

## **Notes on Revelation 13**

Intro: The beasts of this chapter are introduced as Satan's attempt to destroy the offspring of the woman. Cf. historical background symbolized in chapter 12, particularly 12:17.

### **The Sea Beast**

Out of the sea (Cf. Dan. 7). The sea seems to stand for the upheavals and churning in society in general. The fourth beast possess the characteristics of the other beasts. They have a continuity in the Roman empire. The beast of Daniel 7 has ten horns as this one. It seems to suggest the Roman empire.

Ten horns with ten diadems (Explained in chpt. 17).

“Kings who have not yet received a kingdom”, 17:12-13

Seven heads (Explained in chpt. 17)

These are seven kings (Individual Caesars) and seven mountains upon which he harlot sits. Rome was known as the city setting on seven hills.

On his head are blasphemous names (Some eg.

One of the heads was slain, was healed, amazing the world, and serves as a basis for people worshipping the beast. (Caligula was seriously wounded but recovered. Or, the idea may be that one emperor (head) died by the sword and it might have appeared to be the downfall of the whole beast but it somehow recovered. This was true of Nero. His death by the sword brought an end to the Flavian Dynasty and brought the empire into a state of civil war. Three emperors were brought quickly to the throne (Galba, Vitellius, Otho) but none of them ruled for very long. Finally, Vespasian, the Roman general solidified the authority of the empire once again.

A mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies. Such were the efforts of the persecuting Caesars who wanted to be worshipped as gods.

Authority to act for 42 months. Such was the period of time that Nero brought great persecution on the Christians at Rome (64 to 68). There is also evidence of persecution in the provinces (Cf. 1 Peter which seems to be written during the Neroan persecutions). Also the beast of Daniel 7 waged war with the saints for time, times, and a half a time (3 1/2 years).

Authority over every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Cf. Dan. 7, a world empire)

Those who dwell on earth will worship him

Those whose name is not written in the Lamb's book of life

Authority to wage war with the saints and overcome them (Cf. beast of Dan. 7)

The result is captivity and death

The saints are urged to accept their destiny without resistance (v. 9-10).

### **The Land Beast**

Out of the earth (This beast arose from among mankind in general, the unregenerate world. They chose to cooperate with the beast.)

Two horns like a lamb (perhaps this makes him the counterpart to Christ, our lamb. He looks innocent but is really a sinister helper of the beast.) He later called "the false prophet".

He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence (This seems to refer to the emperor cult of Asia Minor that enforced loyalty to the Caesars by requiring that they offer homage to Caesar.) This point is strong to me in eliminating a reference to the Roman Catholic church or the papacy. John seems to speak of something contemporaneous with the Roman empire. Catholicism in its full form did not exist until the fall of the empire. In fact, some contend that it could not exist until empire fell, i.e. the restrainer of 2 Thes. 2:.)

He makes the earth worship the first beast

The beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Satan seeks to counterfeit the resurrection of Christ. Perhaps this is a reference to the common historical conception that when Nero died he was would not remain dead but return. Interestingly, his successors claimed to be Nero revived.

He performs great signs (His role is to deceive by pseudo miracles. Just as faith in Christ is confirmed by real miracles, Satan seeks to counterfeit the miracles of Christ.)

Fire from heaven

Give breath to the image of the beast, making the image speak a sentence of death upon those who do not worship him

He causes all to be given a mark so that no one may buy and sell except those who have the mark. This symbolizes the power of the emperor cult to enforce Caesar worship. From a later period there have been discovered actual documents giving people the right to buy and sell because they have demonstrated loyalty to the Caesar.

The name of the beast

The number of his name (666)

Calculate may be a reference to gematria, a common form of cryptic identification in N.T. times. In both Heb. and Latin letters also served as numbers. Cf. XII. Examples have been cited of using the numerical identification for a person. In the Sibylline Oracles Jesus' number is declare to be 888.

The Hebrew evaluation of Nero's name is 666. "Neron Kysr" Interestingly, some early manuscripts contain the number 616. Why? Metzger in his textual commentary suggests that the best explanation is that it is the result of an altered spelling of Nero's name.

If so, then the head that was slain is in fact, Nero. The beast is the Roman empire. The second beast is the emperor cult that enforced worship of the Caesars.