

# Revelation

**Lesson 15**

**Revelation chapter 13**

**Arlington Church of Christ**

**Remember – the whole purpose of the book of Revelation is to encourage the Christians to remain faithful in spite of what was happening and what was to come – and to point out that it is still all under the control of God and that they will be rewarded in the end.**

**In Revelation 12:9 we saw the devil was symbolized by a dragon, and that the dragon was causing problems for those who would follow God on the earth – first for the Jewish Christians causing them to flee to the wilderness areas and then for the Gentile Christians worldwide.**

**Now, in Revelation 13, the devil is shown as giving his power to human government (Roman) leaders to do his bidding.**

## ***Revelation 13:1-2***

***The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.***

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## Daniel 7:3-7

Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

<sup>4</sup> “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. <sup>5</sup> “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. <sup>6</sup> “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. .

<sup>7</sup> “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

We know from later in Daniel 7 that these beasts are world ‘kingdoms’ – this is the fourth kingdom (Roman empire)

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The dragon (Satan) is at the edge of the sea. The deepest part of the sea was considered where the Abyss was located. A beast comes out of the abyss – the place of evil angels and demons awaiting judgment. Then this beast is given the power of Satan and his throne to rule with great authority on the earth.

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***We saw that this 'beast' is taken from the symbolism in Daniel 7:3-7 and that the beast represents the Roman empire. The Roman empire is given the power of Satan to persecute the Christians.***

***The 'heads' of the beast were the Roman emperors of which there were seven who persecuted the Christians. While there were 10 'horns', leaders of the empire during this time, there were only 7 'emperors' who demanded to be worshipped as gods.***

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**The seven heads are symbolic of the persecuting emperors of this world empire. The ten horns and ten crowns indicates that there were more 'leaders' in power, but that they were not the 'heads' of the empire. (emperors)**

### 1st century A.D.

Augustus (31 BC–14 AD)

**Church persecution begins during Tiberius**



Tiberius (14–37 AD)

Caligula (37–41 AD)

Claudius (41–54 AD)

Nero (54–68 AD)

Galba (68–69 AD)

Otho (January–April 69 AD)

Aulus Vitellius (July–December 69 AD)

Vespasian (69–79 AD)

Titus (79–81 AD)

Domitian (81–96 AD)

Seven Emperors, but 10 horns (leaders)

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**The Roman emperors were declared to be 'divine' and to be worshipped. They were called by names like: Son of God, Savior, Lord, Divine – all names considered to be blasphemous.**

**While the Roman emperors were considered to divine and had statues erected to them throughout the empire, the requirement to worship the emperor as 'god' increased with each new leader. By the time of Domitian it had become a total obsession with the emperor, and anyone who refused to accept him as god – was killed or *banished*.**



## ***Revelation 13:3-9***

***One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?” <sup>5</sup> The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. <sup>8</sup> All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.***

***<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.***

## **Revelation 13:3**

***One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.***

**While there is some question as to what 'the wound that healed was' (see suggestion below) – there is no question that the beast here was symbolic of the Roman empire and the heads symbolic of its emperors.**

**(Note: Nero was adopted by the Emperor Claudius. Five years later, his mother poisoned Claudius with poison mushrooms and made her son Nero, Emperor.**

**Nero was a blatant homosexual, 'married' men and women, burnt down much of Rome so he could rebuild it to honor himself. He blamed the fire on Christians and persecuted them in horrible ways - they were sewn in animal skins and ripped apart by hunting dogs, they were put in sacks with stones and thrown into the Tiber River, they were killed in the Coliseum by animals, they were covered with pitch and used as torches.**

**Finally the Roman Senate declared him a public enemy and he 'committed suicide.' But a story developed that Nero had been resurrected and returned in the form of the Emperors who followed him due to their similar actions.)**

**Remember- Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist 'resurrected' – Mark 6:16 in a similar way the emperors following Nero were said to be Nero 'resurrected'.**

## **Revelation 13:4-9**

***4 People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?” 5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world. 9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.***

**Rome was the great world power at the time – waging war and conquering – but they were given authority by God to do so for a definite time of trouble (42 months, 3 ½ years, 1260 days). It is said that those who worship the beast (the emperor) are those who are not ‘written in the Lamb’s Book of Life’ (Those who worshipped the emperor would not be in heaven because they had rejected the true king – the ‘Lamb’, Jesus)**

## ***Revelation 13:10***

***“If anyone is to go into captivity into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.”***

***This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.***

**During this time of tribulation for the Christians, some of them will be taken captive (imprisoned), while others would be killed for their belief.**

**Jesus had already told the churches of Asia that this would happen and that they were to remain faithful even to the point of death and they would receive the crown (stephanos – victor’s crown) of life.**

**See these scriptures:-**

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***This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.***

### **Revelation 6:9-11**

**When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. <sup>10</sup> They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” <sup>11</sup> Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.**

### **Revelation 2:10**

**Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.      **God has a plan – be patient!****

## ***Revelation 13:11-17***

***Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup> And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. <sup>14</sup> Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup> The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. <sup>16</sup> It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.***

## **Revelation 13:11-14**

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***This beast comes 'from the earth' – symbolizing that it represents a man (man was made from the dust of the ground). The symbolism of having only two horns indicates it has less power than the first beast, and the reference to it being like a lamb is symbolic of 'priesthood'. This man is given authority by the emperor (first beast) and requires all the inhabitants to worship the emperor. This person has the ability to deceive people with false signs like making images (statues) speak or 'come to life' or make fire come down from heaven –***

**Revelation 13:15** <sup>15</sup> The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

*This beast was given this deceptive power to make people worship the first beast (the Emperor) or to be killed if they refused to do so. Many of the Christians did refuse to worship the emperor and were forced to flee or be killed. This beast seems to be symbolic of the High priest of the Emperor's temples which were found in almost all Roman towns. The High priest of the Emperor's temple was the representative of the power of Rome and had the power of life or death. They could also deceive people into thinking the emperor's statue could speak). Satan was giving these people the power to deceive with signs.*

## **2 Thessalonians 2:9**

**The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie,**







***Revelation 13:16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup> so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.***

***The High Priest was the one who had to witness the people burn incense to the emperor each year and say 'Caesar is God' in order to get the 'official certificate of compliance' which allowed them to take part in the city's commerce and the give-away of food and supplies from the Emperor's temple sacrifices. This compliance is symbolized by a mark on the right hand (the hand that dropped the incense on the altar) or on the forehead (in the minds of those who knew it was wrong, but did it anyway.)***

**Slaves in those days were marked with a tatto-like mark on their body called a "stigma". This is a reference to that type of visible sign of compliance.**

# When the Christians refused to worship the Emperor or acknowledge him as god, they were considered an 'enemy of Rome'

Acts 17:5-7 (In Thessalonica) But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. <sup>6</sup> But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, <sup>7</sup> and Jason has welcomed them into his house. **They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.**"

(They are denying Caesar as 'god' - saying to worship Jesus instead)



## **Revelation 13:18**

***This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.***

***There have been many who have attempted to figure out a 'code' to try to find a name that adds up to 666, but there is a much wiser answer. (remember, the beast represents the Roman emperors)***

***Remembering that God's perfect authority is symbolized by seven –and that God being the trinity is represented by 3 - the 'number' of God would be 777. The number 6 symbolizes human incompleteness or imperfectness , so three sixes – 666 would symbolize one who claims to be God, but is just a man.***

**While some have tried to say that 666 is the ‘antichrist’ – that is NOT said here. The word “antichrist” is not even used in Revelation - antichrist(s) are mentioned and described in:**

**1 John 2:18-22**

**Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. <sup>20</sup> But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. <sup>21</sup> I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son.**

**The antichrist(s), and there were many, were those who claimed to be Christians but were not – they said that Jesus was not the Messiah and in doing so dishonored both the Father God and His Son.**

**Perhaps those who said they were ‘Christians’, but who accepted Caesar as Lord would fit into this category.**



The book of Revelation describes the event during the times of the 'seven' persecuting Roman emperors up to the time of Domitian, but some have protested that there were other Roman emperors after this. This is true, but the reason is that the severe persecution of the Christians ended with the death of Domitian. **The next five emperors – called in history the 'good emperors' – ceased the persecution of Christians and treated them as normal inhabitants of the Roman empire**



With all the problems the Roman empire was facing at the death of Domitian, these emperors concentrated on strengthening the remaining empire, rebuilding, and as a result, the Christian religion began a period of acceptance.

While these later emperors were also considered 'gods' by some, they did not insist on being worshipped as such by their citizens. And while 'emperor cults' still existed in certain places – the official position of the Roman empire toward Christians was changing.

**John's vision now returns to a description of the rewards for those who have remained faithful -**

**and then on to a vision of the events approaching the end of time and the judgment day.**