

REVELATION 13:1-10 THE COMING WORLD DICTATOR

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If there are two things that the Book of Revelation is famous for, it's the rise of a world dictator and a false religious leader. There is a conflict and spiritual battle going on for hearts, minds and bodies of people. There will come a time when the final phase of this battle is going to be played out on earth. In Revelation 13, we see the Devil get what he has desired from eternity past and receive the worship that belongs to God. This worship will be short lived. Satan will make great promises and claims through his Anti-Christ and false prophet, but he will not be able to deliver what he promises.

Revelation 13:1 - *"Then he stood on the Sand of the Sea"* (NKJV). "HE" takes us back to chapter 12 and the dragon, Satan, who was going to make war against the saints. It's Satan who is causing this beast to come up out of the sea. "Sea" in the Bible usually does not refer to a literal sea unless it is designated as such. The sea is a symbol of the Gentile nations. Consider Revelation 17:15 where the great prostitute is sitting on the waters of peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.

Satan is raising up this beast out of the Gentile nations. Note that the Greek word for "Beast" refers to a wild terrifying beast described as having Seven Heads. This is a reference to the Seven Hills of Rome. The readers in John's day would have immediately made this connection. This is telling us that this beast will emerge from the revised Roman Empire that Daniel talked about (Dan.7). This revived Roman Empire will be made up of Ten Powerful Nations, symbolised here by the Ten Horns. Daniel 7 refers to a Little Horn (another picture of this wild beast) will first conquer three of these nations and then subdue the other seven to gain this control over them. John's description of this beast goes on to describe it as having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. This was the way that Daniel described the great world empires, Greece, the Medo-Persians and the Babylonian empires which would set the stage for the final world empire which would be the Roman Empire. John gives us them in the reverse order. To Daniel these world empires were still to come, to John they had already come to pass. Daniel gives them to us from his perspective looking forward, and John from his perspective, looking back.

The beast's empire will be the culmination of all the great empires that have come before it. His kingdom and world order will be the best of all of them. This is the Anti-Christ, the man of sin, and little horn of Daniel 7. The world will see him as the greatest world leader that has ever lived. He will be able to do in a greater way what these other great civilisation had only done in part. He will be the Greeks, the Romans, the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians all rolled into one offering the ultimate global community. The world will accept this because it will bring about world peace. Under him the world economy will soar bringing peace to the Middle East ending the Arab/Israeli conflict. All this will happen during the first three and a half years of the Tribulation period. What will not be obvious until the Second Half of the Tribulation period is the power behind this Beast (13:2).

The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. Behind this man's charisma and amazing political skills is the Devil himself. Satan will give him his power, and his throne. This is going to be Satan incarnate. Because Satan is not God, all he can do is to counterfeit all that God has done. So Satan comes up with his own satanic trinity. Satan will be god the father, the Anti-Christ will be his son, Satan in human flesh.

When does this happen? (13:3). There is a mock resurrection. We have the son of Satan raised from the dead. We are not given the details, but something happens, there is a successful attempt on the Anti-Christ's life and he is pronounced dead. But wait, three days later this man is raised up. He is raised up with the life of Satan in him. This is a demonic miracle. The world will marvel at this and follow him all the more. He will no longer be just a great leader, he will now become the Messiah, he will become the saviour that they were looking for and the resurrection from the dead will seal it.

Revelation 13:4 – The devil will finally get the worship and adoration that he has longed for. With this the boldness of the Anti-Christ grows (13:5-7). Not only will the Anti-Christ blaspheme God and Jesus, but it will be granted to him to make war with the saints and overcome them. It has to our Heavenly Father. Nothing can happen to those who are His but that it first goes before His throne for His approval. There will be thousands killed in the first part of the tribulation, but there will be even more believers killed in the last three and a half years of the tribulation.

Satan has got what he wanted for a season, but that season is going to quickly come to an end. Before it does, he has another surprise to lay upon the world (13:11-18). A false witness that will direct people to worship the Anti-Christ. He has authority from the devil and the Anti-Christ to do signs and wonders that are so powerful that the whole world will be mystified and deceived. His miracles will be real and demonic at the same time. The False Prophet will encourage the world to erect a statue of the Anti-Christ that can be worshipped. Many believe that this statue will be put up in the holy of holies in the Temple. Jews will recognize this as the Abomination of Desolation standing in the Holy Place and will renounce the Anti-Christ once and for all. The false prophet will instigate the mark of the beast that no one will be able to buy or sell without (13:6). The technology is here, all we need is the man to who will come along and put it in place and that man will come.

Revelation 13:18 – His number is 666. This is the number of the perfect man. This man will be at the pinnacle of human evolution and enlightenment. The world will proclaim him as what we all can and want to be. The number "666" is the number of the name of the coming Antichrist. Giving a number to a name is called "*gematria*," which is the Greek practice of adding up the letters in someone's name. It is easy to take a name and turn it into a number. It is much harder to take a number and turn it back into a name.

Turning the number into a name is the key to unlocking the name of the Antichrist. Revelation 13:18 is the applicable verse: *"This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666."* According to John, those who are wise can get an insight into the Antichrist's identity by knowing the number of his name. In ancient Greek, Hebrew and Latin letters represented numerals according to their order in the alphabet. For example, in Greek, Alpha is one, Beta is two and so on. The letters in Greek for "Nero" (Neron) add up to 1005. However, if the Greek letters for Nero Caesar (*Neron Kaisar*) are transliterated into Hebrew (*nrwn qsr*), the letter numbers add up to 666 (50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 = 666). Note, "the number of the beast" was not

written as a figure like “666.” Rather, the letters of the alphabet were written out in full. Many interpreters consider the Roman Emperor Nero to be the “antichrist” of Revelation 13 because the number of his name is 666 and because he inflicted “Antichrist like” horror upon the first century Christians. Some consider Nero to be a historical Antichrist and we that we are not to expect a future Antichrist. Yet, for the number to have any significance for a first century AD reader, it would have to refer to a contemporary historical figure. Other interpreters, myself included, view the Book of Revelation as being both historical and predictive of coming future events. Nero was indeed an “antichrist” as well as a picture of the coming future Antichrist—whose number-name will also add up to 666. The number “6” in the Bible is often associated with man; just as the number “7” is the perfect number, 3 is the number of the Trinity. 666 is thus a number that consistently falls short of triple perfection: 777. The number also refers to the “unholy trinity,” Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet.

We don't need a super man who becomes a god. We need God to become man and dwell among us. That's what Jesus Christ did.