

**THE RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST
AND THE FALSE PROPHET
The Mark of the Beast
Revelation 13:1-18**

THE BEAST ARISES. Revelation 13:1

"I stood." Some translations read, "he stood" or the "dragon stood." The difference in the reading comes from the dropping one Greek letter from the verb "stood." With the letter added it means the John stood upon the sand and with the letter dropped it would mean the beast stood on the sand. It is most likely that a letter would be dropped than added. If it is the dragon standing on the sand of the sea in verse one, then this contradicts the next sentence that says the beast is rising out of the sea. The King James Bible translation is correct. Thus, contextually, it is plainly John who is seen standing on the sea shore (sand) and who sees the dragon arise from its midst.¹

The reference to the beast rising from the sea refers to Daniel 7:2-3. Daniel saw four beast rising from the sea which was symbolic of the four empires, the ancient Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman nations. The Bible occasionally uses the word "sea" symbolically as a reference to the Gentile nations and that is the picture here.² Symbolically the dragon, who is Satan, is seen arising from the Gentile nations which identifies him as the Antichrist a Gentile.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S BEAST. Daniel 2

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2, he saw a beast heading a head of gold, in which Daniel identified as King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:38). The beast is further described as having a breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay mixed. History records that the Babylonian empire was conquered by the combined nations of the Medes and the Persians represented as the breast of silver with two arms. This is called the Medo-Persian Empire. Following the Medo-Persian Empire was Alexander the Great who conquered most of the known world and established the Greek Empire represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as the belly and thighs of the beast described as being of brass.

The Greek Empire was followed by the Roman Empire. In secession, each of these empires controlled a larger portion of the world. The last empire to rule the world was the Roman Empire identified as being like iron. Emperor Constantine I (271-337 AD) moved his capital to Byzantium in 330 AD. This divided the Roman Empire into two halves represented by the Western capital in Rome and the Eastern capital in Byzantium which was renamed Constantinople. The Western Empire ended in 476 AD, when the Goths conquered the last Western Roman Emperor Romulus Augustus. In 1453 AD, the Eastern Roman Empire came to an end when its capital city of Constantinople fell to invading Turks. Thus the two legs of the beast accurately represent the divided Roman Empire.

The two feet of the beast are described as consisting of iron and clay. Clearly

history records the that Roman Empire ended, but Daniel 2 states a future empire is coming which is identified as being partly of iron representative of the Roman Empire and of clay which means it will not have the strength and power of the former Empire. This "Revived" Roman Empire is said to have two feet which perfectly fits Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which describes the old Roman Empire as having two legs. It is reasonable to continue to accept the details of the prophecy and conclude that the two feet will each have five toes representing five Eastern nations and five Western nations which combine make up the ten nation confederacy.

John sees the beast rising from the sea having, *"seven heads, ten horns, upon his horns ten crowns and upon his head the name of blasphemy."* Daniel 7:8 identifies the beast with this description as the Revived Roman Empire and as "another little horn" meaning another nation. Thus it is the Antichrist who arises from the sea, probably meaning the sea or mass of humanity. Jesus in Matthew 13:47 symbolically referred to the sea to represent the lost world. In the chronology of the Tribulation this happens just after the rise to power of the "little horn" or the world leader, the Anti-christ. This odd looking beast refers to the confederacy of nations that will make up the Revived Roman Empire symbolized by in Daniel 2:33 as feet of iron mixed with clay. Here the beast which is the Revived Roman Empire is seen as rising out from the nations of the world. Of these ten nations, three are conquered by the Antichrist (Dan. 7:8), thus the Antichrist's ten nations are reduced to seven actual nations. The crowns refer to symbols of authority of the ten nations.

Written on the head of the beast are the "names of blasphemy." Blasphemy is defined as the attributing the work of God, the Holy Spirit, to the Devil. A possible connection is that the Roman Empire will claim to be the nation of God. The Roman Catholic Church, centered at the Vatican in Rome, claims divine authority and the pope claims to be the Christ's representative on Earth. In the later days of the old Roman Empire is was called, "the Holy Roman Empire" denoting the authority the Roman church believed it had over it. This is pure and simple blasphemy. The Roman Catholic Church has never represented Christ on earth and is a perversion of every true teaching of God's word. Thus these nations under the Antichrist claim to be representing God and yet in truth are nations controlled by Satan. Under the false prophet the Antichrist will unite the religions of the world into one. Protestants, Catholics, apostate Christian churches and cults along with Islam and the oriental religions could easily be joined into one creed. The present existence of the World and American Council of Churches is proof of apostate Christian churches willingness to put aside all doctrine in the name of ecumenicalism. All these "faiths" at this time will have put aside their doctrinal differences for the sake of unity and loyalty to the Antichrist. The names of many religions will be written on the seven heads of this beast. The fact that those that blaspheme God will be identified by the various heads indicates the religious foundation of the beast or the Revived Roman Empire.

This new beast, the revived Roman Empire, has all the characteristics of the nations of history recorded in Daniel 7:4-7.

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|------------------|---|---|
| Lion | = | Babylon |
| Bear | = | Medo-Persian Empire |
| Leopard | = | Alexandrian Empire |
| Ten Horned Beast | = | Roman Empire - a combination of the preceding three nations yet more powerful |
| Little Horn | = | Revived Roman Empire under the Antichrist. |

The fourth beast represents the old Roman Empire that is restored to power in the Tribulation. In this verse no break in time is seen because God was not revealing this present Church Age to Israel. Note that Daniel 7:9-14 is referring to the Second Coming of Christ. The coming empire of the Antichrist is often called the "Revived" Roman Empire because the same nations that made up the old Roman Empire will be a part of the new revived world power. The Antichrist will form a coalition of European states probably under the authority of Rome. The Roman Catholic Church historically has seen itself as being the power behind the kings and governments of Europe. Under this theory called the "Divine Right of Kings" kings ruled because they were chosen by God and the Roman Catholic Church as the representative of God on earth had authority over kings. If the apostate Roman Catholic Church gave its support to the Antichrist it would be decisive in uniting the European states and giving legitimacy his coming to power. Today each of the European states has a state church which is either Protestant or Catholic. Although some of the European nations are Protestants there is great support to return these churches to the Roman Church or to cooperate in ecclesiastical matters.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream these world empires are seen as one large image. (Dan. 2:31-35 and the interpretation in verses 36-45)

The description of this great image: (Dan. 2:31-33)

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|--|
| Head | - fine gold - | Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel's day. |
| Breast and Arms | - Silver- | Medo-Persian Empire |
| Belly and thighs | -Brass- | Greek Empire |
| Legs | -Iron- | Roman Empire |
| Feet | -Iron & Clay- | Revived Roman Empire (In the Tribulation under the Antichrist) |

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BEAST. Rev. 13:2

This beast that John saw is describes as having the characteristics of a lion, bear and leopard. The imagery comes from Daniel 7 and these are the symbols of Babylon, the Medo-Persian, and the Greek Empire. Each of these in secession were the forerunners of the Roman Empire which is describes as symbolically as being like iron. Each of these three empires contributed some of their distinctiveness to the Roman Empire. The last phrase in the verse two says, "*and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority*" which reveals that Satan is the power behind this beast. Therefore each of the

three empires are represented in this the fourth empire and is a composite of all the characteristics of these prior empires. Daniel saw them in the order they would rule looking into the future from his day. John sees them in reverse order, seeing the Revived Roman Empire first and looking back in time. Thus this beast is identified as the Roman Empire which has been revived and is empowered by Satan, and lead by his dupe the Antichrist.

THE BEAST RECEIVES A DEADLY WOUND. Revelation 13:3

The Antichrist will be a man, a world leader that is possessed by Satan. When Satan was cast to earth he possessed the Antichrist and now visibly rules the world. (Rev. 12:4) It is Satan, the dragon, which is giving the Antichrist his great power. Verse 3 reveals that one of the heads of the beast receives a mortal blow to its head. Verse 1 states the beast will be made of seven heads and ten horns. The confederacy is comprised of ten nations which are described by Daniel as ten toes. (Dan. 2:33, 41-42) In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the ancient Roman Empire is referred to being legs of iron. However, the feet and ten toes are said to be made of iron and clay which reveal a fifth empire that is has the elements of the fourth empire which is Rome, but is weaker. (Dan. 2:33) Daniel 2:34 discloses that a stone, that was not cut by the hands of man, smites the toes of the beats and destroys them. It is well to note that each time God mentions this last nation He reveals its destruction. Daniel 2:35, in giving the details of this empires destruction states *"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."* It then is clear that this fifth empire, headed by the beast, the Antichrist, rules over the last world empire that is an amalgamation of the preceding four nations. There are seven nations that make up the revived Roman Empire. The Antichrist rules the entire confederacy, but is officially the head of one of the seven nations. Therefore this appears to be referring to the Antichrist.

Daniel 7:20 explains that this last empire has ten heads, but the beast overcomes three of the ten nations leaving only seven heads or rulers who serve the Antichrist. Revelation 13:3 discloses that one of the heads receives what appears to be a fatal blow to the head. Many believe that this means the Antichrist will be killed and then brought back to life by the Devil. Revelation 13:14 states the wound is from a sword. Nowhere in the Bible is Satan seen as having the power to bring the dead back to life. The wound is described using the term *"as it were."* This could mean the wound only appeared to be a fatal. Satan is the master of deception and the world could easily be fooled into believing this wound is fatal. Skilled graphic technicians and illusionists could easily deceive people with their tricks. In awe over the power of the Antichrist to recover from a death blow his world power and control is strengthened.

Others believe it refers to the revival of the Roman Empire which in history died long ago, but it is now brought back into existence. At present the Roman Empire does not exist and to many it appears unlikely that it could be brought back into existence. It would

be quite a political feat to revive the Roman Empire (Holy Roman Empire) which covered all of Europe and England. Some suggest that the reference may mean the world marvels at the fact the Roman Empire is revived. Most likely however, this is a reference to the Antichrist.

HISTORICAL NOTE

By the middle of the 10th century the old Roman Empire which had degenerated until it had little power or influence. In mid 900's, Otto the Great made Germany the chief political power and created the what was called the Holy Roman Empire. Otto chose to base his power on an intimate alliance with the Roman Catholic Church. He gave large grants of land to the Church leaders and gave them political power. As a consequence, he assumed the power to elect the clergymen who were to receive the royal lands and to serve him. Otto ruled with the blessings of the pope and his appointed clergy and this gave him greater power. In 951, Otto, a German, assumed the title of "King of Italy." He then marched to Rome and took the city. He persuaded Pope John XII to crown him emperor and extended his power to the point that no pope could be appointed without his approval.

Otto the Great had successfully renewed the Western Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire because of its affiliation with the Roman Church. He actually only ruled over Italy and Germany, but he was the most powerful ruler in Western Europe. After Otto I's death, from 973 to 1056, he was succeeded by five emperors and the empire continued to expand into Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary.

Many opposed the Ottoman Empire with its concept of an emperor being the divinely ordained leader of the Roman church. Further Italy did not like having a German as their emperor. The larger commercial cities became wealthy and they too wanted to throw off imperial rule. The Roman church joined the move to rid itself of the Ottomans. Pope Leo IX (1049-1054) saw the Roman Catholic Church as God's appointed instrument for the spiritual and political salvation of all men. All Christians then, even the kings and princes, were therefore under his rule as the Vicar of Christ. The emperor was in the course of these reforms denied from having any say in the elections of papacy. The pope formed alliances with southern Italy for protection instead of the relying on the emperor and further took over many of the responsibilities of the empire. However, the Holy Roman Empire although weakened still survived.

In the middle of the 12th century, a new family of Germany rulers came to power named the Hohenstaufens. The first Hohenstaufen was Frederick I, who successfully restored a great deal of the power the Holy Roman Empire had lost. Frederick I refused to admit to papal supremacy or allow the Church to interfere with his rule as emperor. Until he drowned in 1186 his rule was one of rebellion and caused discord in the empire.

His son, Henry VI, took the throne, and tried but failed to expand the empire into

Spain, the Holy Land and France. He died a premature death in 1197. After his death the Roman church again regained the power under Pope Innocent III. He planned to not let any of the Hohenstaufen's rule. When he could not prevent the German nobles of electing a new emperor to the throne, the Pope appointed another Ottoman to the throne and civil war broke out. With the help of France, Pope Innocent III, gained the upper hand and had Frederick II, crowned emperor. He proved no pawn of the pope and regained the power of the empire. To maintain power he made many concessions to the nobles and the Pope. He died in 1250 and was not replaced until 1273.

During this period the empire literally came apart. Germany came to pieces politically and from this period on the individual nobles and kings went their own independent way. Thus the Holy Roman Empire that had stood in some form for a thousand years failed. It is well to note that the descendants of the Hohenstaufens who live in Austria still claim the right to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire until this day. Many have speculated that the Antichrist could be a Hohenstaufen and restore the Holy Roman Empire.

THE WORLD WORSHIPS THE BEAST. Revelation 13:4

Revelation 13:4 states that the world worships the Dragon, who is Satan, because it gives supernatural power to the beast. This is interesting because the uniting factor in the Antichrist's rise to power is his religious appeal to the religions of the world. During the last half of the Tribulation the world begins to openly worship the beast and this could mean that these apostate churches, cults and false religions finally acknowledge who they are in truth serving. False Christian religions up to this time have masked themselves saying they worship Almighty God our Creator, but now because of worldwide hatred of God they unmask themselves.

The Antichrist's power and rule will be unrestrained until the Lord returns and will last three and a half years of the Tribulation. (Rev. 13:5) The character of the Antichrist is seen in his blaspheming God, God's name, the tabernacle of God, and those in heaven. His blasphemy is that he claims he is God, takes God's name, and proclaims the dwelling place of God is on earth in him. Further he claims power over heaven itself. (Rev. 13:6 also see Daniel 7:8, 11, 25)

THE BEAST BLASPHEMES GOD. Revelation 13:5-6

The phrase "*there was given to him*" denotes that the beast is given the power to blaspheme God. In verse 17, the same phrase is used in which the beast is given the power make war against the saints of God and overcome them. The phrase indicates that God is not restraining the beast in the last half of the Tribulation. The intent to blaspheme God and kill the saints of God is the desire of the beast and God does not prevent him from doing as he pleases. In allowing the beast to reveal his true character, God is allowing the beast to expose himself to the world so they might see

who he truly is. The beast can no longer hide behind a cloak of feigned peace and good will be can be now seen as the evil and despicable person he is truly. Further the hypocrisy of man comes to an end. Who a man serves, either God or Satan, is now starkly apparent. The false religions and cults come out of the closet and openly oppose God by bowing down and worshiping the beast.

The word “blasphemies” means he speaks evil things in a torrent of rage and vehemently attacks God and those who believe God’s word. The beast then openly rallies the enemies of God around him and in his railing against God feeds their rebellion against the Lord and His truth.

THE BEAST MAKES WAR. Revelation 13:7

Earlier at the beginning of the Tribulation, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit has been removed and the beast now under the control of Satan rules the world with almost total control. His rage is poured out on the saints of God who refuse to worship him and God allows him to kill them.

In Revelation 14:1-5, John sees the 144,000 Jewish saints who were sealed in Chapter 7, as being in heaven. This verse explains what happened and why they are in heaven with the Lord. In time the beast is allowed to kill the saints of God, including the 144,000, at or shortly after the middle of the Tribulation. It appears that most of the people on earth who were open to receiving the Gospel have been saved and the beast is seeking to wipe them from the earth.

Although the verse says he is given power over all kindreds, and tongues (languages) and nations, they will not all accept him. If he has power over Russia and the Eastern nations his hold is weak in that they will rebel and attack the Israel. The beast’s final campaign will be in the Jezreel Valley, at Armageddon and he will be fighting against a series of nations coming from the east. Although the beast’s empire is referred to as being worldwide, it probably encompasses the European nations to the west and nations of the Middle East, but not the far eastern nations such as India and China.

THE UNSAVED WORSHIP THE BEAST. Revelation 13:8

The unsaved of the world whose names are not written in the book of life will all worship the beast. During the Tribulation many will worship the Antichrist out of fear and awe of his great power. In Revelation 14:9-11, God says that all who receive the mark of the beast will not be saved and will be cast into the Lake of Fire. However, not all will be lost as many Jews and people from all the nations will hear the Gospel and believe. At the same time the religious ecumenical movement will blossom into full bloom as the Antichrist claiming to be God and assisted by the false prophet unites all religions of the world into one world religion. It should be noted that the Christian and non Christian religions will probably still retain their individuality, and add the worship of Satan and the Antichrist to their religions. In history when the Roman Emperor set himself up as a god he required the people worship him. However, they were also allowed to worship other gods as well.

Christians who were brought before Roman courts were given the option to make a sacrifice to the Emperor or pay a penance to him and to save their lives. They could retain their belief in Jesus Christ, but had to also pay homage to the Emperor as a god. It did not matter if they continued to worship Christ, only that they also worshiped the Emperor or the gods of Rome. Christians refused to worship any god, but Jesus Christ and were therefore martyred. It could easily be the same way during the Tribulation.

Revelation 13:8 states *“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.”*

This verse has incorrectly been used to support the false teachings of Calvinism that purports that God has elected in the past that some are to be saved and others to be damned to hell without any chance of being saved. Nothing in the verse says or suggests that God has decreed or chosen to not include their names in the book of life. The verse simply states the unsaved will worship the beast. It is a serious error to impose someone’s supposed presuppositions on God’s word. We are to accept God’s word literally for what it plainly states.

THE WARNING TO THE “DWELLERS OF EARTH” AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. Revelation 13:9-10

The phrase “dwell upon the earth” in the Greek language has a more intense meaning than conveyed in English. The word “dwell” is the Greek word *“katoedeo”* and is used to describe the Godhead in Colossians 2:9. It is used in Ephesians 3:17 of Christ’s taking up permanent abode in a believer’s heart and in the Gospels of demons returning and taking up absolute possession of a man.³ The use of this strong word means that those referred to are soundly resolved to spiritual worldliness and its subsequent sinful life.

The key to interpreting this passage is to understand that the term means more than just those who physically reside on the earth. It also reveals something about their character and spirit. These “earth dwellers” have made their choice to reject God and His offer of redemption from sin. They are in open rebellion against God and their sin and rejection of God is the reason their names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb. God did not predestine them to hell, but they willingly have chosen to go there because as Jesus said in John 3:19-20, *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d.”* Further the phrase *“from the foundation of the world”* refers to the God’s plan of salvation in that Christ would be slain for the sins of the world. (See Eph. 1:3-14).

Verse 10 is a warning to those who are following the beast and are carrying out his murderous deeds. God says those who imprison or kill others will have the same thing happen to them. The phrase *“Here is the patience and the faith of the saints”* is given as an assurance to the Tribulation saints who are being persecuted will be avenged by God for their sufferings and deaths. This same assurance is shown in Revelation 14:12 to those who *“that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”* It is hard for us to imagine the anguish these Christians are experiencing, because everything in their lives

is unsettling. Think what it would be like not be able to purchase food or shelter for yourself or your family and to be constantly pursued by the government forces that are out to kill you. Think how you would feel to have loved ones, family or friends who are worshiping the Devil and the Antichrist and having received the mark of the beast you know they will spend eternity in hell. Think how helpless you would feel when your family or fellow brothers and sisters in Christ are caught and executed. Think about the effects of this on your family and children and your inability to protect them. Yes, it will be comfort to know that God will pay just retribution to those who perpetrating these terrible crimes on innocent people.

THE FALSE PROPHET. Revelation 13:11-12

John now sees a new character come on the scene that plays is an important part of the Antichrist's worldwide government. This second beast is described as another beast that also has great power which he uses to promote the empire of the first beast. In Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10 identify this second beast as the false prophet who will be cast into the Lake of Fire along with the Antichrist. The Antichrist will be a Gentile world political leader and this second beast appears to head and enforce his worldwide religious system. He comes from the earth, which makes the distinction of his being not from heaven and is a man. He too is empowered by Satan. The term false prophet is a Jewish term which could indicate that the false prophet is probably a Jew. The term is not used in the Bible to describe a Gentile and further the second beast is a miracle worker. In scripture it is Jews, not Gentiles that do miracles. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 says of the beast, *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

His appearance also is noted as being like a lamb with two horns. This would refer to his mild and placid appearance which the world associates with a religious leader. False religious leaders always appear to be mild mannered and gentle persons. They have charismatic and appealing personalities, unlike a real lamb that has no horns; this one has two horns which reveal his true destructive nature. Though he appears as a lamb he speaks as a dragon. False teachers and religious leaders always present the appearance of being lamb like, yet when exposed their true nature is revealed showing them to be cruel and greedy for power and money. Their deceptive appearance is noted in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, *"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."*

This second beast referred to as the false prophet has the same source of power as the Antichrist and leads the world in worshiping the beast. Verse 10 again mentions the "deadly wound" received by the Antichrist which indicates that the false prophet is using this supposed miracle as proof of the Antichrist's supernatural power. The world, lost in sin, is clearly deceived and believes his lies. Today if you turn on your TV and watch the dozens of false evangelists it is clear they have a strong cult like and loyal following. They

are all multimillionaires supported by their gullible audiences. Their gullibility to these false teachers is easy to understand and shows in miniature what will become worldwide phenomena in the second half of the Tribulation.

THE FALSE MIRACLES OF THE ANTICHRIST. Revelation 13:13

The false prophet performs great signs (miracles) and even appears to bring fire down from heaven. (Rev. 13:13) This could be an imitation of Elijah's miracle done to appeal to the Jews. 1 Corinthians 1:22 says, *"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom."* The Bible states that many are impressed by the "signs" (wonders) and this adds to their deception as they are awed by the power of the prophet. (Rev.13:14) Many people today are impressed by false miracles that are claimed to be from God. The great following of the false TV faith healers comes from their apparent power to do miracles. One of the TV networks had a special program on TV faith healers which exposed many of the tricks they used to do their supposed healings. Although the tricks they used to con their audiences were exposed, they were little affected by being exposed as frauds.

Satan gives power to the Antichrist and the false prophet to do great wonders. Verse 14 says the false prophet deceives the world by the means of these miracles. If they were real there would be no need for deception. Today magicians using deception make elephants and jet liners disappear before their audience's eyes. The Devil is the great deceiver and these supposed supernatural miracles are probably simply tricks. We should not be impressed by wonders, but by obedience to the Bible. We should judge whether God approves of a man or ministry by comparing it with the Bible, not its works!

The term "ecumenical movement" refers to a modern trend of many churches to come together in a common worship. It will be the work of the false prophet to bring different religions together during the Tribulation having them put aside their doctrinal differences aside to worship together. A recently television news program demonstrated the current trend to bring all religions together. Across the screen rolled pictures of a Moslem mosque, a Catholic church and a Jewish synagogue. The reporter made these statements as each picture came into view. "In Islam they call him "Allah", in Christianity he is called "God," and in Judaism his name is "Jehovah." Note how shrewdly he represented God as the God of Islam and apostate Judaism.

In the past twenty years the Charismatic movement has been a drawing card that has brought many doctrinally different "Christian" churches together. Many orthodox Roman Catholics, Protestant and "Christian" denominations have joined together in working together in evangelism setting aside all doctrinal differences. In recent times such unbiblical movements such as the Promise Keepers has spread like wild fire through "Christianity" which shows that many in Christianity can be misled. These various groups have stated agenda is to bring all religions together into a common worship of God. Doctrinal differences are completely ignored in the

name of unity. Mormons, Catholics, cults and professing "Christian" churches are coming together in "serving" the Lord. (The quotations are placed to identify these terms as being falsely used) The real problem is that most of Christianity today is a false religion made up of unregenerate people who have been deceived.

Increasingly Bible believing churches and pastors are being asked by the leaders of churches to participate in evangelistic meetings to bring, "all the Christian churches in our area together." Only a few uncompromising New Testament churches that love God's word are refusing to participate in these joint ecumenical meetings.⁴ All this ecumenical fervor is simply a prelude that is setting the stage for the coming one world church under the Antichrist and the false prophet.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST "666." Revelation 13:15-18

The false prophet leads the people to make an "image" of the beast. What this image actually is not known. It could be an idol, a machine, a computer system or a symbolic sign of the authority of the Antichrist.

The image of the beast speaks and has the ability to kill those who do not worship the beast. Some including the writer of these notes believes this is probably a worldwide computer system used by the Antichrist to control the world. The Internet has boomed in the last few years clearly showing that technology to control the world is basically in place. Technology is growing so fast now that from month to month much software and computer systems become obsolete. A common joke in the computer world says that a salesman in a computer store went to lunch and when he returned an hour later the whole industry had changed. Literally it is almost changing that fast.

Japan announced in August 2007 that they are planning to spend eight billion yen in research for a new system that would replace the Internet. It is projected to be in commercial use by 2020. This new communications technology would not be susceptible to current Internet problems such as virus and would be much faster.⁵

The image of the beast can talk and can identify individual people determining whether they have received the "mark of the beast" or not. The Internet now has the partial ability to do this and within a short time will have this full capability. Since September 11, 2002 when the terrorist attacked and destroyed the World Trade Center there has been a rush to install TV surveillance in all public places. In most major cities in the world there are thousands of TV cameras covering most of the city and they are all connected to a center communications center. It is hard to go anywhere in the city without being under surveillance of their highly sophisticated system which can be accessed from anywhere in the world where there is an Internet connection. Many major sports events the entire stadium is under the constant watchful eye of a surveillance system that can take using digital face recognition software can in minutes compared it to a data bank of criminals. A high quality color video camera operating in bright or dim light can now be squeezed into a screw head. The center of a Phillips screw is more than large enough to contain the lens of such a camera, which can therefore be concealed in any light switch, or

any area of any room where a Phillips screw head is visible.

Cell phones have cameras and GPS (Ground Positioning System) can pin point the exact location of a cell phone. The image of the beast has the power to mark everyone on earth in their right hands or foreheads. Internet, satellite, cell phone and cable technology provides, TV, telephone, banking and "on line stores." A card or electronic implant would then be used a gas stations, grocery stores and etc. to pay for items purchased in retail outlets.

Within the last few years hundreds of small banks have been absorbed by the larger banks which have moved the world closer to a cashless society. In a few years many financial analysts predict there will only be a hand full of banks left and these will be "super" banks. In October 2008 several large banks that were on the verge of failing were purchased by larger banks. These effectively reduced the number of banks in American and gave the remaining banks great power. There is a move toward creating a cashless society in an effort to reduce costs by eliminating the expense of paper checks. Accounting will be instantaneously done electronically. Account transactions would be displayed on your home terminal and all banking and financial transactions all over the world will be constantly monitored. It perfectly fits what the Bible says about the capabilities of the Antichrist's system that will control all commerce and activity by means of system identified as 666.

In 2010 the technology is in place that a person does India in September 2010 lunched it new advanced technology biometric ID card system will identify each of its 1.2 billion people by scanning finger prints and irises and store them in a national data base. The reason India says it needs a national identification system is to make sure government welfare will go to the right people and all the poor to be able to use banking facilities.¹ You can use a cell phone Internet access enter your password and account number and get your balance, record and make transactions. Also, the every person could receive a micro computer chip which would be implanted somewhere in the body. Such things as driver's licenses, vehicle registrations again would be encoded into this electronic chip. A scanner could both retrieve and place information on this implanted micro chip. The information could easily be undated by a wireless system. A person's salary could be electronically posted on payday to their bank account and bills would be paid, goods purchased and money borrowed electronically. The public would readily accept this technology because it could eliminate identity thief.

The image of the beast not only identifies and has information on individuals; it also controls world commerce and the legal system. With such power this system it could not only control buying and selling, but also be integrated with the legal system. This would allow the Antichrist to try, sentence and punish violators of his new government's laws. It could easily sentence persons in violation to be executed.

¹The Intel Hub, "Big Indian Brother, India creates a Nation Biometric ID system", <http://theintelhub.com/2010/09/15/big-indian-brother-india-creates-national-biometric-id-system/>, September 15, 2010.

All this technology was only a dream just a few short years ago. What was purely science fiction only ten years ago is today a reality. The speed with which the computer world is advancing is another indication that the time of the Rapture followed by the Tribulation appears close at hand.

The requirement to receive the "mark of the beast" is an action of the Antichrist to control the world's population. The technology needed to require that everyone have this micro chip implant is available now. Science needs only to refine this technology and make it inexpensive, smaller and capable of storing all the data needed. On May 10, 2002 a family in Florida made nation headlines by being implanted with a microchip called a VeriChip. Using a handheld scanner which reads the VeriChip, theoretically, police, paramedics and hospital workers would use the information during an emergency. The chip, which only takes seconds in implant and is the size of a grain of rice, could also be used as a security tool, has stirred debate over its potential use as a "Big Brother" device to track people or invade the privacy of their homes or work places.

For years it has been reported that in Luxembourg since 1983 there is a computer which can monitor everyone in the world. This computer used reels and tape. Think about the possibilities today when computer chip can store thousands of gigabytes of information on a chip less than the size of one's finger nail.⁶

"Europe" the magazine of the European Common Market says: "Europe researchers will soon be linked through a unique systems of computerized system would a first include nations of the European Common Market, but later would be expanded to include non-member nations as a wealth information would be fed into the "EURONET" computer in Brussels, Belgium. The main computer is at Luxembourg and Brussels is a terminal station. Today the EURONET is a reality and Europe is politically united with a common currency.

In 1996 it was projected that even small businesses or an individual with a small personal computer (PCs) would soon have the capability of this 1998 super computer. By linking computers worldwide, using the Internet, the capacities of any number of computers can be connected together which was totally unheard of just a few short years ago. Today that too is a reality.

Thus even at this moment, the technology and means to unify the world under such a system is a reality. It would be possible to monitor where a person was on earth using Global Positioning Satellites (GPS). The OnStar and TrackStar GPS systems can monitor your car, where you travel, who are your friends, your conversations, what and where you eat, who you visit, what you earn, and where you spend it. The GPS locator in cell phones cannot be turned off when the phone is powered thus where a person is or has been can be tracked in real time. In mid-2013 it was revealed by a whistle blower that the phone company Verizon was aiding the government in spying on millions of American through their cell phones. Through credit card monitoring everything about a person's life could be revealed. The fact is that technology is changing so fast that this commentary is probably outdated by the time it is published.

Taxes would be collected by computer and prefigured eliminating the long IRS forms. America's farms are presently coded by the USDA, and they know exactly what is grown, how much is grown and sold, and where the products are distributed. Taxes could automatically be deducted from a person's bank account. The Department of Transportation (DOT) controls interstate freight shipments using a massive network of computers. Using Satellite technology every truck or car on the road could be monitored. Social Security, with the Census Bureau has everyone in the USA identified and has detailed information on each American. There is a move in the government to give everyone an implanted Federal Identification number. The use of implanted micro chips could eliminate any need of cash money or coins. Most credit cards are already international in use and the debit card is fast replacing paper checks

One thing worth noting is that in third world and under developed nations this technology may not be available. This would mean that those that receive the mark of the beast would be those in the developed nations. Of course this is speculation, but this may imply that many of those who believe and receive Christ during the Tribulation will be those who are not hearing the Gospel today.

The watch word for today can be summed up in the words of Amos 4:12, "*prepare to meet thy God*" and Isaiah 55:16, which says, "*Seek the Lord while he might be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*"

Many people down through history have speculated as to what the number refers too. All have been proven wrong. In an attempt decipher the meaning of the number some have tried to use a numerical system of assigning numbers to letters of the alphabet.

One thing that is overlooked by those devising such a system is that you should not use English, but rather Greek or maybe a European language. It is safe to say that the reason God gives the number of the beast is to clearly identify it when it comes into existence. Those in the Tribulation, when the system comes online, will know the meaning of the three sixes and it is highly unlikely that anyone today could decipher the term.

Most true Bible students if honest must agree there is no way to determine at present who is the Antichrist. But clearly when he arrives those on earth will know him and will be able to identify him positively as the Antichrist because he will in some way be identified as or with the number "666." It should be a little concern to Christians today living in the Church Age because they will never see the Antichrist. The Lord Jesus Christ will come for them before the Tribulation begins at the Rapture and they will be taken to heaven before Antichrist is revealed.

End Notes:

¹ **Error! Main Document Only.** The error of changing the text to read "he" or "the dragon" stood is but another of many erroneous translations of the modern the English Bibles which follow the corrupt Westcott-Hott Greek translation called the Minority or Eastern Text.

² The word “sea” is used metaphorically of “ungodly men” in Jude 13, Isaiah 57:20. The word is used symbolically in the apocalyptic vision of the “a glassy sea like unto crystal” in Revelation 4:6. In Isaiah 60:5 the word refers to the Gentiles, “Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the *sea* shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”

³ J Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come*, Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 1974, p. 197.

⁴ In the town where I once pastured, a Southern Baptist pastor was promoting a joint meeting of all the denominations. This evangelistic meeting included the local Southern Baptist Church, the Catholics, Protestants and several Pentecostals groups. I asked respectfully what the purpose of the city wide meeting was. He responded that it was to win the lost to Christ by preaching the Gospel. I then asked why did he include was the Roman Catholic Church and these other churches in doctrinal error, if the purpose was to preach the Gospel. Further I asked him why that all the churches he mentioned with the exception of the local Southern Baptist church taught that salvation could be lost, which means they too are teaching a works based salvation. This “pastor” became very angry after I declined to join with him, said with sarcasm, “I’ve have run across you Independent Baptist before.” To that I said, “Amen.” (June 5, 1996).

⁶ The Japan Times Online, August 19, 2007, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nb20070819a2.html> .

⁷ A gigabyte is used to denote the RAM memory of a computer storage device or file. A gigabyte traditionally has a binary definition of 1024^3 bytes.