

The Servants of Satan (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 13.

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which probably means revelation from Jesus Christ, but it could also mean the revelation about Jesus Christ because we see Him revealed through this book, but primarily we see revelation from Him.

He is unveiling for us things that we don't see with the natural eye. He's showing us what's going on behind the scenes as we as a church seek to follow Him, as we as Christians seek to walk with Him.

We see fleshed out really for us what Paul says in Ephesians 6, that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but it is against the evil forces.

It is against the spiritual forces of wickedness, the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. It's a spiritual battle. And so we are beginning to see perhaps a little more clearly as we go through this book how that plays out.

[1 : 33] So we are in chapter 13. We're looking at the second half of chapter 13 this week. Remarkably, you might understand that chapter 13 follows chapter 12.

So just a little insight there. Chapter 12, we have the dragon introduced, right? We have the red dragon, the one who is identified as the ancient serpent, Satan, the devil, the deceiver of the whole world, right?

So we know who the dragon is. The dragon is symbolic of what he does. And it is also the picture that he was at creation in Genesis 3. He was the serpent, a dragon, not a snake.

He had legs before the curse. Okay? So he is the ancient dragon, the serpent. So he is working in history.

He's attacking the church. He tried to attack in chapter 12 the birth of Jesus. He was thwarted there. Jesus then ascended to heaven. Then there's war in heaven where he is then, after Jesus ascends, kicked out of heaven.

[2 : 44] He is cast down to earth. He no longer has a place in heaven to accuse the brethren because Christ is now there. Who has conquered, who has forgiven, who has cleansed the brethren so they can't be accused.

So the devil is thrown down to earth where then he attacks the woman, the one who has birthed the church. The one who has both Jew and Gentile birthed the church.

He attacks the woman he's thwarted there. So then he attacks, at the end of chapter 12, the offspring of the woman who are both Jewish and Gentile, who keep the commands of God and who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

So I want to pick it up from verse, the end of verse 13, end of chapter 12, verse, whatever that verse that is, 17, and then through verse chapter 13, and we will be looking at, specifically, the second half of chapter 13.

So if you're able, please stand as I read from Revelation, last sentence of chapter 12 into chapter 13. So he's talking about the dragon, okay?

[3 : 58] The dragon stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads and ten diadems on its horns.

And blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard. Its feet were like a bear. Its mouth was like a lion's mouth.

And to the dragon, and to it, the dragon gave his power and his throne and his great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound.

But its mortal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast.

And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who's like the beast? And given a mouth, uttering haughty and blasphemous words. And it was allowed to exercise authority for 42 months.

[5 : 08] It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God. Blaspheming his name and his dwelling. That is, those who dwell in heaven.

Also, it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation.

And all who dwell on the earth will worship it. Everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life.

The book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes.

If anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword he must be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and the faith of the saints.

[6 : 07] Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb. And it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence.

And makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast. Whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs. Even making fire come down from heaven to earth.

In front of people. And by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast. It deceives those who dwell on earth. Telling them to make an image for the beast.

That was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast. So that the image of the beast might even speak.

And might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also, it causes all, both small and great.

[7 : 12] Both rich and poor. Both free and slave. To be marked on the right hand or on the forehead. So that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark.

That is, the name of the beast. Or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom.

Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man. And his number is 666.

So reads the word. Let us pray. Our father, as always, we pray. Ask that you would speak to us. That we would hear from you. And here, father, we admit we come to a passage that is just filled with wonders.

And mysteries. And so we need your help. Help us to connect dots. Help us to have wisdom and understanding from you that we might grasp.

[8 : 24] Perhaps not every single detail here. But that we might grasp the message. The meaning. The significance. Of what you are unveiling for us here.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. So, a man and his wife were having an argument.

I don't know which man and wife this was. But a man and wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee in the morning. And the wife said, you should do it because you get up first.

And then we don't have to wait as long for our coffee. The husband said, no, you're in charge of cooking around here. You should do it. Because that's your job. And I can just wait for my coffee.

That's fine. So the wife replied, no, you should do it. Besides, it's in the Bible. That the man should do the coffee. And the husband said, I don't believe that.

[9 : 29] Show me. So she fetches a Bible and opens to the New Testament. And showed him on the top of several pages. It says, he brews. That's so funny.

Good. I'm glad you enjoyed it. Because it's for a point. Words have meaning. And words can be changed from their original meaning.

Hebrews had nothing to do with making coffee. We know that. That's why we left. So we come to words here in Revelation 13.

That are interpreted and understood in different ways. Which is why this study is so fascinating. How do we take these words?

Do we take them literally? Do we take them symbolically? Do we take them? How do we take this? People who love the Bible and are devoted to its study just as much as anyone else come up with different understandings.

[10 : 47] Okay? So, how do we understand? So we come to a verse. The last verse of chapter 13.

Verse 18. Is the most discussed verse in all of Revelation. It brings up some subjects that fascinate us.

This mark of the beast. What is it? This number. Six. Six. Six. And we're told to calculate it. Add it up. Oh, I can do that. What does that mean? Is it a code? Is it a riddle? Well, we're told there that it is the number of the beast.

For it is the number of a man. Oh, okay. So, it's a mark. So, is it a tattoo? Is it a brand?

[11 : 52] Is it a mark? Is it literally a mark? Or is it just a chip they put under your skin? Yeah, we've heard that, right? Okay. So, some, not in the first or second century, but some of the ancient fathers thought that it referred to, this 666 number referred to Nero Caesar.

Because if you take Nero's name, not just Nero by itself, but Nero Caesar. If you take it from Latin and then you add up the numbers, it doesn't come out to 666.

So, if you take it from Greek, then it doesn't add up to 666. So, what you've got to do is you take his name from Latin or Greek. You transliterate it into Hebrew. That's the key.

You've got to transliterate it into Hebrew. So, you take the Latin letter and you find the Hebrew equivalent. Or the Greek letter and you find the Hebrew equivalent.

And that way, if you do that, it adds up to 666. With one caveat. You have to misspell it in Hebrew. You have to leave the yod out.

[13 : 05] The little yod. Remember Jesus said every jot and tittle, every yod, every little just, it looks like a little apostrophe. But it's a Greek letter, I mean, it's a Hebrew letter.

So, you just kind of forget that. It adds up. That's it. We got it. What's interesting is nobody in the first century or second century tried to identify that person.

Nero sure seems like a sure bet. Because if anybody is anti-Christ-like, it was him. And then he dies and you remember there were rumors that he came back.

He was slain and came back. Okay. So, what does all this mean? This mark of the beast, this number 666, we're fascinated with it.

We're naturally, we're told to add it up. So, okay, it's got to be a riddle. It's got to be a code. So, what is it? Does it refer to a world leader of some kind? If you remember, you know, some people thought it was Ronald Reagan.

[14 : 14] Others thought it was Henry Kissinger. You know, it's all. No, it wasn't them, apparently. So, who is it?

Does it not refer to a person, but rather to the duration of their reign? Hmm? Or is it simply a symbol of the anti-Christ? Symbolic number.

Because adding the number has never identified anyone. Honestly. Without fudging. Or transliterating.

Has never referred to anybody. So, here's a principle of interpreting Scripture. It cannot mean now what it has never meant then.

We have to, to try, properly interpret, we have to understand what did it mean then. And then we extrapolate, okay, what could it mean now? So, if it never meant an identified man in the first century when John was living.

[15 : 25] And by the way, John wrote this after Nero. So, he could have easily said. Okay. So, what is this?

So, how do we, how do we, how do we understand all of this? What we do have in Revelation 13 is God showing us, unveiling to us, revealing to us, why we need the armor of God on.

Paul says, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes, the methods, the wiles of the devil. What, how does the devil scheme?

What are his methods? We're shown the methods right here. He works through two servants. What we see in Revelation 12 and 13 is a kind of trinity of evil.

An unholy trinity. You know, God's trinity is Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Father plans, Son executes, Holy Spirit applies, right? Every aspect of how God works.

[16 : 28] The Father is the planner, the executor, the elector, the one who chooses, the one who sends the Son. The Son is the one who comes, acts, does, performs, right?

Saves. He's the true Savior upon which things happen. And then the Holy Spirit does what? He works with Father, Son, and He serves the Son, right? By causing people to see who He is and understand who He is.

And then the Holy Spirit works upon us. He applies this to us. He causes us to be born again. He causes our eyes to be open. He causes us to breathe. Okay.

True, spiritual life. So, Satan is an imitator. He copies, mimics.

He's not original at all. He's very creative. So, he has a trinity himself. Starts with the dragon, who plans everything.

[17:31] Dragon is Satan, who executes, or who puts everything into motion. He uses a anti-counter Christ through which he works, who comes in an earthly form, right?

Whether that's Caesar, whoever that is, he works through them. They are the counter Christ. They are the one who, remember, we're told that this beast had seven heads, and one of the heads was mortally wounded, dead, and what?

Oh, resurrects. Oh, that's a good idea. I think I'll do that. Been done. But, okay, do it again. Copy.

And then that one, that first beast, the Antichrist, works through a second beast, who is the one who gets everybody to see who the first one is.

Not truly see who he is, but gets them to accept the power. He's the power. Second one's the power. Doing the signs and the coercing and the changing.

Whereas our Holy Spirit is not a coercer. He's an inspirer. He's an opener of eyes. So, see what's going on here?

[18:50] So, we see two servants. So, the first servant we saw is this seven-headed, ten-horned beast, right? One of the heads had died, but the beast itself comes back to life.

Not the head, but the beast itself comes back to life. So, we see that as Satan working through this first beast, who is earthly or civil authorities, rulers.

We know that the heads refer to kings, right? Both Daniel 7 and chapter 17 of Revelation, which begins to unfold for us what these heads look like, what the horns are.

Okay? So, when we read later in chapter 17, we get the interpretation. So, the seven-headed beast refers to kingdoms, kings. And we understand seven in Revelation, not meaning seven successive, but seven symbolically.

So, we have seven churches, right? And he writes to seven churches. Yet, we know in the first century there was a bunch more churches than just seven. He writes to seven in one local region.

[20:03] He doesn't even include some of the most famous churches, like in Rome. He writes to seven in one area. And they are representative. It's not just that seven is all the churches. Seven is representative of all churches.

Okay? So, seven being a complete representation. So, what we have with the seven heads, I believe, most likely, is that it's not seven successive kingdoms, but seven as a complete representation of all earthly kingdoms throughout time.

Whether it be Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. And by the way, in Scripture, Rome, the fourth kingdom, was when everything changed.

That's when Christ came and another kingdom. Okay? So, that's what I think. So, I think the first beast is earthly authorities, civil authorities. In the first century, it said, we're told in verse 1, that that beast came from the sea.

So, for people in the seven churches living in Asia Minor, who came from the sea? Rome.

[21:15] Rome came across the sea to Asia Minor. Rome is that, for the first century, Rome is that first beast. At that time.

And who had several Caesars over a period of 500 years. Okay? Several Caesars, not just one. Several. Then, how did Rome work through the second beast?

So, you have Satan working through earthly authorities. You have the civil authorities, the earthly leaders, Roman rulers, working through what? To get worship from the people.

They work through religious authorities. They work through false religion. See, the first beast from the sea comes across, so it's foreign.

The second beast is from the land, so it's more local. So, it's the local priests who are enforcing the worship of Caesar in the first century.

[22:21] Remember, we talked about this in chapters 2 and 3. The seven churches. What were the threats? Remember that some of them lived where Satan's throne was? All of them were dealing with temples and false religion all across the board.

But every town had some kind of worship or, if not, temple to Caesar. And remember that some of them died because they would not worship Caesar.

Remember, we're told in one of the letters, Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed. Why? Because he wouldn't worship Caesar. And how did you worship Caesar in those days? It doesn't mean you had to go to his temple and, you know, worship like we did.

It just meant you had to go to the feast. And you had to say, yep, I serve Caesar. No king but Caesar. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? No king but Caesar. You just had to say it.

If you didn't participate in the feast, then you'd lose your place in the marketplace. And by the way, that has an economic effect on you. If you can't buy or sell. Now, you see how this works?

[23 : 31] If we're thinking about it, how did it, what did it mean in the first century? It meant Rome. It meant their imperial priesthood who enforced the worship of Caesar at that time.

It doesn't look like that today. Today it's different. So who is it today? Who is the worldly power today? Whatever it is, it's working through false religion.

Okay? Now, we can see that. We see false religion all over the place. In fact, we're told, oh, no one religion. Well, it's all of them. Right?

All are good except for the one that says it's exclusive. That one we don't, you know. That one's not okay. That's the message today. That's the false religion of these beasts.

Okay, so those are the two beasts. That's what, that's my taking. What I do think is also likely is that this is an all-time kind of thing working all the time.

[24 : 35] It's all, it's first century on. We see it today, this kind of, this kind of deception going on. But I think it's entirely possible that the very end time, it can come out in a much more intense way.

With a one-person antichrist and a one-person false prophet that may bring the very end. That's certainly possible. But, not necessarily, I don't think.

We could be in the last time. Every generation of Christians has believed they live in the last time. Paul was convinced he was in the last time. Luther, Calvin were convinced that the Pope was the antichrist. Okay, so every generation of Christians.

We laugh now, but we're thinking, yeah, but he didn't live when or he lived in there. What the church did then. That's why there was a reformation. It was abuse and false.

[25 : 39] So they were convinced. Okay, so it has forms in every time. It has forms today. Okay. So we have this unholy trinity of the dragon and the first beast and second beast.

Each serving Satan. So let's take a closer look at this second beast. It shows here a trickery of religion. A false religion.

A religion by deception. Okay, so we want to ask the question, what is this beast of the earth and how does it serve Satan? Two answers.

Verses 11 to 14, we'll look at the identity. What is this? We give the appearance and we're told what he does. And then verses 15 to 18, we'll look at his intentions.

What is his role? What is he doing? All right. So the beast's identity, we can safely say that the identity of this second beast is the false prophet.

[26 : 40] Because that's what he's called later in this book. He's called the false prophet in chapter 16, 13, chapter 19, chapter 20. Three times later, this second beast is called the false prophet.

Okay, he's spreading lies. And I would say his identity is the false prophet or prophets of worldly religion. Okay, world's religions.

False religions. Copying God but twisting it in some way. Okay, so let's notice some things. Notice first his disguise.

Verse 11. Notice how the language that he says. Verse 11, I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like what? Like a lamb.

Oh, isn't that interesting? Well, that's got to be harmless. Like a lamb? That's not scary. This beast, it's a lamb. But what?

[27 : 44] Two horns like a lamb but spoke like a dragon. So it appears harmless. What I see is not all that it is.

It seems and looks harmless as a lamb. A lamb with two horns. That's normal. It's not got seven or anything. It's not weird. It's a lamb with two horns.

Just like rams have. Right? So that's not scary. That's okay. But when it speaks, it gives away who it is.

It speaks as a dragon. Well, how does a dragon speak? How did the serpent speak? No, not powerful. No, I mean that we think...

No, what is it? We're told, who is the ancient serpent in chapter 12, verse 9? Oh, it's the ancient serpent, the one in the garden. How did he speak to Eve?

[28 : 43] Was he scary? No, she wasn't scared. He just raises some questions about what God said. Did God really say that? Just get her to question God. Oh, you won't die.

Right? He's not... It's not overpowering. It's just subtle. A false prophet will speak like that. Not scary. Not thunderous. Just simply deceptive. Let me take what God says and let's just turn it a little bit. Let's just turn it on its side. Let's just alter one part of it.

Truth is truth, but you know, it evolves, doesn't it? Right? We're past that stuff. We're a more evolved culture. So we should understand things a little different. Of course.

God never meant us to take all that literally. Right? Is that how we hear it? It's not profanely anti-God.

[29 : 45] It's an evolved God. Appropriate for our society. Right? Because we're thinkers. Just like Eve, we should judge what God says.

He didn't really mean that. So we judge what He really says. Can't trust what He said, right? So that's how the dragon works. What's interesting to me, remember in chapter 5 when the Lamb was revealed?

Remember, He said, who's going to open the scroll? Who's worthy? Who's worthy? Nobody's worthy in heaven. Who's worthy? And then finally one of the elders says, oh, don't fear. Because who?

Who? What did He hear? What name did He hear? No. He heard the Lion of Judah. He heard the Lion of Judah.

When He turned to look, what did He see? Then He saw the Lamb. He heard Lion, saw Lamb. Both are right. Lion, yeah, Lion of Judah.

[30 : 52] Yeah, that's the Messiah. How did the Messiah look when He really came? Not a Lion. He looked like a Lamb. Here it's the opposite. He hears Lamb, but...

No, no, sorry, sorry. He sees Lamb, but He hears Dragon. Okay, see how it's kind of reversed? So it's out of the earth.

This is a beast out of the earth, which may mean, if out of the sea means foreign, like Rome coming across the sea, then earth may mean then local.

Here's a beast, right? The other one had ten horns, seven heads. It's big and scary. This one's kind of, it's just a lamb with two horns.

Something less. Right? Something like it's serving the other one. It probably means it has less power. Maybe it's more temporary. Maybe the other one, if the other one's Rome, the big powerful Rome, then who serves, who does Rome's dirty work to make sure the world complies?

[32 : 10] Right? Is his priests, his imperial priests, the temples and the marketplaces and all of that. That's how we control people. Pax Romana, we keep the peace.

How do you do that? We got our ways. We got our ways. It looks harmless. Oh, but if you don't go to that temple, if you don't go to that feast, you ain't buying and selling in our town.

Try finding another one. Okay, so that's what it looks, that's the disguise. Looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon.

What's his design? Verse 12. Well, he serves the other. We got this trinity here. We got, it exercises all the authority of the first beast. So the dragon gives his authority to the first beast.

The second beast gives his authority to the second beast. Exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, which literally means in its eyes. So it could be under its watch.

[33 : 17] It could mean literally in the very presence of it. It depends how you interpret it. And he makes, he makes the earth. He makes the earth and its inhabitants worship.

In other words, it's not a, he doesn't give him the option. He makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed. Now notice it's not the head that was healed, but the beast was healed.

So one of the heads had a mortal wound. That head wasn't healed, but the beast was healed. So it had another, got another head. No, it's all right. That one, I wouldn't go. I got another one. Okay.

That's the idea. So his design is to coerce the world to follow, worship, Satan's scheme. The second beast, the false prophet, works for the first beast.

So the priesthood works for Rome to make the world worship Caesar in the first century. So what's worship? It keeps saying worship.

[34 : 27] Do you notice there's a religious element in this whole thing? Worship, worship, worship. So do we really think the world today is going to go worship some man?

So what do you mean by worship? Does that mean they will come to a temple and they will bow down? Some people will, but you think the whole world will? Is that what worship means?

What does worship mean? What does it mean? See, if we import our ideas of worship into that word, then it can only look like this. But if we write, what does worship mean?

To bow down to. It doesn't mean you physically have to do that. To kiss the feet doesn't mean you physically have to do that. It means to align with. To rely on.

To trust in. Be devoted to. And it doesn't even have to be genuine. So notice.

[35 : 37] Because when we get to the hand and the head thing. You put the mark on the hand or on the head. You don't have to do both.

Just one or the other. Just do it. You don't have to mean it. Just do it. Just do it. You got to check the box. You're fine. Okay? That's what I mean.

It doesn't have to be genuine worship. Just go through the motions. You'll be fine. Then you get your check. Then you get your place in the marketplace. That's all that matters. Let the government.

Okay. Should I go that far? Because we want to depend on them. Let them save us.

Let them protect us. See what's happening? Oh no. It can't be happening today. Is it? So.

[36 : 35] How does he do it? How does he get everybody? How does he coerce? You can't tell Americans today. You have to do this. Right? How do you do that? How do you make them?

How do you coerce them? Well. Verse 13. Verse 13. He performs great signs. Miracles. Signs with significance.

Even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people. Just like Elijah. Right? How did he do that? It's got to be God.

Got to be God. Make fire come down from heaven. That's God. Can't argue with that. Right? So he does signs. He does signs in front of people. So they see it.

Even if in front means they witness it. They see it. Don't have to be there. But they saw it. Maybe it's on TV. Maybe it's just up in the sky. How do they do that?

[37 : 32] And by the signs. Verse 14. By the signs it's allowed to work in the presence of the beast. It deceives those who dwell on the earth. Tell them to make an image. So there's clearly.

Verse 13. 14. Says how does he deceive the world? By using signs. He uses signs to deceive them. Okay? Counterfeit miracles.

How do they do the counterfeit? So how does he make fire come from the sky? How does he do that? I mean that's got to be a miracle. Well again.

Later revelation helps us understand. Earlier parts of revelation. So we read in chapter 18. That one of the way. The way that. The false prophet.

Deceived the world. Was by. Sorcery. Pharmacia. How do sorcerers work? Well they mix chemicals.

[38 : 31] You know if you mix certain chemicals. You can make things explode. Oh yeah. You've heard of that right? You can make fire. Ooh. Fire.

From nothing. Must be a miracle. It's deceptive. And when you're talking about spiritual beings.

Being behind this. Not just a physical man.

But a man perhaps. Demonized. A man. Controlled. With demonic. Power. What can demons do?

What do they do in Egypt? Moses. Here. Let me prove that I'm from God. I throw the sword. Drop my. What do you have? Staff. Drop the staff.

It turns into a. Snake. Ooh. Then who. Then who copied that? Right. No. The magician. Oh we can do that. Do that. Do that.

[39 : 24] Okay. Do this. Okay. Here we are ready. Oh. See. Snake too. We can copy that. So they copy. Copy. Copy. And they get to one of the.

Plagues. And they go. Sorry Pharaoh. We can't do that one. That's the finger of God. That's. Real. Ours. Is sorcery.

That's. Can't touch that. Can't fake that one. Okay. Satanic power. Can copy. Some of God's.

Miracles. That's. What he's going to do. That's how he's going to do it. Sorcery. And it's done.

To deceive. So let's get practical. If you're for a moment. Okay. So. This whole deception thing.

How is this false prophet. Going to deceive you. What is the deception. The deception is to get us.

[40 : 22] To move us. From God worship. To. Whatever else. Worship. Okay. To adopt a new image. To adopt a new idol. And remember what an idol is.

It's just a substitute God. Could be anything. So how's he going to do that. What are the lies. That Satan promotes. Well here's one thing.

That he says. It's not sin. If you're born with it. Heard that one. God made me that way. So it's not sinful. Right.

Right. Haven't we heard that one. God made me that way. So it has to be okay. Right. Well. God made me a certain way too. But then there's certain things.

That he made me with. That he said. I can't do. How's that. Just because I was made that way. Doesn't mean it's okay. Okay. All of us have handicaps.

[41 : 19] We're born with. All of us have. Natural tendencies. That God says. No you restrain that. That's natural. Now you're supernatural. Now you don't. Pursue. What's natural.

But it sounded good. Didn't it. If I'm born with it. It's not my fault. I'm born that way. Am I stepping on any toes here. Are we going to get bombed.

At the church here. Well. Well. God's our savior. We're not worried about that. Isn't it. So. What is. What does scripture say. So that's what the devil says. What does scripture say.

First Corinthians six. Or do you not know. That the unrighteous. Will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived. See people were being deceived. Who gets into heaven.

Oh anybody. Doesn't matter. Oh. Paul says. No. Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral. Nor idolaters. Nor adulterers. Nor men who practice homosexuality. Nor thieves.

[42 : 16] Nor the greedy. The greedy. What's wrong with greedy. Nor the greedy. Nor drunkards. Nor revilers. Nor swindlers. Will inherit the kingdom of God. He's not talking about those who have been formerly in their past.

Because he writes to Corinthians who said. Who he says. You've been all that stuff. But now you're. Changed. Right. But those who practice those things. Will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Doesn't matter what. They say. Well here's another lie that Satan spreads to the world. There are no consequences to sin. Sin doesn't matter.

There's just mistakes. There's no consequences. Remember what the serpent said to Eve in the garden? You're not going to die. God said if you do this. There's a consequence. You die. Satan said.

No you're not going to die. You're not going to die. No consequence. No consequence. What does Paul say in Galatians 6. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever one sows.

[43 : 11] That he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh. Will from the flesh reap corruption. But. The one who sows to the spirit. Will from the spirit.

Reap eternal life. There are consequences. Third. A third deception. Satan gives. Is. Sin is old fashioned. It's an old fashioned narrative. It's an ancient thing.

You know. We don't talk about sin anymore. It's not. It's rude to talk about sin anymore. That's judgmental. Right. Most people are good. Obviously there's some bad ones. But most people are good.

Right. I mean. We can't go around saying. You know. That one's worthy. And you know. So that's one of the lies. And sin. By the way. Sin is a shame word. We don't.

We don't want to shame people. Well. Here's what John says. If we say we have no sin. We deceive ourselves. We deceive ourselves. And the truth is not in us.

[44 : 05] If we confess our sins. Here's the good part. If we agree and confess our sins. He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Oh. Little children.

Let no one deceive you. Let not the dragon. Or the false prophet. Or false teacher. Deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness. Is righteous. He doesn't say whoever's perfect.

He says whoever practices righteousness. Doesn't mean you get it all the time. But you're working. And whoever makes a practice of sinning.

Whoever makes a practice of sinning. Not whoever sins. Whoever makes a practice of sinning. Devotes their life to that.

Is where? Of the devil. Is of the devil. There it is. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. That's the reason the son of God appeared.

[45 : 03] Was to destroy the works of the devil. So. The beast's identity. Satan works through world rulers.

Who work through false religion. Who twist and change the truth. So. In the next verses. 14 to 17. We see. How the beast works. What's his intention. His intention. Is to seduce the world. Into false religion. And it doesn't have to be technically a religion. There's a lot of people that don't want to be religious at all. Today. And yet. That can be their religion. It's simply. No. You're fine. You can talk. It's a. Religion's a belief system. So. So. It could be anything. It could be anything. It's just. Not God. It's. It's. So. Remember. We keep going back to the. [45 : 59] To the letters to the seven churches. Remember. They were warned. What were they warned about? They were warned about false teaching. The teaching of Jezebel. The teaching of Balaam. The teaching that led toward idolatry. The teaching that led toward immorality. That was creeping into the church. And he was warning them. You need to repent of that. You need to deal with this. This is Satan working in. Creating a false. Taking a true religion. And making it. Oh. Let's just. That's okay. We can compromise this way. See. That's how it starts. What happened to all the churches. That used to be really strong. Right. What happened? Oh. A little bit of error comes in. Oh. We don't want to take the Bible literally. Oh. There's errors in the Bible. Okay. If there's errors in the Bible. Then. Okay. [46 : 57] We can cut passages out. That we don't like. Or that. I mean. It just goes. On down the line. So. To seduce the world into false religion. So. One asks three questions. What. What is this image it talks about? What is this mark it talks about? And what are the implications of the whole thing? So. The image. He mentions an image. In Greek. The word is icon. Maybe you've heard that before. An icon. An image. A representation of some kind. That the earth dwellers. Are deceived. To make an image. Something that's representative. Of. The first beast. The. Antichrist. If that's what we want to call him. It's an idol. Some kind of image. Some kind of representation. Doesn't have to be a little statue. Okay. That's what we think of. Could be. But it might just be a mental image. It might just be. [47 : 54] An idea. An ideology. A system of belief. An image. Make an image. That you. Bow down to. Idols. Remember. Are anything that substitutes. For God. Things that. You find your security in. Things that you find value in. Things that you. You trust. You depend on. I mean. Anything can be your idol. My job can be an idol. My career can be an idol. My family can be an idol. My church can be an idol. That's where I find my security. That's where I find value. I don't go there because. You know. Jesus means everything. I go there because. That. That. Makes me feel good. So. Even good things can become. Idols. Right. My family. Whatever. My government. My ideology. Okay. And. [48 : 48] And he says. In verse 15. That. That. He has the power to. To give breath. To the image. Kind of a false. Holy spirit here. Gives. He can make it live. He. You make this image. This statue. Live. How do you do that? That's got to be real. That. She. Well. I. I read several places. That in the first century. And long before that. But. First century. The. The. The. The. The. The. Using sorcery. Or ventriloquist. Ventriloquist. You know. Yeah. Like a puppet thing. Right. Ooh. Did that. That spoke. Didn't it? You know. It's like. Watching Darcy Lynch. Like. Okay. She's not moving her lips at all. So. Like that. Trickery. Okay. Makes the image. To breathe. To speak. And if the image. [49 : 45] Is really more of an idea. Idea. An ideology. Oh man. That. Those words. That idea. That lives. That residence. See. So it can mean. If we over literalize it. We might miss. The meaning here. And then we're told. That. That what. What does this beast say. Verse 15. So that the image of the beast. Might even speak. And might cause those. Who would not worship. That's Christians. Cause those. Who would not worship. The image of the beast. To be slain. So. Christians are under threat. Imagine the Christians. In the first century. They're under a threat. You either participate. In these pagan festivals. Or you. Or you lose your place. In the marketplace. Or you die.

Like one of the saints. Of those first seven churches. Did. Antipas. Died. Because he. He stood his ground. So. Imagine.

[50 : 40] There. Look at all the different avenues. Through which this beast works. It's a political level. It's an economic level. Which we'll see. Buying. Selling. It's a. It's a religious level.

About worship. It's even a social. There's social pressure. Imagine living in a society. Where you're not conforming. To what everybody else is doing. What's wrong with you? Okay.

All. All of this. Comes in. So what's this mark? So they get the mark. They get a. Literally the word mark. Means. To brand. Or. To stamp.

Or tattoo. And that was something they did back then. They did that with slaves. To mark their ownership. You know. They would. Tattoo. Or brand them. And. And it's identifying ownership.

Or who you serve. But here again. The. The devil. Is. Copying. Something that God has already done. Remember in Revelation 7.

[51 : 39] What happened to the 144,000? Before the plagues come out. Hold off on the plagues. Until. We. Do what? To the. Servants of God. Till we. Seal them where?

On the forehead. Forehead. Oh. He doesn't even have an original idea. Forehead. Okay. Was that literal? Is there a literal? Is it really? Remember some of the promises to.

To the early churches. Where if you conquer. If you overcome this. I will put God's name on your forehead. Or. The name of God's city. Is that literal? Is that like.

Tattoo? Is it? I'm okay. If that's what God wants to do. I'm okay with that. Or is it symbolic? So.

What about this mark? Is this. This literal? Is it literally a tattoo. Or a mark?

Could be. But unlikely. In this book. Which is so full of. Symbols. And. But what's more significant.

[52 : 34] I think is. Where the mark goes. It's either on. The right hand. What do we do with our hands? Work.

Deeds. Right? We do things. We act. We do. And then on the forehead. Right between the eyes.

What do we do with our foreheads? Well. Nothing with our forehead. But what's.

What's our forehead represent? Our mind. What we think. What we believe. What we believe.

Remember. God told the Israelites long ago. Take these laws of mind.

Put them on your forehead. Put them on your hand. Why? Because they shall guide what you do.

What you think. What you say. Put them on your gates. You put them everywhere.

And the Jews of course. Are faithful to the word. So they take it literally. And what do they do? They actually make boxes. With the. Commands in there. And put them on their head. Bless them.

[53 : 30] I think they're over literalizing it. But they're trying to be faithful. Okay. I respect that.

Okay. I respect that. Jesus didn't do it.

So apparently. You know. It wasn't a literal command. But. So I think it's the same here. He's talking about something symbolic. Something. You're committed in what you believe. Committed in what you do.

You either conform by. By doing it. Or. No. I believe that. I agree. I. No king but Caesar. No king but Caesar. I'm good. Okay. You're clear. I don't think it has to be genuine.

You just conform. And you can buy and sell. Right. Verse 17. So that. No one can buy and sell.

Unless they have the mark.

That is. The name of the beast. Or the number. Of his name. Okay. Here's where we get into the fun stuff. What's this symbol? So what's the implication?

[54 : 29] Verse 18. Just like last time. In verse. 9 and 10. We were given an application. To the first beast. We're given in verse 18. Another application. What's the implication of all this?

What does this mean? What do we need to do? What difference does it make? Well. Verse 18. This calls for wisdom. Not intelligence. Wisdom. Not a mathematical mind.

Wisdom. What's wisdom? What's the difference between wisdom and smarts? You can be a really smart person. But have no wisdom. Wisdom's about the application. Right.

It's the skill of applying knowledge. Proverbs is all about. Here's the wise person. Right. They look at the two different options. They realize what the consequences are. So they make an informed practical choice based on.

I see where it goes. I don't lean on my own understanding. I learn from what God has told me. So wisdom. And then he says. He who has understanding.

[55 : 32] Let the one who has a mind of understanding. Calculate. Okay. Now here's where we. Here's where. Okay. See it says. You got to calculate the number. You got to add it up.

See. It's a code. It's a riddle. You got to add it up. That's what the word means. It does mean that. It also means.

Figure it out. It also means. Reckon. This takes wisdom. And discernment. So apply this.

Interpret this carefully. I lean toward this understanding of this word. To figure it out. See through the deception.

Interpret it wisely. I lean toward that because. As I said. In the first two centuries. There's no one identifying the antichrist. In the first two centuries. By a number.

[56 : 29] It's not until later centuries. Oh. Oh. It's a riddle. We code. We do. We use. They had a term for it. Gram. Gram.

Gram or something. Where the numbers stand for. Number. Letters stand for numbers. In Hebrew. That's absolutely true.

So. Aleph. Means one. Beta. Not beta. Thinking of Greek. Okay. Never mind. Not as fluent in Hebrew.

Okay. Beth. Aleph. Beth. Beth. Beth is two. Gimel. No. That's Greek. Sorry. Okay. Never mind. There's. There are a lot of similarities.

But they're different. All right. Hebrew is so much better. It is the heavenly language. You know. So. Okay. So. Calculate. So. Figure it out. So.

[57 : 27] I don't think. It's more likely that it's not about solving a riddle or a code. It's more that it's symbolic. In fact. Chapter 17. That tells us what the heads mean. What the horns mean.

Chapter 17 tells us. Right. And it even tells us the numbers are symbolic. Not literal. So. Learning to read this book.

As symbolic. So. 666. What's that stand for? Well. What does 7 stand for in the Bible?

Completeness.

Perfection. God created the world in 7 days. Well. 6 days. Ooh. 6. Maybe there's a hint. 7 was His day.

That's a complete week. 7 churches. We know there were more than 7 churches at that time. But 7 churches was a complete representation of all churches.

[58 : 27] 7. Jesus has 7. The Lamb has 7 horns. A completeness of power. So 7 heads is the idea of a complete representation of earthly rulers.

Not a succession. But a complete. So 6. 6. Think about this. If I count it up. He says count.

Right. Okay. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. No. Oh no. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Ish.

One short of. 7. 7. Brilliant. Isn't it? Isn't this just brilliant stuff? It's incomplete.

It's unfulfilled. I want to go to 7. It's 6. It fails. It falls short. It falls short. 6. 6. Is the day that man was made.

[59 : 33] That's man's day. The 7th day. What happens on the 7th day? That's God's day. That's God's day. 6. Is man's day.

The complete day is God's day. We get to enter into that day through Christ. But get the idea? He says the number.

What's the number? This is the number of the name. Okay. So you got to attach the number to the name. Calculate the number of the beast. By the way, if you take the word beast in Greek and you add the numbers, it adds up to 666.

So that one does work. But it doesn't give you a name. No Nero. No Ronnie Reagan. None of that. And then he says it's the number of the beast.

And it's the number of a man. Oh, see? There you go. It's the number of a man. Okay. Now the problem with that is in the Greek. There's no a.

[60 : 40] If writing in Greek you want to identify a particular person, you would use the article the. So he says it is the number of the beast. It is the number of the man.

No, he doesn't say the man. There is no word for a. So it's the number of man. It's the number of humanity.

That's all it means. Not a man. That's why it wasn't Nero. Because it was Nero plus a whole bunch of other guys. That's why it wasn't Alexander the Great.

Because it was Alexander and everybody else that followed him. It wasn't just Nebuchadnezzar. It was Nebuchadnezzar. And then it was Darius. Right? And it's Cyrus.

And it's different names. There's no one name fits the 666. Got it? It's symbolic. Now, I could be wrong.

[61 : 42] Probably not. So now remember what we say about this whole thing. Okay. This isn't like reading Paul and we can just we can know just what he's saying because he's very precise.

We're reading apocalyptic literature. Okay. So what do we take literal? What do we take specific? What do we take? What's a symbol? Right? And there's obviously lots of symbols.

So we have to be careful. So when we say what does what is absolutely true from this book? Well, God wins. Right?

We get heaven. There is a war going on and we're in it. But there's several general things we get. It's clear. Now, what's the particulars about that?

Then we have to talk about, okay, what's most likely? Given the information we have. And the clues we get from here and from here, from Daniel and from later chapters, we kind of piece them in.

[62 : 41] Okay, that's most likely. So that's why I'm saying it's most likely that the first beast is civil authority. The second beast is a false prophet kind of false religion kind of thing.

And I think that works today. So how do we deal with all of this? What's a false prophet?

Remember, Jesus talked about this in Matthew 7.

He said, beware of false prophets. Well, how do we know what they look like, Jesus? He says, well, they come to you in sheep's clothing, so you won't see them right away.

They come in disguise. They're in sheep's clothing. But inwardly, they're ravenous wolves. Well, then how do you tell if they're really a wolf? Remember that Paul said to the Ephesian elders on the beach, he said, some of you will turn out to be wolves.

Some of the elders within the church. It comes from within. Remember, Satan puts the tares in with the wheat. So how do we know?

[63 : 46] Jesus said, you'll know. You'll recognize them by their fruit. It's going to take a while. You're going to have to watch.

You're going to have to watch. What is their fruit? How do they talk? Looks like a lamb, but talks like a dragon. Well, it's not outright lies, so it's a little twist, so I have to just kind of watch.

They don't know. They don't know right away. It's not obvious. Then Jesus said later in Matthew 24 when he's talking about the end times, he says, if anyone says to you, look, here's the Christ.

There he is. Jesus said, do not believe. Imagine Jesus saying don't believe something. Don't believe. I've already been here.

Don't believe. For false Christ and false prophets will arise. And guess what? This is what they're going to do. They're going to perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, to lead astray.

[64 : 48] Even the elect, if that were possible. Because if the elect aren't paying attention, they could be led astray. We all could fall for it for a time, can't we?

If we're not careful, we can be deceived for a while. Not ultimately, but for a while. Oh, man, I really thought that guy was the real thing. I can't believe what he just said.

He just showed who he really is. But he said so many things that were biblical. That's how Satan works.

How did he tempt Jesus? He quoted scripture. Okay. Satan's scheme is to copy and pretend that he's righteous, that he's an angel of light.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians, what I do, I will continue to do. He's talking about there's people that he's competing with or that are competing with him. What I do, I will continue to do.

[65 : 52] I'm doing the right thing. In order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission, they work in the same terms as we do.

So he's talking about there's other people that are being deceptive. He goes on to explain him. He says, these guys that make these claims, these guys are false apostles. They're deceitful workmen.

They're disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. You ever met anybody, by the way, that calls himself an apostle or a prophet? I got a letter recently from somebody. I'm a prophet. I said, okay, thank you very much.

Maybe they are, but you don't. Read the Bible. You don't proclaim yourself to be a prophet. But they're falsely disguising themselves as apostles.

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.

[66 : 54] Now think about it. They're disguising themselves as servants of righteousness, not wickedness. Oh, we serve Jesus.

Oh, we believe in righteousness. Okay? They say the right things. They have sheep's clothing.

It's not immediately obvious. You have to listen. You have to look for the fruit. Okay? Can't they just have a tag on and make it easy?

Yeah. No. That's why it's called Satan's schemes. Okay? He's always a copycat. And he's going to copy what God does. But he's just going to give it a little twist.

Not too much, because they'll catch on. So he's got just a little bit. Because they'll like that. They'll want it to mean that. Okay?

[67 : 51] So we must be wise. Recognize these false teachings by their fruit. So ask some questions. Does this teaching?

Does this person? Does this ministry? Does this whatever agenda is coming out? Does it glorify God? Does it say what God says? Or does it change that?

Does it take God's truth and twist it? Say it in a new way. Does it glorify man?

Is it human reasoning? It's like, oh, well, that makes sense. Well, yeah. Humans make sense. We are given. We are in the image of God.

So we use reason like God does. But we use it for our own purposes. You know, we use human wisdom instead of godly wisdom. What? What's human wisdom?

[68 : 48] Well, we lean on our own understanding instead of trust what God has said. So it's always a temptation for us to, well, God would make more sense if he said it this way.

That's all the devil's doing. Does it usurp God's authority? Does it take for itself what belongs to God alone, like worship, like devotion, like allegiance, like reliance, ultimate reliance for security?

Satan is working hard in our world. He works through human government, world rulers who work through false teaching and false prophets, false religions, false belief systems.

We see it today. So, put on God's armor. Put on his belt of truth, his truth.

Put on a breastplate of righteousness, whose? His, not mine. Mine's got holes all over it. Put on, what do we do?

[69 : 56] Shoes. Shoes of? How do we walk? What do we walk in? What do we do? What do we tell? What do we go tell people? Gospel of peace. Wait a minute, brother.

Take up first, you've got to take up the shield. You go BB, belt, breastplate. Then you go shoes, shield. See, it's brilliant, right? So, take up the shield of?

My faith. Thank you, young lady. Shield of faith in what God has said. And then, what do we put on then? When it's ready, we know the battle's coming right now.

Helmet of salvation. Helmet of salvation, because then I've got to remember, okay, I belong to him. It's all him. And then, I finally get offensive.

And I take the sword. Word of the Spirit. Bless you, young lady. Of the Spirit, which is what? The Word of God. So, we call it a sword.

[70 : 57] Sorry. Sword. Remember, people just say word. We say, sword. Okay? That's what Jesus used for every temptation.

It is written. It is written. It is written. It is written. When you're tempted, simply say, it is written, whatever you're tempted with. I'm tempted with lust.

Say, it is written. Flee immorality. There's power in that. I've experienced power in that.

Just say it. Just keep it simple. Take the shortest quote you can get, because you need to remember it in the moment. Okay.

Oh, I'm done. Okay. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your Word. Oh, Lord. This is some stuff here. We don't have confidence, Father, that we know every detail here.

[72 : 04] But we have confidence that what you have revealed to us, that the devil has schemes, and he's truly working, and he is working through worldly things.

And he is telling lies, and that's how he's going to gather people to follow his way. He's going to lie. And so, Father, give us wisdom.

Give us discernment. Help us to know your Word. Help us to walk with you. And, Father, help us to continually keep our armor on.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.