The inhabitants of the earth, those who do not know God, pledge absolute allegiance to this system. Worship here probably refers to contracts with Rome wherein municipalities exchanged rights for benefits. Their total focus is with the affairs of the State. If people do not know God, their only hope resides in kings and princes of this world. To many, a “better” government is the hope of mankind. We would do well to remember that the majority of men saw nothing wrong with the Beast. He had the popular support of the people. But, the majority is seldom correct. Beware of majority rule.

^{NAS}Exodus 23:2 "You shall not follow a multitude in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice;

There are **two trees**, the poisonous tree and the tree of life. Likewise, there are only two cities, the city man and the City of God. One cannot be a member of both. There are only two kingdoms, the kingdom of Light or the kingdom OF DARKNESS. One cannot be a member of both. There are only two kings, Kurios Jesus or Kurious Caesar. One cannot worship both. No man can serve two masters.

The “**book of life**” refers to God’s knowledge about the redeemed and His claim on His people.

The “**lamb slain**” refers to the Redeemer and His work of redemption at the cross.

“**foundation of the world**” reveals that Calvary was not an historical development, but an event planned before creation . . . before Adam sinned . . . before you and I were born. The phrase could modify either “written” or “slain.” Both are true. The names of God’s people are penned in God’s book from the foundation of the world. Christ was destined to suffer for our sins at the cross before time began. Here, John draws his first application. When one knows that his name is written in heaven, he can endure opposition on earth. True Christians are loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not fear the Beast more than God. Do we know for sure our name is written in heaven? If not, how can we ever risk offending authorities? And, if our name is not on some government hate list, our Christian life is not sprinkled with salt.

Revelation 13:9-10 If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The phrase, “**If any man have an ear**” is John’s way of saying, “Beloved, I want you to wake up, put your thinking cap on, and make an application to your life.”

Captivity refers to an individuals enslavement to the State.

Killed may refer to political or economic death; and, or martyrdom.

Many will be harassed. Some will suffer banishment. Others will be martyred. John himself was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. This was a time for Christians to take a stand; to dig in their heels and to be faithful.

But, to resist the State can be suicide.

One Christian with a polished sword is no match for a Roman legion. Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge and the survivors of the Branch Dividians in

Waco, Texas can testify to man's vulnerability against the thundering power of the State's military forces. If there is any encouragement here, it is in the phrase, "must be killed." Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.

The word "**patience**" (hupomeno) means to "to remain under." When we go through difficult trials, we look for a quick exit. But, there is no exit from the cruel mercies of tyrants. John is telling his people they must remain under the pressures from the State as they follow the Lamb.

The word "**faith**" (pistis) could mean one's personal faith or one's faithfulness to Christ. During times of political chaos, there is a need for each saint to fortify his personal beliefs. Severe persecution tests one's fundamental convictions. There is very little one can do to stop an elephant stampede. Likewise, there is very little one Christian can do to halt the progress of a monstrous political system. To openly defy the State is a death warrant. When government is God in the minds of people, you can expect to be treated like Typhoid Mary; if you embrace Theocracy instead of the gospel of democracy you cannot expect State actors not to betray you. Nevertheless, we are called to stand our ground. If enough snowflakes stick together, they can stop traffic. This is the patience of the saints. Believe! Be faithful. Rest!

The Second Beast

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

Similarities between the two Beasts

- Both are wild Beasts:
- Both have horns:
- Both are energized by the dragon (Revelation 13:11)

The second Beast is less hideous than the first Beast. He only has two horns. Nothing is said about his "heads." His power lies in

deception . . . in words of art . . . in legalese . . . in the power of lies. The power of lies is often seen in their ability to reshape reality, control perception, and create false happiness

The second Beast appears from the earth. He is sometimes referred to as “the prophet” —the monster camouflaged in wool.

Two horns: Horns speak of power, combat, and confrontation.

Spoke like a dragon: He has horns like a lamb and looks harmless, but he roars like a dragon with the breath of death. He is also an agent of Satan.

Futurists see this as a future prophet who will attract followers to the alleged Antichrist . . . but, there is no doctrine in Scripture about a single super antichrist.

Preterists see this Beast as the smaller confederate powers within Rome that sought to pledge allegiance to the Empire for political favors.

Possibly, the second Beast refers to the government’s propaganda machine which appears to be harmless but is joined at the hip with the first Beast. CNN, ABC, CBS, and Fox News comes to mind.

States have a huge interest in controlling the media and spinning the news. No doubt Rome had its promoters that discharged information, disinformation, and misinformation through its reporters. Governments have their ways of controlling "free speech" whether it be rewarding the loyal or punishing the disloyal.

Revelation 13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first Beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed

The second Beast acts like a false prophet directing humanity to follow the first Beast.

Worship — a term for promoting devotion and allegiance to government in the form of paying tithes to the State.

The second Beast is a propagandist skilled in the art of social conditioning . . . in terms of art . . . technical jargon . . . phrases with precise technical meanings distinct from every day use. We might call this “brainwashing” or “ballyhoo.” In one sense, the second Beast is a false Holy Spirit, a representative of the government that gives political speeches to expand the party base and promote public policy.

Every State is in some sense a specialized logocracy, a government of words. Courts issue "gag orders" to people who might expose the foxiness of State secrets. Public policy promotes censorship by enacting legislation against "hate speech," and "anti-Semitism." Most states advance "allowable speech" to prevent any criticism of the ruling elite.

In the first century, the propagandists were priests for the imperial cult, a council of distinguished city representatives who promoted loyalty to Rome in exchange for political favors. In Asia Minor, citizens were required to place a pinch of incense on an altar before they entered the market place to do business. Refusing to honor Caesar in this manner could result in something as simple as rejection from the market place or something as serious as crucifixion on a Roman cross.

Circa 30 A.D. promoters of Rome circulated this publication:

“Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved.”²

When Peter preached that Jesus is Lord, he declared war on Rome (Acts 4:12). Rome executed all the apostles who taught there was “another king, Jesus” (Acts 17:6-7).

And, modern States will not tolerate Christians who do not pledge allegiance to the regime. Shortly after Vicky Weaver addressed the U.S.

² CA Farmer 241:5 (Oct. 5, 1974), p. 28.

Attorney General for Idaho as “Servant of the Queen of Babylon,” she was executed by a government assassin along with her son and her dog (Ruby Ridge, August 1992).

“**deadly wound**” refers to a political comeback, a revival of Rome’s tyranny.

Revelation 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

The word “**wonders**” (σημεία) means “signs” or “miracles.”

Making **fire** come down from heaven reminds us of Elijah the prophet. Whether this is literal or figurative has been a matter of dispute. Since this section of literature is a mythological allegory called apocalyptic literature, the presumption should favor the figurative — that people are mesmerized by the powers of the State.

Apparently, this Beastly propagandist was a powerful political agent who wielded **thaumaturgical powers** to produce solidarity in the empire.

It is not clear whether John is referring to counterfeit miracles that he regarded as fraudulent; to clever tricks of a magicians and sorcerers in the service of a false religion; to sorcery or tricks of the mind; to fraudulent schemes in commerce; to a genuine manifestation of demonic power; or to boasts of government about their accomplishments. John is probably referring to sorcery — tricks of the mind that capture the hearts of media-influenced statist.

Like our politicians, the Caesars took credit for all the good and accepted no responsibility for the blunders in their administration. Victors are famous for whitewashing their crimes and demonizing their adversaries as monsters.

One must ask, “What is the attraction of false systems like imperialism or secularism or communism?”³ All have powerful leaders with a grand propaganda machine that rewards solidarity and punishes dissent.

Modern Iran is an illustration where civil/religious leaders may execute anyone who does not adhere to Islamic Fundamentalism. Zionists are famous for their solidarity and cruel punishment against dissenters. Palestinians come to mind.

Indoctrination and mind control are functions of the State. Every monarch employs the art of deception to win adherents and crush enemies — the skill of intentionally misleading others through cunning psychological manipulation to create a false impression or belief, often for personal gain (GAI).

Revelation 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the Beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

The word “**deceiveth**” (πλανᾶ) is a present active indicative verb which means “to lead astray” by the practice of deception. The *wretchedness of deceit*, of course, is the *deceived does not know that he is deceived*.

The phrase “**them that dwell on the earth**” are the objects of dupery — probably a phrase that refers to unbelievers making their home on earth and not in heaven. They are set in direct contrast to God’s heavenly people who are not deceived.

³ These three terms represent different facets of political and social organization: **imperialism** relates to power projection and domination, **secularism** to the relationship between state and religion, and **communism** to economic structure and class relations

Maketh an image: This may refer to making an idol out of government rather than a literal image. Consider all the propaganda and symbols that promote allegiance to Washinton D.C.

The propagandist is effective. His pragmatism works. Possibly, John is referring to such methods used by the imperial cult to trick and deceive superstitious people. Sorcery and ventriloquism is attested in Acts 13:6; 16:16; 19:13. Perhaps, this applies to the propaganda machines that are associated with all governmental powers; that is, sophistry used in the media outlets of a nation.⁴

Futurists, however, foresee an apocalyptic ambassador who will be empowered by Satan to counterfeit the miracles of Christ. Historists see this as the papacy. But, a rogue pope would have no significance to the original readers. They were facing Roman propaganda, imprisonment, and execution, not a distant proud, over-reaching supreme pontiff.

Wound: We learn that the Beast was wounded by a sword. Possibly, this refers to some type of military defeat . . . or assassination (Goths, Huns). Julius Caesar was the first to gather all power unto himself. Though assassinated, the Caesars following him continued his imperialistic ambitions. Recovery from the wound speaks of resilience of this political machine.

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed.

This is a difficult passage. Many apocalyptic dispensationalists understand this to be a proleptic statute of a future super Antichrist that

⁴ Sophisticated: In relation to public officials: unduly refined, deprived of simplicity and honesty, pretentious or superficially wise, able to employ word magic in order to alter the mind of the innocent, deceive, or to plant fictions in the mind; mind controllers employing propaganda through word art.

will be placed into a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem — a huge, speculative myth (Titus 1:14).

The historical background to the fact that he had “**power to give life unto the image**” is a Roman statue via deception by a ventriloquist. In Asia Minor, citizens were required to wear amulets and jewelry that signified loyalty to Rome or be subject to the accusation of “treason.”

But, more than likely John is talking about salesmanship. Consider the role the media plays in propping up government schemes.

In Asia Minor, failure to give a pinch of incense to Caesar was a capital offence. Regardless of the details here, John paints a picture of a system that is resolute in demanding total devotion of the total man to the absolute State. Failure to comply meant prosecution, even death!

Numbering Man: The Anthropological Crisis

Q: The question, “What is man?” may be the most important question of our time.

God created man in his own image and called him a “living soul” (nephesh). Man sinned. He is a sinner, but man is not trash. Though marred, he is still made in the image of God. While he is not as lovely as he should be, he is loved by God and therefore redeemable.

Government is a Beast and treats man as chattel, as a commodity, as a vassal of the State. Evolutionists believe that order came out of chaos and that man is a biological entity or mass of protoplasm to be used and then destroyed like a lab rat.

The beast uses sorcery⁵ to transform “living souls” into **legal persons**.

⁵ Sorcery – magic; a trick of the mind using sophistry, word play, confusion of definitions, cognitive biases, misinformation, misdirection, paradoxes, lying, fraud, and deception.

In 1 U.S.C. § 8, Congress defines a **person** as a “human being,” “child,” “infant,” “individual,” or “homo sapien” otherwise known as a “primate” or intelligent “ape.” But, Christianity does **not** treat people as apes.

Many statutory codes define a person as a fiction, a government created individual, corporation, partnership, or **other legal entity**.

Consequently, the Beast dehumanizes man, treats him as a “person,” a commercial entity, or a commodity to be bartered. Thus, the Beast sees man as a number, a fiction, and as property of the State. This is why government officials ask about your social security number.

We call this system “slavery.” Thus, the mark of the Beast is a number that identified a government slave. The 14th Amendment calls these persons “citizens” subject to the jurisdiction of Congress (the Beast).

Thus, we have an anthropological crises created by the Beast out of the sea.

Thus, a good man does not consent to these labels. He refers to himself as a “living soul” subject only to his Creator – see the Declaration of Independence.

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 13:16-17 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count⁶ the number of the

⁶ The imperative “count” (παραλογίζο) is an aorist active imperative. If the original readers were to obey this instruction, the name Nero Caesar would be 666. What relevance would calculating this number have if it applied to someone 2000 years into the original reader’s history? This is powerful evidence the book was written before 70 AD and that it had immediate relevance. The fact that the Syrian version reads,

Beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Small and great is a reference to the Beast's universal success in capturing minds; in creating worshippers of the State; in producing statisticians who look to better government as the hope of mankind.

Buy or sell refers to buying and selling and doing business in commerce.

No man refers to the effective universal installment of this commercial system which no man is able to escape.

What is this **mark** (charigma)? Dozens of interpretations abound.

The mark has been identified as anything from social security numbers to computer chip bio-implants. Prophecy teachers advance all kinds of appealing theories. But, to understand what St. John meant, we must investigate the first century mind.

The practice of assigning numerical values to letters is called "**Gematria.**"

In the Roman world, a mark or "charigma" was a technical term for the imperial stamp used on commercial documents and coins — something like the American dollar with all its symbols. Either of these usages would explain the mark on the hand or forehead.

Marking something material with a stamp or mark shows a claim of ownership.

This mark may or may not be literal or material. In Ezekiel's day, the Lord marked the righteous with a Tav on the forehead — not literally, but figuratively or spiritually speaking.

"John the Evangelist in the Isle of Patmos, where he was thrown by Nero Caesar" must be considered when interpreting this passage.

Ezekiel 9:4 And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a **mark** (Tav⁷) upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

God has marked his saints (Revelation 7:3-4), but **not** with a tattoo symbol. Using the physical term “mark” is a symbolic means of communicating ownership. As men mark their possessions with a stamp or other emblem to identify what belongs to them, God knows His own.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and **I know** them, and they follow me:

Without a **pledge of allegiance to Rome**, Christians living in Asia Minor could **not** do business in Caesar’s market place. Thus, the mark is a symbol, sign, emblem, or act that signals loyalty – like a wedding ring. In Rome, placing the fist against the heart was a pledge of devotion. In Germany the Sieg Heil signified loyalty. In the U.S. raising the right hand and taking an oath is a symbolic gesture of allegiance.⁸

Q: What did the number 666 mean in Biblical times?

There are at least sixty interpretations to the number 666. Many have tried to identify this with a particular person in modern times. By assigning Hebrew, Greek, and English letters a number, various calculations have been submitted to identify the antichrist of Revelation 13. From Nero to Henry Kissinger, endless possibilities abound.

⁷ An ancient Hebrew letter Tav (טָו) looked like a cross or the letter “t” or “x”.

⁸ The great need in America is a pledge of allegiance to the family and not the state.

“ . . Donald Trump is arguably a contemporary version of such an antichrist (it would do him too much honor to call him the Antichrist)” (Reformed Journal).

But, in a highly symbolic passage, such speculations are frivolous. What possible significance could a despot two-thousand removed from the first century have upon the seven churches?

But, there is an exception. In Hebrew, the name/number for **Nero Caesar tallies to 666**. In some manuscripts the number reads 616, the Latin equivalent to Nero Caesar⁹. Nero Caesar (54-68 A.D.) is the strongest candidate for the symbol 666. That there is a going to be a future super antichrist is pure, theological speculation. The Scriptures talks about many antichrists and never about one super-rebel . . . unless it is Daniel’s “little horn” (Daniel 7).

The number 666 is symbolic like all the other numbers in Revelation are symbolic. The number seven is the number of perfection and often symbolizes God’s perfection. The number 666 is the number of man that symbolizes man’s imperfection – man’s loyalty to government . . . to the state . . . allegiance to a regime.

The point of the passage is that this economic system is controlled by autocrats in a pagan institution that demands absolute allegiance – a maniacal political regime that punishes non-conformists. John encourages non-conformity, non-allegiance, and reasonable resistance to the totalitarian Roman State.

For example, consider how President Roosevelt introduced FRNs, unbacked securities, and banned the use of silver and gold – Executive Order 6102, 1933. All systems fail to achieve perfection (777). The Roman Empire, Romanism, Communism, Islam, and Democracy has failed to

⁹ Some MSS known to Tischendorf read the number of the Beast as 616 (Latin number for Nero Caesar) instead of the Hebrew 666 (Nero Caesar in Hebrew characters).

produce a just political / economic system. For this reason, Christians pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done;” i.e., that men may recognize God’s rule now and surrender to it.

Why is the mark on the hand? Why on the forehead? Again, there are over 60 interpretations to the question.

The number on the forehead and hand are symbolic signifying ownership and the dehumanization of man— owners number cows, equipment, and goods but not people.

The **forehead** is chosen because that is the origin of man’s thought life. This system seeks to control the thinking of mankind through misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, sophistry, trickery, and fraud.

The hand is chosen because the hand represents human labor – work, income, commerce. This system seeks to control labor and to extract wealth from the common citizen to perpetuate the system.

This passage has an application for our time!! Any interpretation that consigns this passage to a future government hinders Christians from discerning how their own government behaves like the Beast of Rome.

The whole Zionist-Evangelical notion that there is going to be a future seven year tribulation period, the rise of a super antichrist who is going to place a literal 666 mark on people’s forehead and hand is the product wooden-headed literalism – a gross, Neanderthal failure to rightly divide the Word of Truth, an offense to intelligence.

The Beast morphs its way through history. It often dies and then comes back to life with a different name: socialism, despotism, communism, secularism, et al. At various times, governments take on the characteristics of Rome by demanding absolute allegiance and by controlling commerce. When this happens, Christians are called to resist –

not to protest, but to push back — to stand one's ground against the pounding waves of secular, antichrist totalitarianism.

“Resistance to tyranny is service to God” — Thomas Jefferson.

The principle, "no man has to obey an unlawful order" is a fundamental tenet of military law and ethics, codified in the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). But, the application is critical. All resistance must be peaceful.

Capitalism and its wealth creation from "excess value of labor" comes to mind. Usury and the errant belief that money propagates money is another fruit of the Poisonous Tree. Every modern government contaminated by the IMF has a system in place to control the mind through legalize and propaganda as well as an unconstitutional graduated system of taxation to fleece the sheeple. Do mentally imbalanced political machines that produce passive, unquestioning, obedient, ignorant, compliant dumb-down, 1040 Revenue producing slave units ring a bell?

As we consider our own technological age with social security numbers, credit cards, and computer chips, it is easy to imagine a legislative ID system that assigns a number for the purpose of identifying members, tracking people, and controlling citizens.

Since the fall of the World Trade Center in (September 11, 2001), Americans have demanded greater security. All kinds of governmental tracking systems have been embraced. RFIDs (Radio Frequency Identification Devices) can read driver's licenses, credit cards, and passports. Telephone calls are recorded¹⁰. Emails are collected in some

¹⁰ The government tracks phone calls using methods like cell-site simulators (Stingrays) to mimic towers, working with carriers for data access (warrants required for content), intercepting data at network level (NSA), exploiting software vulnerabilities for remote activation, and analyzing metadata from tower dumps, all while adhering (mostly) to legal frameworks for specific targets but sometimes collecting broad data, especially for location and call records (GAI).

NSA government cyber data base. Privacy is a right of the past. And, considering our own economy, how can anyone doubt that the Federal Reserve with its toxic currency owns everything and everyone?

Since, the gold confiscation of April 5, 1933 Americans have been forced by color of law to use Federal Reserve Notes. The Social Security Number and the 2020-2030 Real ID already acts like the Mark of the Beast .Ever try getting a job or bank account without an SSN or 2030 Real ID?

The application is simple: any government system that tracks and stores information in computers; and, or ID that behaves like the mark of the Beast must be resisted.

If something in the matrix acts like the mark of the Beast, resist it. If an ID system controls your thinking and labor, resist it. If some government requirement behaves like the mark of the Beast, oppose it. Whether it be the social security number, 2030 Real ID driver's license, or federal voter ID Christians must oppose it.

The Beast of Babylon reigns unchallenged. In the midst of things we cannot control, God calls us to be loyal to Christ during all seasons of life — like a knight who stands guard until the last breath with armor rusting around his bones.

3. Victory over the Beast

All victory comes from faith (1 John 5:4).

You can't tame the Beast or make it cuddly. Governments are made up of sinners and they cannot improve. It is what it is — an ugly, hideous, bone-crushing monster.

You can **not** change the Beast by voting, protesting, carrying signs, writing letters, joining political action groups, staging a rally in the

capital, or by passive compliance. The Beast is all about war, conflict, confrontation, contests, struggles, and fights. It loves all this attention.

The way to victory is to “Follow the Lamb wherever He goeth” (14:4).

The means of defeat is the peace of God (shalom) — the peace of God, not the justice of God, crushes Satan. Be at peace; that is, be calm, cool, and collected. Do **nothing** out of fear or anger.

Romans 16:20 And **the God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet** shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Philippian 4: 5-7 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which **passeth all understanding**, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Stop thinking you can make government better or that you are here to change the world.

Edmund Burke's comment, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing," is sheer nonsense — a propaganda ploy to sidetrack Christians from Christ and to get them protesting in the streets trying to tame the Beast.

Only apply the rules of justice when an agent of the Beast knocks on your door. Use the law, not to defend yourself, but to keep the monster in his pen. Federal statues are a leash that keeps the giant from trampling the village people.

4. The Lamb and His Followers

◆ Q: Want victory over the Beast? Want to escape the matrix? Follow the Lamb!

The Apostle John wants us to know that the key to victory over the Beast is not following the bone-crushing righteousness of God but to follow a gentle, peaceful Lamb. Moreover, John wants us to be able to distinguish between sheep and goats, wheat and tares, and the true people of God in contrast to the followers of the beast.

A New Name

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a (the) Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

The first distinctive of the people of God is that God knows them and claims them as His own.

The word “**lo**” means John stopped, looked, and listened — a stunning shift in focus after seeing the hideous dragon.

The Lamb is a metonym for the Savior — the Lord Jesus Christ. John does **not** behold “a Lamb” but “**the** Lamb.” He is **not** mesmerized by the hideous Beast and his sycophant slaves, but by the wonders of the Lamb and His loyal followers.

The standing Lamb: The last time we saw the Son, He was standing before the throne. Now He is standing on Mt. Zion — an expression of providential love, concern, and energetic involvement of the Lamb with His people.

Mt. Zion is the hill on which the temple was erected in Jerusalem. Mt. Zion is a symbol, type, or icon of the city of God in heaven where the Lamb reigns. It is not literal, carnal Jerusalem, but heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem glittering with gold streets and sapphire blue stones — the holy City of God is contrasted with Babylon, the corrupt city of man where the Beast rules (14:8)

This passage contrasts the followers of Christ with the followers of the Beast. Like the statistis in chapter 13 are marked by the Beast, God knows His own and claims them.

Father's name written in their foreheads: This is the apostle's way of saying the 144,000 are redeemed members of the Family of God, that they share the Father's DNA by virtue of being born again by the Spirit of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3-14).

“**Written**” is set in contrast to the icon mark of the Beast.

The Father’s name written on their foreheads signifies that God has purchased the 144,000 (by the blood of His Son) and owns them. They belong to Him, not the world; that they are a redeemed community of living souls, not slaves.

The 144,000 is code for the redeemed church¹¹. In chapter 12, John portrays the ancient battle between Satan and God’s people in mythological imagery. Those who follow Satan working through the Beast are marked with a number. The 144,000 of the true Israel of God are **not** marked with a number, but have the precious name of the Father inscribed on them; that is, they are not chattel, but children of God — believing men and women from all nations devoted to Christ — true Christian men and women.

The purity and devotion of the 144,000 stand in contrast to the masses who prostitute themselves to the Beast. God identifies His own as 144,000 redeemed men — living souls, true humanity; aka the *new Israel* or *spiritual Israel*. All true believers, millions of them, are among the 144,000. They are sealed and received by the Father as His inalienable property; that is, true children of God, born again by His Spirit having a spiritual-genetic link to Him.

Numbers in the Book of Revelation are not literal. They are symbols of a truth! Thus, the 144,000 is a number that represents the whole, complete church militant on earth — spiritual Israel created by gospel proclamation standing for the truth of the gospel in every era of history.¹²

¹¹ The 144,000 is an ideal number representing the redeemed – a calculation closely associated with the new Israel, the people of God in His plan of redemption. All Christians are included in spiritual Israel.

¹² The 144,000 are first mentioned in Revelation 7 and closely associated with the 12 tribes of Israel (12 x 12,000 = 144,000) the ideal elect of God, the redeemed of mankind, spiritual Israel, the remnant, the new Israel aka the church or the seven

The “**Father’s name**” is said to be written on the foreheads of the 144,000 – the Christian’s private ID mark. Use of the term “written” informs us this is a royal law – a permanent, eternal status. It is not a literal, tangible, material mark but spiritual certification of ownership. This ideal imprint with the Father’s name is set in contrast to the invisible number-mark of the Beast. Property has numbers; living souls have names. John is telling us that just as the followers of the Beast can be identified by their devotion to the State; the followers of the Lamb can be identified by their devotion to the Lamb.

The “Father’s name” **on the forehead** of God’s people are their “confession made unto salvation.” Their confession is true, sincere, public, and permanent. John does not say “they know God” (a human perspective) but that “God knows them” (the divine perspective). John’s theology is not “Armenian” emphasizing man’s choice, but “Calvinistic” emphasizing God’s election.

The vision was designed to encourage the believers in their devotion to Christ and opposition to Rome. The monster in chapter 13 had many followers and appears to be invincible. But, God’s people take heart because they are known in heaven and their names are recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Consequently, they are eternally secure in Christ – not because of what they have done, but because of what He has accomplished for them at Calvary – redemption! Glory!

Revelation 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

Voice from heaven: This is the voice of authority.

candlesticks; that is, the church is the chosen people of God and stewards of His revelation to mankind.

Voice of many waters . . . thunder: Like the sounds of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, the voice from heaven was clear, roaring-powerful, thunder-loud, and unmistakable! But, can readers hear it or are they spiritually deaf?

Harps, a common musical instrument in Biblical times, speak of harmony, rest, and happiness. The ones singing are the 144,000 or the church militant. Like a dream, the 144,000 shift and appear to be present on Mt. Zion in heaven next to the Lamb. The followers of the Beast do not sing. But the 144,000 not only sing, they are the only ones who bring glory to God on earth. Only Christians can sing songs of redemption. The Beast brings death and tyranny to humanity; the 144,000 bring life, freedom, and joy to mankind.

A New Song

Revelation 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

The second distinctive of the people of God is their occupation with redemption.

The new song is a song of redemption. It implies relationship and salvation. Only those who know God and believe the gospel can sing something so intimate and endearing. The imperceptive followers of the beast dulled by earthly ambitions remain perplexed by the joy Christians have in the Savior.

Before the throne and before the four beasts, and the elders is a reference to the Father's approval of Christian-devotion to Him.

The fact that "**no man could learn the song**" implies that redemption is a prerequisite for learning the song. The 144,000 are a symbol of all God's people who have tasted salvation and demonstrated loyalty to the Lamb.

They are completely devoted to Christ in contrast to those who are loyal to the Beast / State / government.

There are only two kinds of people on earth: believers and unbelievers; Christians and non-Christians; regenerate people and unregenerated people; worshippers of Christ or worshippers of the Beast.

They are redeemed “**from the earth.**” This suggests citizenship in heaven, other-worldliness, the pursuit of God, the separation from pagan lusts and pleasures, deliverance from hope in government, and occupation with heavenly priorities.

A New State

Revelation 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

The third distinctive of the people of God is separation from evil.

“**They are not defiled with women**¹³” is code for holiness and should **not** be taken literally. Half of these people are women themselves. The act of defiling is a reference to the Greco-Roman practice where men and women visited pagan temples to engage in religious sexual rites. The negative adverb “**not**” implies separation. This class of people are **virgins** — the church militant wholly devoted to Christ and free from earthly affections and defilements.

Virginity is a symbol of pure devotion — God’s ideal for His people. The term virgin is highly symbolic of the character of the righteous — a

¹³ Women are often viewed in Scripture as the source of evil, deception, and manipulation. Solomon warned his sons about strange, “odious” women (30:28). Virgin-Marys with purity in their hearts are rare; Jezebels are common. In this passage virginity represents pure devotion to our Lord.

reference to being pure and clean. It's as if God is blind to the defects of His people on earth. He appears here to see His people in Christ totally devoted to Him and not in Adam following the sins of the flesh —
“Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me!”

The 144,000 (parthenos) are **spiritual virgins** who do not engage in pagan fertility practices or service to a government, antichrist agenda. Virginity is an attribute communicating to us these believers have not compromised the faith for sake of political or financial gain. The reason for this interpretation is the context.

The context is one of allegiance.

Nowhere are marital sexual relations a negative matter in Scripture. Celibacy is **not** a virtue. Human sexuality as it exist in marriage is holy and undefiled (Hebrews 13:5). What comes into view here is the believer's pure and holy devotion to His Lord and Master.

The fourth distinctive of the people of God is pure devotion to Christ — **they follow the Lamb wherever He goes.**

Contracts are a form of intercourse between two parties. The 144,000 do not fornicate with the Beast; that is, they do contract with the Beast nor do they apply for benefits and privileges from the State; they do not promote political-party interests. They follow the Lamb and His Word. This is God's ideal for every Christian – to be purely, totally, continually, humbly, intensely, deeply, genuinely, wholeheartedly, profoundly, and dutifully devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know the church is succeeding when you hear its preachers preach "No king but King Jesus" — a Christian declaration asserting Jesus's supreme authority over all earthly rulers and governments. Since Jesus is Lord, it is not possible or desirable to know, care, or obey the Beast's statutes (Colossian 2:4-10; Acts 17:6-7).

Firstfruits is barley season. Christ is called the **firstfruits** (1 Corinthians 15:20). These 144,000 are the firstfruits of the Age to Come. Having surrendered to the authority of the Kingdom of God, they have tasted eschatological salvation and the blessings of the Eschaton. They are regenerated beings destined to share the benefits of resurrection on a renewed earth.

The 144,000 are God's ideal model for all God's people. John wants his readers to strive to be loyal to Christ and to achieve a level of pure devotion to Him as they live out their faith in a messy, corrupted Beast-controlled environment.

A New Status

Revelation 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

The fifth distinctive of the people of God is their lack of duplicity; i.e. their attachment to truth, righteousness, forgiveness, and goodness.

No guile (lie) is a noun expressing a fact of authenticity and lack of duplicity. Having "No lie" is the ideal picture of the redeemed (Zephaniah 3:13). The only One who has never lied is Jesus. John challenges his readers to strive by faith to avoid the chicanery and duplicity of the period and to be true to their Lord and Savior — publically and privately. The 144,000 are not private followers of the Beast and public followers of Christ. They do not pledge allegiance to both the Beast and the Lamb — to God and government. No man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Their walk matches their talk. They live in the world, but they are not of the world. They are loved by Christ and hated by the Beast.

Without fault before the throne means "They are blameless" in the eyes of the Father. This is John's way of describing how God views His people.

- God's people are justified by faith; that is, they are declared righteous and treated as such.

- They are a forgiven people; that is, their debt to God has been discharged and settled at the cross because of the death of the Lamb. Because they are blameless standing before the throne, they seek to live a blameless life in their standing before men on earth.

John's presentation of the 144,000 is an idyllic portrait of Christ and His church. On this side of the veil, Christians are far from "blameless." Their standing is perfect (justification); their spiritual condition is being perfected (sanctification). There are no great Christians, only a great Savior of mercy and grace that saves His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

John's message to the seven churches is not so much about the second coming as it is about His Present Exalted Life of Christ. Christians pursue the Lamb on His throne now . . . in time . . . today!

This passage motivated the original readers to see themselves in Christ and to spawn the character of the 144,000; to serve Him without fear of what Rome could do to them (Luke 1:74; Matthew 10:28).

Likewise, this section of Scripture should motivate us to claim our holy standing in the Son and to love the Lamb so much that we take on the virtues of the 144,000. Duplicity and divided affections have no place in the church of Jesus Christ (James 1:8). Let us be like an unclouded sky at dawn; like roots clinging to heaven; like a bride waiting for the groom – a happy people eager to follow the Lamb where ever He goes.

(Source: Stockton, B. (2005) A Commentary on Revelation, *Standing Firm in our Time.1.4.2*, Unpublished Manuscript, ABQ, NM)

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