

When the Whole World Gets Duped

(An In-Depth Look at Revelation 13)

Robert Vacendak

When I moved to Texas in the summer of 1983 and began serving in a local church, I met a woman who was in her mid-twenties that was a vibrant witness for Christ. Whether it was Thursday night visitation or Saturday morning soul winning, she was there and ready to share the gospel with people who needed to hear. In my mind, she was one of the best witnesses for Christ in the church. She and her husband were kind and gracious people who would occasionally invite my wife and I and other couples over to their home for an incredible meal and for some great fellowship. I can't remember when our lives went in different directions but I guess it has been nearly twenty years since I have spoken with this woman or her family. Because of the kind of witness she was for Christ twenty years ago, if someone asked me to guess what she was doing today, my guess would be that she is still faithful to Christ and still giving the gospel out to people who desperately need eternal life. But about a week-and-a-half ago, I was at a missions banquet and saw one of her relatives that I hadn't seen in a long time. I asked him how his sister-in-law was doing and was deeply saddened by what I heard. If he had told me that she was backslidden and away from the Lord, that would have been bad enough. But he told me that she is currently married to her fourth husband, has gone on to get advanced degrees, and no longer believes the

gospel or the Word of God. She is now adamant that what she formerly believed is all a bunch of fables and lies.

I don't have to tell you that we are living in very dangerous times. These are dangerous times for many reasons, but they are dangerous times *especially* because we live in a world in which people are very easily persuaded to make terrible choices. We live in a world in which people are very gullible—they are easily misled—and in the end, pay a huge price because of that. And this is true concerning both believers and non-believers.

In my session this hour, I'd like to speak to you about the spiritual deception that is ravaging the world around us. I not only want to encourage *you* to be on guard, but I would like you to help others to do the same. Revelation 13 tells us that there is a day coming when nearly every person on the face of planet earth will be deceived. *How in the world does that happen?* Well, that's what I would like to speak to you about. The title I have given to my session this hour is this: **“When the Whole World Gets Duped.”**

Not too long ago on the evening news there was a short news story about how zoo animals—as beautiful and as wonderful as they are to look at—can become very violent and deadly in a moment's notice. They showed several instances where zoo visitors and even zoo employees were not paying attention like they should have been and were nearly killed. One woman stepped across a four-foot fence to take a picture of a polar bear and before she knew it, the polar bear reached through the bars of the cage and began to maul her. People standing there began to hit the bear with sticks and managed to

eventually distract the bear to the point where the woman escaped but they showed a chilling picture in slow motion of the bear gnawing on the woman's tennis shoe.

Another woman was not so lucky. She was a zookeeper who worked with huge African lions. Once again, in an unguarded moment, a beautiful and majestic African lion suddenly turned against her and nearly killed her. TV crews showed the woman being wheeled away by the paramedics with her right arm missing. As we all know, wild beasts are very beautiful, but they are also very deadly.

Revelation 13 tells us that there is coming a day in which a human being will be given incredible abilities and power directly from Satan. This human being will be so wise, articulate, and powerful that the people of planet earth will look at him and say, *"Have you ever seen anyone like him? What an incredible person! Who is like him?"* They will say those things and they will literally worship him. To the people of this world, he will be the greatest political and military leader who ever lived and they will do anything he says. But in reality, our Lord tells us through the Apostle John that this coming ruler of the entire world is nothing more than a wild beast—he is a person who will tear your arm off and kill you if he has the opportunity.

In Revelation 13, God gives the Apostle John a perfectly clear and accurate vision of this man whom the Bible calls "The Man of Sin" as well as his right-hand man "The False Prophet." Please turn to Revelation 13.

As you're turning, please allow me to give you a mini-outline of the section of Scripture we will be looking at. If we back up one chapter, what we notice is that

Revelation chapters 12, 13, and 14 introduce us to some of the main characters of the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation Period:

—First, the nation of Israel and Satan (in chapter 12).

—Secondly, the Man of Sin and the False Prophet (in chapter 13).

—And finally, the end-time agents of God—the 144,000 (in chapter 14).

When you and I read these three chapters, what we see is that the intense hatred that Satan has toward the nation of Israel (in chapter 12) compels him to raise up two men through whom he will seek its destruction in the last half of Daniel’s 70th week. Detailed information about these two men is the focus of chapter 13. In chapter 14, we see the end-time agents of God at work, but in chapter 13...

I. The End-time Agents of Satan (13:1-18)

Let’s begin by considering the future ruler of the world:

A. The Man of Sin (13:1-10)

Revelation 13:1 ----- Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Here in Revelation 13:1, the Apostle John has a new vantage point for his visions:

the sand of the sea. Of course, throughout the Bible, “the sand of the sea” is used repeatedly in reference to the nation of Israel (cf. Gen 22:17; 32:12; Isa 10:22; Rom 9:27). Now as John is standing on the seashore, he sees **a beast** (*therion*—a wild beast) coming **up out of the sea** with **seven heads and ten horns** (cf. 17:9-14). The “sea” from

which this wild animal emerges is a symbol of the Gentile nations (cf. 17:15). Satan's right-hand man who will rule the world for the 3 ½ years prior to Christ's return will be a Gentile—specifically (according to Micah 5:5-6), an Assyrian. The **blasphemous name** on the **heads** of the Beast indicates that in the 3 ½ years before Christ returns to reign, this world ruler will speak insults towards the God of the Jewish evangelists (cf. Rev 11). Listen to Daniel 11:36: “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, *shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods*, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done” (emphasis added). His blasphemies might sound something along these lines:

“What kind of God would wreak havoc on the environment of this beautiful earth for 3 ½ years and cause billions of people to die? Only a selfish God of vengeance and evil. I am here to help you and to bless you. I've already taken care of His two prophets of misery and now it will be my goal to rid the world of these fanatical criminals roaming the earth who speak in His name” (of course, a reference to the 144,000).

So in verse 1 we see his blasphemies against Jehovah. Now in verse 2, we see his incredibly swift rise to worldwide power:

Revelation 13:2 ----- Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

The Man of Sin's swift rise to worldwide power is seen in the words **like a leopard**. He will crush enemy armies decisively because he has feet **like the feet of a bear** (in fact, Daniel 11:40-43 gives us information about his military engagements as the Middle-Eastern “king of the North” just prior to his worldwide rule). As was illustrated for us in verse 1, the Beast possesses **the mouth of a lion**, and will pour forth abusive

words about God and His people (cf. 12:2, 5-6). Daniel 11:38 tells us that he will lavish Satan with gold, silver, precious stones, and treasure. And because he does, Satan will give him **power**, a **throne**, and **great authority**. These will all be directly from the hand of **the dragon** (cf. 13:4), i.e., Satan.

Now as John stands on the seashore, verse 3 tells us that he sees the Beast suffer what appears to be a mortal wound:

Revelation 13:3 ----- And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

Both v 3 and v 12 speak of it as a “deadly wound.” Though it is impossible to pinpoint the exact moment this will occur, it appears that the Beast is assassinated. But what causes the whole **world** to marvel—to be utterly amazed; BDAG, p 303—and to follow **the beast** is his resurrection from the dead—notice: **his deadly wound is healed!**

Some commentators do not believe that the king of the North actually dies. But in reality, a strong case can be made that he *does* die and is raised from the dead. Let me explain this. In Revelation 5:6, Christ is described as a Lamb “as though it had been slain.” Here in 13:3, the same basic phrase in the Greek is used (hosei esphagmenon) translated: “as if it had been mortally wounded.” Again, this same basic phrase is used in v 8 calling Christ the Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world.”

In the matter of resurrection, the Greek word used in Revelation 2:8 in reference to Christ’s resurrection from the dead (ezesen) is used in v 14 where it says that the Beast was “wounded by the sword *and lived*” (emphasis added). So in both cases, there is strong evidence that the Beast does indeed die and then come alive.

And as utterly amazing as his resurrection will be, mankind will be even more amazed when they discover that their resurrected leader is now supernaturally indwelt by the spirit of an ancient Roman emperor (in my commentary, I deal with this in depth in Revelation 17). After over three years of absolute turmoil on earth, mankind will be easily deceived by the miracles they see—and they will wholeheartedly follow the Beast.

Because of the lying wonders Satan will bring to pass, the whole world is mesmerized by the Beast and his god, the dragon (whom we know as Satan):

Revelation 13:4 ----- So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

People will be amazed: *“Never has the world met a man his equal!”*

What we see here is the utter gullibility of people separated from God—people who are easily deceived due to their rejection of the compass that God offers His creation for their earthly journeys—the Word of God. That our world is filled with unsaved people who are engulfed in all kinds of spiritual deception should not surprise us. But what it should motivate us to do is to ask the question: “How am I (as a believer) doing when it comes to recognizing truth versus error? How gullible am I?” When someone on the radio or the TV or someone at work is saying that God’s Word says thus and such, do I know the Word of God so well that I can instantly recognize their words as deceptive? When we as God’s people are unable to do this, we are in danger of being, as Peter said, “led away with the error of the wicked” (2 Peter 3:17). And it should motivate us to learn God’s word as we never have before. —So what have we seen so far?

Verse 1—He is a Gentile.

Verse 2—He has great military strength and rises to worldwide rule swiftly with Satan’s help.

Verses 3-4—He is miraculously resurrected after being assassinated and is worshipped. Now verses 5 & 6:

Revelation 13:5-6 ----- And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

In addition to incredible oratorical abilities, Satan will also give the Beast **authority to continue** (or, according to the MT “power to make war”) for **forty-two months**. (Of course, this is the passage Zane used to title his book—a book I highly recommend.) Deceived by Satan and convinced that planet earth’s problems are due to the God of the Bible and His followers, the Man of Sin will despise God’s people, make war against them, and seek to destroy them (cf. 12:17; 13:7). He will pour out insulting words **against God** and rally the people of planet earth (by saying things like):

“For 3.5 years, the two witnesses of the God of the bible tortured us here on earth with all of their plagues. 3 billion people lost their lives. Obviously Jehovah is a dark and evil entity. But we can overcome him. First, we must do away with every one of his followers. They must be arrested and executed. They stand in the way of unity, love, and peace on the earth. Secondly, we must prepare for war. According to his own scriptures, Jehovah will send his false messiah back to the Mount of Olives to attempt to take over the world and impose his ugly and ruthless laws upon it. But he will not prevail. My God, Lucifer—the beautiful lightbearer who empowered me to stop the witnesses and their plagues—will empower all of us as we come together in unity against Jehovah. Only then will this earth know the perfect peace we all long for---a world without Jehovah, his false messiah, and his divisive teachings.”

The Beast will rally the inhabitants of earth, and he will succeed:

Revelation 13:7-8 ----- It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

These verses are truly grim. The Beast will not only **make war** with the people of God, he will **overcome them** (that is, kill them; cf. 13:15). His rule will be worldwide: **over every tribe, tongue, and nation**. His adoration as mankind's God will be worldwide as well: **All who dwell on the earth will worship him**—all who will ultimately remain in unbelief: those **whose names have not been written in the book of Life** (cf. 20:15).

Now God calls His creatures to listen carefully to what He is saying. These words will be highly encouraging to believers in that day:

Revelation 13:9-10 ----- If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The Great Tribulation will be a time of intense persecution and martyrdom for followers of the Lamb. It will be a time when the Beast will lead many saints into **captivity** (= prison). He will kill multitudes of them **with the sword** (in Rev. 20, we see that beheading will be his primary method of execution; cf. 20:4). Verses 9 & 10 are basically a parallel to Galatians 6:7-8—“Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.” The Beast and those who do bidding will pay a huge price. So John is encouraging believers of the Tribulation to cling to the truth that their persecutors will pay for the evil acts they commit (cf. 19:19-21; Matt 26:52). As followers of Christ, they may be called to suffer imprisonment or execution. Therefore, their “weapons” are to be **patience** (endurance) and an unwavering **faith** in God.

Would you allow me to pause for just a moment? Friends, it is vital that our lives are full of God's Word. The way the pros can tell counterfeit money from the real thing is that they know what real money looks like so well that the counterfeit can be spotted in a second. The same is true of false doctrine and godless behavior. We should know God's Word so well that when we hear or see anything that contradicts the truth, we will know it immediately—and reject it! I can't tell you how important knowing God's Word is! It is simply vital.

Now we come to the second half of Revelation 13. As we have seen, somewhere near the mid-point of the seven-year tribulation period, the man whom Daniel 11 calls the “king of the North” will be miraculously healed of a deadly wound and become “The Beast”—Satan's world-ruler. He will kill God's Two Witnesses and then enter the rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem and present himself to the world as its savior:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, **so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God** (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Now, since the Man of Sin claims to be God, he will want a prophet to bolster his claims—and Satan will make sure that he gets one—the Bible calls him “the False Prophet.”

B. The False Prophet (13:11-18) (= the Antichrist)

One of the things that Satan knows beyond a shadow of a doubt—maybe better than anything else—is that if he can’t sidetrack people from hearing the gospel of grace through drugs, alcohol, and blatant sin, he will very cleverly do it through false religion. In fact, it is one of his most subtle ways of fighting God. If he can’t addict people to *overt sin*, he will try to get them “doing stuff for God”—Jesus, Buddha, Allah—it doesn’t matter who. As long as they never discover the truth of eternal life by grace through faith in Christ.

Now if you’re a history buff, you know that from the beginning nearly every religious movement has found it necessary to have its own prophet (undoubtedly because the true religion found in the Word of God is prophetic in nature). As a result, most false religions also claim to be *verified* by prophecy. The final world religion before Christ comes to reign will be no exception. Let’s look at Revelation 13:11.

Revelation 13:11 ----- Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

The second **beast** that John sees here in his vision does not come out of the sea as the first beast did but **out of the earth** (Gk: *ges*—land), very possibly a reference to the *land* of Israel (cf. 1:7). As we saw in verse 1, the first beast—the beast out of the sea is a Gentile. The second—earth’s new religious leader—may very well be a Jew. Think about this. In light of the endless Arab-Israeli problems which the world has endured *ad infinitum*, this would be an ingenious arrangement from the mind of Satan himself—the union of an Arab and Jew to lead the world into political, economic, and religious harmony. The perfect answer to the world’s current dilemma!

So what can we learn about this future religious leader? Well, when John says that the beast out of the land possesses **two horns like a lamb**, he is saying that outwardly, he will appear very humble and gentle. But what comes out of him will be far different: he will speak **like a dragon**. The Satanic doctrine he will zealously promote will be the deity of the first beast (cf. 13:12; Matt 7:15). He will be the ultimate “wolf in sheep’s clothing!” That is why he is called “the false prophet” three times in Revelation (cf. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). The first beast—the Man of Sin—will exalt himself, not only as a political leader, but as God. And because of that, he will want (and need!) a religious man to passionately promote him before the world.

Now there’s a great reminder here for us. In light of Satan’s power to deceive, believers must always test what teachers say against the Word of God, no matter how holy and God-like they may appear:

- “...by their fruits you will know them...” (cf. Mat 7:15-20).
- “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess 5:21).
- “...do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

The believers in the early church tested *even the Apostle Paul’s words*—and they were commended for it by Luke (cf. Acts 17:10-11).

Please listen carefully to the following words. Most commentators and pastors generally refer to the first beast (the Man of Sin) as “the Antichrist,” but in light of the fact that the Apostle John is *the only NT writer* to use this title in his writings—and he does so in the context of *false prophets* (cf. 1 John 2:18-19; 4:1-3)—it is highly probable

that it was the end-times *religious* leader (*the* False Prophet here in Revelation 13) whom John was referring to when he coined the title “Antichrist.” Please note: *Nowhere does Paul or any other NT writer call the first beast by this title.*

This has a critical impact on how we view 1st John. Look at 1 John 2:18 with me:

1 John 2:18 ----- Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

If capital “A” (Antichrist) is a reference to the Man of Sin, lower case “a” (antichrists) is kind of ambiguous—“...*you have heard that a corrupt God-hating leader is coming, even now many God-hating leaders have come...*” But if Antichrist is referring to *the* False Prophet, the statement is much clearer and instructional: “*you have heard that the False Prophet is coming, even now many false prophets have come...*” John is sounding a clarion warning about people who are leading other people away from the truth of God’s Word. Again, this is clearly seen in 4:1-3:

1 John 4:1-3 ----- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many **false prophets** have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And **this is the spirit of the Antichrist**, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

In light of these two passages in 1st John, I am of the opinion that seeing the Antichrist as the False Prophet of Revelation brings a much stronger impact than seeing him as the Man of Sin.

Now we saw that in verse 11 of Revelation 13, the False Prophet will come across as a very humble religious leader. What are some of his other characteristics? Verse 12:

Revelation 13:12 ----- And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Because the authority that is bestowed on him is so great, he will command the entire earth **to worship** the Man of Sin. Of course, being a “holy man,” he will not do this by barking orders (that would be way too harsh for such a “great man of God”). As we shall see in v 14, what he will do is simply to erect a statue to honor the Man of Sin as the one who rose from the dead, i.e., **whose deadly wound was healed**. What the False Prophet may say to mankind in that day might sound something like this:

“Do you not agree with me that this man who has risen from the dead is planet earth’s real Savior and worthy of all our worship? He has stabilized the earth once again by ridding it of the evil deity’s two prophets. I therefore decree by the authority vested in me, that anyone who will not worship the image of mankind’s true and living Savior proves his devotion to the evil deity and his son Jesus and does not deserve to live.”

The False Prophet will have great authority and miracle-working power:

Revelation 13:13-15 ----- He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth— by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

What we see here is that the False Prophet will portray the Man of Sin as mankind’s Messiah and will bolster his claims by performing astounding miracles (**great signs**) like making **fire come down** from the sky to **the earth** (something that, interestingly enough, the OT prophets of Baal could not do). That unsaved people will be deceived by the powerful miracles that the False Prophet will perform goes without saying. But a majority of God’s covenant people (the Jews) will be deceived as well (cf. Zech 13:8). The critical Greek text does not contain a phrase in v 14 that is found in the

MT which bears this out: *tous emous*. If included, the English translation reads: “And he deceives *My own people* who dwell on the earth...” In light of the fact that one of Satan’s key desires is the annihilation of the Jewish race, this should cause us to strongly consider the inclusion of this phrase.

Now verse 14 tells us that the False Prophet will perform astonishing miracles **in the sight of** (or, better, “*on behalf of*”—BDAG, p 342) **the beast**. Through Satan’s **power**, the False Prophet will **give breath to** a statue bearing the likeness of the Man of Sin, meaning, it will become alive—demon possession—not of a person, but of an inanimate object. It will possess the ability to **speak**, but its main purpose will be to kill—it will destroy all who refuse to **worship** it. Mankind will see this and will be highly motivated (in essence, *forced*) to worship the Man of Sin.

Again, there is a very important lesson here: **we are to be rightfully suspicious of religious movements which constantly appeal to miraculous activity to vindicate their claims.**

If someone says to you (as they have said to me), “*God came upon me one time and I was glued to the ground. I tried but I couldn’t get up off the ground for two hours. That **had to be** God’s work,*” you might want to say to them: “*Oh really? If you can’t verify that from Scripture, how do you know it wasn’t Satan trying to dupe you into believing a lie?*” “*Because it felt so good and powerful---it had to be of God.*” Oh, I see. So now we base our beliefs about God on how something feels. Folks, a lot of people go into churches and light candles and it makes them feel good but that doesn’t mean that

God is in that. I used to feel pretty good about myself when I came out of the confessional booth, but that doesn't mean that God was happy with me.

Another important lesson: **we are to get our beliefs from God's Word and not from what we experience.** That is very important. In the Great Tribulation, the False Prophet will be performing miracles—the world will be stunned by what they experience. But those incredible feats will be directly from the hand of Satan himself—satanic deception as the world has never experienced before. And this leads us to possibly the most sinister scheme Satan has ever unleashed on mankind. The False Prophet will institute a worldwide economic system which involves in the eternal damnation of all who participate:

Revelation 13:16-18 ----- He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

If the murderous statue wasn't bad enough, another way that the False Prophet will dupe mankind to side with the Man of Sin is through their pocketbooks and stomachs. Regardless of a person's lot in life (**small or great, rich or poor, free or slave**), the False Prophet will require *all to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads*. He will decree that without this mark of identification—the ultimate sign of loyalty to the Man of Sin—**no one may buy or sell**. Of course, once again, to the unbelieving humans who survive the first half of the Tribulation, this will sound like the greatest thing on earth, but in reality, it is simply a tool of Satan with *eternally damning consequences*:

Revelation 14:9-11 ----- “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall...be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

Obviously, God will not allow believers to take this mark. He will either give them special grace to reject it, or He will take them home before they are able to receive it. But none of God’s people will take this mark. From Matthew 24, it is clear that not all of God’s people will persevere in godliness—“the love of many will grow cold” (24:12). Not all saved people in the Tribulation will endure in godliness till the end. But even though *some* of them fail God in this matter, *none* of them will take the mark of the Beast. That is something that God simply will not allow.

So what is the mark of the Beast (as it is often called)?

The **mark** of the Beast *may* be like a tattoo and consist of **the name of the beast, or the number of his name** (according to verse 17). Of course, another possibility is that the mark will be a computer chip implanted beneath the skin that can easily be scanned.

But regardless of how this plays out, once the economic system based on this mark is instituted, believers will find themselves in desperate straits—shut out from the world’s economy and enemies of society. And what they will need is the **wisdom** offered to them by God. According to verse 18, those who are wise and **understanding** will **calculate the number of the beast**. In other words, in spite of the tremendous but temporary advantages enjoyed by those who take the mark of the Beast, the discerning believer in that day will recognize the Man of Sin and his mark for what it is—**it is the number of a man** and not God. Though it is a mystery to us, perceptive followers of

Christ in that day will clearly understand the connection between the Beast's **number—666**—and the Beast himself (possibly through the previously given teachings of the two witnesses). Wise believers will understand this connection and will avoid the Beast and his heinous mark like the plague!

In closing, I would like to ask how you are doing in terms of recognizing false teaching. The same apostle who gave us Revelation also told us (as we read earlier) that “many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1). Let me encourage you in the days ahead to do your best to become students of the Word like you never have before. Ask God to help you understand it. And then do all you can to stand for the truth and against error. You can have victory in this matter because “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
