

# CONCERNING THE WAY

August 5, 2009

## LESSON 68: THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST



### Chapter 13 – The Two Beasts

In the last chapter we saw a dragon (Satan) with seven heads and ten horns pursue the woman (a remnant of Israel) who gave birth to the child (Jesus). The child was caught up into heaven to God, and the woman fled to a safe place that had been prepared for her by God. The dragon, seeing he could not harm the woman, became enraged and went off to make war on the rest of her children.

Now we see the rise of two beasts that are very much identified with the dragon, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, who will deceive the whole world and bring it under their power during the Tribulation.

Something that never could have been conceived of by most of us even twenty years ago is now on the horizon. I'm speaking of a true one world government. Today no one can deny that it is coming. More and more leaders around the world are calling for it (even the Pope is calling for it), and most believe that it is necessary. Believe me, it is going to happen, and someday, the leader of that government will be the first beast, the Antichrist.

Most leaders around the world are desperate for peace. But they believe that we can't have peace in the world until we have peace between religions. To do that there will have to be a merging of the religions into one, with a common standard that everyone must abide by, and no one can say that their way is the only way. This is the coming one-world religion, and someday the leader of that religion will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> beast, the False Prophet.

You may find this hard to believe, but there are literally millions of people actually praying for the Antichrist to come. There are many more people in this world who worship Satan than you would expect. Luciferians, Satanists, New Agers, UFOligists, Muslims, 2012ers, and many others are looking for a "cleansing" of the earth, a catastrophe. There is clearly a collective spiritual revelation that has emerged and is deeply solidified into leaders all over the world that a new world order is necessary, it is coming, and it is inevitable. There is no globalism movement without the spirit behind it. That spirit is the one mentioned in Ephesians:

**Ephesians 2:2 ... according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.**

There is a living presence guiding and directing world affairs to lead eventually to a great chaos. When this happens, when economies collapse, wars break out, famines take place, diseases wipe out millions; when some or all of these things happen, a man will come forward that will seem to have the answers to the world's problems. All of these groups I mentioned above are looking for this man, in fact they are doing whatever they can to bring about the coming of this man who will rule the world and solve its problems. They have expectations that this man will bring all the things that will fulfill their visions of a perfect world.

There's been a ramping up of supernatural phenomena over the last thirty years. All over the world people are hearing voices, experiencing spiritual presences in their lives, channeling other entities, talking to extra-dimensional beings, having out-of-body experiences, etc. Witchcraft, sorcery, and Satanism are growing. UFO activity is growing (which I believe is also demonic). These things are REAL. Most of us are so naïve, sitting around thinking that life will continue on just as always, and making believe that these things do not exist, they're not real. Well, most of the people practicing these things are much more spiritually committed

than we are. They are mostly underground now, but they are waiting for their time to come out into the open. They believe they are the army, the troops of the Antichrist. Because of their commitment to Satan, they have power and they know how to use it. Do you think I'm an alarmist? I am not.

Do not deceive yourselves – there are millions of these people. They are very organized and deliberate in their attacks, often targeting churches and pastors. They infiltrate churches, cause problems, and pray regularly against the leaders of those churches. If you haven't already, it's time to pick a side, come down off the fence. If you have not committed your life to Jesus Christ, if you are not on the Lord's side, then you are in great danger – you still belong to the kingdom of darkness. This is not a fantasy, it is not make-believe. We are in a war, and it's getting more and more intense. You cannot remain on the sidelines.

The fallen angels, the demonic entities are coordinated in a vast network around the globe. Principalities and powers, the - as new agers call them – ascended masters, these are the presences guiding the world to globalism, preparing the world for a great chaos, great bloodshed, a great breaking down for the sake of a new order – a new world order, a new spiritual order. With the rise of the Antichrist, it will be like a spiritual bubble has been burst, and the powers of darkness will gush out. It will be like the opposite of what happened at Pentecost in Acts 2.

You will not find accurate information about this man in the writings of Nostradamus, in New Age writings, in the Koran, or any other religious writings. Only in the Bible, God has given us revelation about who he really is, mainly in the books of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. He is called the Beast, the Antichrist, the Man of Lawlessness, the Foolish Shepherd, and the Little Horn.

He will come as the answer to all of man's problems; he will be seen as the savior of mankind. He will deceive the world into thinking he is the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ. But actually he will be mankind's greatest nightmare.

**Revelation 13:1** *And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.*

The dragon is definitely the power behind the rise of the beast (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The beast has ten horns and seven heads just like the dragon. We'll see some things as we go through the text that shows us clearly that this is the Antichrist.

Some see this beast as a kingdom or government instead of an individual:

*“But it is very clear from what follows in Rev. 13 that there is something more than the Empire here in view. In Rev. 13:3-8 it is a person that is before us. We are satisfied that this same person is also described, symbolically, in the opening verses. As is frequently the case in the prophetic scriptures, the king and his kingdom are here inseparably united. Rev. 13:1, 2 portrays both the Empire and its last Emperor.” Arthur Pink*

*“Is the beast out of the sea a man or an empire? The answer is both. (a) The beast is a man because his number is that of a man (Rev. 13:18). Also the use of the masculine pronoun αὐτόν [auton] (Rev. 13:8) to refer to the neuter θηρίον [thērion] (Rev. 13:1-2, 4) indicates that he is a human being. In addition, parallels between the beast and the Lamb indicate that he is a person: both have followers on whose foreheads are inscribed their names (Rev. 13:16-17; 14:1), both are conquerors (Rev. 5:5; 13:7), and both receive worship (Rev. 5:8; 13:4). (b) At the same time the beast is an empire over which the man reigns. This fact is demonstrated by the symbolism of the beasts of Daniel 7.” Daniel K. Wong*

Daniel's four beasts were also seen rising out of the sea (Daniel 7:2-3). The sea represents the antichrist's kingdom coming out of the Gentile nations. We saw the beast coming out of the abyss in the last chapter,

which spoke of him being revived from a fatal wound.

There are different interpretations of the seven heads. Many think they are seven kings or rulers that will exist at this time that the antichrist will rule over. Others believe they pertain to seven world kingdoms and kings of history, ending with the beast's kingdom. We're told what the ten horns are in Revelation 17:12-13 and Daniel 7:24, they are ten kings, which probably represent ten regions of the world government that the Antichrist will rule over. These are the ten horns that Daniel saw in his night vision. To remind us how closely Revelation agrees with what Daniel saw, let's read some of chapter seven as a review:

**Daniel 7:7-8** "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. (8) "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

**Daniel 7:23-24** "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. (24) 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

So this fourth kingdom, the coming "new world order", will be ruled by ten kings, and the Beast (the little horn) will rise up and conquer three of them. All then will eventually submit to the Beast (Revelation 17:13).

The dragon (Satan), if you remember from the last chapter, has crowns on its seven heads, representing seven historical kingdoms of which the beast's is the last one. This beast has crowns on its ten horns, representing the ten kings that the beast rules over.

The "blasphemous names" represent the beast's character, which is explained to us in Daniel 11:36.

**Daniel 11:36** "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

Now back to Revelation 13:

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

The description of the beast here reminds us of the beasts in Daniel's vision (Daniel 7:4-8):

*It is a composite of the four beasts of Daniel's vision (Dan. 7) and must be related to them. Daniel wrote from the standpoint of the Jewish people, whose fate under the Gentile empires to come would effect the First Coming of Messiah. Revelation, written under the fourth and last of these empires, presumably after the Jewish commonwealth had been crushed, takes this picture of Gentile world power from Daniel and combines these four empires onto the picture of the future world-state. The magnificence of Babylon, the vastness of Medo-Persia, the dominating culture of Greek Macedonia, and the organizing might of Rome*

*are united in one state that will aspire to world domination and that will achieve it. Merrill C. Tenney*

The order of the attributes of the beast are in reverse from what Daniel saw, which just shows their vantage point in history. Daniel, living during the time of the lion beast (Babylon), looked forward and saw the bear (Medo-Persia) and then the leopard (Greece). John, living in the time of the first phase of the last beast (Rome), looked backwards in time to see them in reverse.

The fact that all of these animals are combined in the last kingdom of the beast fits well with what Daniel said about the continuation of those kingdoms (Daniel 7:12). When the stone made without hands (the Messianic Kingdom) strikes the statue, it smashes all of the parts of the statues (Daniel 2:34-35, 45). So, the attributes of all the kingdoms are found in this last beast.

Most think this last kingdom will be a revived Roman Empire, mainly because of the toes of the statue in Daniel's dream (Daniel 2:41-44). And, because Daniel is only shown four beasts (kingdoms) which will come about before the final Messianic Kingdom. So the last kingdom of the beast has to be a continuation of the Roman Empire in some way. Also, Daniel is told in Daniel 9:26 that the "people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary". This prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 by Rome. So, the prince (beast-antichrist) to come has a Roman origin.

The prophet Hosea was shown these beasts and how they would be used to turn Israel back to God:

**Hosea 13:6-11** *As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me. (7) So I will be like a lion to them; Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside. (8) I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, And I will tear open their chests; There I will also devour them like a lioness, As a wild beast would tear them. (9) It is your destruction, O Israel, That you are against Me, against your help. (10) Where now is your king That he may save you in all your cities, And your judges of whom you requested, "Give me a king and princes"? (11) I gave you a king in My anger And took him away in My wrath.*

*"The lion, bear, leopard, and wild beast . . . correspond to the world empires among which Israel is to be scattered and persecuted (Dan. 7) during the time that she is in Dispersion until she will be regathered by her covenant-keeping LORD (Eze. 37:1-28; Mtt. 24:31; Rom. 11:26)." Merrill F. Unger*

"the dragon gave him his power" – this tells us clearly that the Antichrist is energized by Satan, which Paul also confirmed in 2 Thessalonians 2:9.

**2 Thessalonians 2:9** *The arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders,*

*"He will be Satan's parody of the God-Man. He will be an incarnation of the Devil. The world today is talking of and looking for the Super-man. This is exactly what the Antichrist will be. He will be the Serpent's masterpiece. . . . he will be the culmination and consummation of satanic craft and power. All the evil, malignity, cunning, and power of the Serpent will be embodied in this terrible monster." Pink*

Satan will even allow the Antichrist to be worshipped as God, which would seem to mean that he will possess (indwell) the beast. And Satan gives the beast his throne and authority, which is still his to give at this point until Jesus comes back and takes it from him at the end of the Tribulation. Satan has made this offer before to Jesus, which He refused (Luke 4:6, Matthew 4:8). So the Antichrist will accept the offer that Jesus Christ refused. Like Jesus is the incarnation of God, the Antichrist will be the incarnation of Satan.

**Revelation 13:3** I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;

*It is best to identify the restoration to life with an end-time satanically controlled king who will come to the world as a false Christ. This allows for the interchangeability of the head with the whole beast—i.e., the king with his kingdom—as Rev. 13:12, 14 required. It coincides with further details to come in Rev. 17:8. It agrees with the final climactic appearance of the beast in history as a person, in concert with the vision's focus on the future. This means a future sequence that will be a close counterfeiting of Christ's death and resurrection." Robert Thomas*

"As if it had been slain" – the interesting thing here is this is the exact phrase that is used back in Revelation 5:6 for the Lamb (Jesus). It means having the appearance of having been killed and brought back to life. Opinion is divided on this verse whether the Antichrist will actually be killed and then be brought back to life, or if it will be some kind of deception.

Somewhere near the midpoint of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will be assassinated, probably by a head wound. He will at that point be indwelt personally by Satan, who was permanently kicked out of heaven in the last chapter, and then imitate Christ's resurrection.

Many people have trouble with this idea because they believe Satan would not have the power to actually resurrect anyone, and I agree. But God could certainly temporarily give Satan the power to resurrect the Beast for His purposes. No one can be dogmatic about this, but either way it looks like a real miracle, and many people at that time will think so. It will have a huge impact on people. They will believe then that the Antichrist is divine.

*"Man ignores the force of Jesus' resurrection, but will choose to be fooled by the Beast's recovery. Why? Jesus demands righteousness; the Beast will indulge sin." Monty S. Mills*

Zechariah speaks of the 30 pieces of silver to betray the Messiah at his first coming, and then goes on to describe a "worthless shepherd."

**Zechariah 11:12-17** I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. (13) Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (14) Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. (15) The LORD said to me, "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. (16) "For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs. (17) "Woe to the worthless shepherd Who leaves the flock! A sword will be on his arm And on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered And his right eye will be blind."

If this is speaking of the Antichrist, then it looks like he will be attacked on his arm and in his right eye. He may even retain the scars from his wounds after his resurrection, just like Jesus did! So the death and resurrection of the antichrist will be an imitation of Christ's death and resurrection, and it causes the earth-dwellers to worship him:

**Revelation 13:4** they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast;

**and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"**

The way these last two verses are worded in the original Greek indicates that the worship of the beast and the dragon are in response to the miraculous healing of the beast. This is the ultimate of all the signs empowered by Satan to deceive the world, and it makes it so obvious to us that he is trying to impersonate Christ.

You can see this coming even today. The Jesus most people believe in today is not the Christ of the Bible. They want to believe in a Jesus that will never judge them, is a pacifist, and advocates love of your fellow man and love of the earth. The Antichrist will portray exactly the kind of Christ that people want, and this resurrection will seal the deal for them.

Especially after what these earth-dwellers went through with the Two Witnesses, they will think they have a new superhero, they will exalt him as God, and be willing to do anything for him. And so at the time of the end, Satan will *almost* get what he has always wanted, universal worship (Isaiah 14:14; Matthew 4:9; Luke 4:7). This is the first phase of the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15, Daniel 11:36-37, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

*"This cry of the world, 'Who is like unto the Beast' is a travesty of the song of Moses. When celebrating Jehovah's overthrow of their enemies at the Red Sea, Israel sang, 'Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods! Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!' (Ex. 15:11 cf. Ps. 89:8)." Pink*

*"The Antichrist will be a man (2Th. 2:4), but at some point in his life, he will be indwelt by a powerful demon from the abyss. This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intellectual genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power. Added to those natural qualities will be the hellish power of Satan. The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and consummate wickedness." John MacArthur*

**Revelation 13:5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.**

These are the "boastful words" which Daniel saw the little horn speak (Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25), and blasphemies in Daniel 11:36. Notice as always that God is totally sovereign over all these events. The beast is allowed his authority for a limited time by God. This is the time of the Great Tribulation, the last 3 ½ years.

**Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.**

This includes all the things the beast blasphemes against: God Himself, the holy angels in heaven, the church in heaven, and all those who have been martyred up to this point in Jesus name. He is enraged by the faith of so many that refuse to worship him, and all he can do to try to get them to do so is to persecute them and threaten them with death.

**Revelation 13:7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.**

This speaks of the global control the Antichrist will have.

*“Daniel 7:23 clearly states that at some point the Fourth Empire devours the whole earth. This is something Rome never did. Some attempt to make the expression mean the “then-known world,” but it cannot be said that Rome even conquered the then-known world. . . . Rome did not even extend as far east as the empire of Alexander the Great. The Greeks went as far as the Indus River in India . . . Rome did not even extend that far. Furthermore, Rome never fully conquered the Parthian Empire, and that, too, was part of the known world. The area of Scotland was also part of the known world that Rome did not conquer. Rome had to build the Hadrian Wall in order to keep the nomads of Scotland from overrunning that part of Britain controlled by Rome.” Arnold Fructenbaum*

He will try to kill all believers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Tribulation. Daniel foretold this as well:

**Daniel 7:21,25** "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them (25) 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

How could God allow the Beast to overcome the saints? Well, exploring the answer to that question would be a whole study in itself. Suffice it to say that in passages like this, we have to understand that God is sovereign and He knows what He is doing. The deaths of the saints will bring glory to God, and they can be witnesses even in death.

This is why it is so important to make your decision to trust in Christ NOW, while there is still time. Do not be found faithless when Jesus comes for His Church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8). Believe me; you do not want to be here on earth at this time. Those who do not worship the beast and take his mark will be killed.

*“When we talk about the judgment of God upon our sinful, unbelieving world, we may not be popular, but lives will be saved for eternity....As I write this, I long for everyone to give their hearts to Christ now, when it is comparatively easy to be a Christian. David Jeremiah*

**Revelation 13:8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

It's hard to imagine living in a world full of Satan worshippers, but that's the way it will be. These earth-dwellers who worship the Beast not only physically live on the earth, but all their affection and allegiance is to the earth, in contrast to those whose citizenship is in heaven (John 15:19; 17:14-16; Phillipians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). They seem to be in a different category than all other people, in that *their names have never been written in the book of life*. They are so hardened against God and continue to reject Him even though there has been overwhelming evidence that He exists, that they are irredeemable. God in His omniscience and sovereignty predestined them for destruction.

**Revelation 13:9** If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

Here is the same statement that was made by Jesus through John in chapters 2 and 3 in the letters to the churches. Only in this case, it doesn't say "let him hear what the spirit says to the churches". This is a good indication that the Church is not present on earth during this time of the Tribulation. This verse is definitely not written to the churches, but to the believers who will still be living on earth at that time.

Again, the Holy Spirit is warning everyone to pay attention to what's being said here, and make sure they

have accepted Christ so they will not have to go through this terrible time.

**Revelation 13:10** *If anyone is meant for captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed by the sword, then by the sword he must be killed. This requires steadfast endurance and faith from the saints.*

This appears to just be a statement for believers during that time that they must accept what God has ordained for them. It would be a comfort knowing that God is in control of their destiny, not the Antichrist. Though their bodies may be killed, their deaths are just a gateway to eternal life with Christ and will be avenged. Endurance and faith comes when we rest in God's sovereignty (Romans 8:35-37).

Read Luke 21:12-19. Jesus said "by your endurance you will gain your lives." Believers during this time will have the choice of either taking the mark of the beast and dying twice (body and soul), or dying once and living forever by refusing the mark. Although a remnant of Jews will be protected by God in a special place in the wilderness, the vast majority of believers will be open to persecution by the Antichrist from the midpoint of the Tribulation to the coming of Christ (3 ½ years).

**Revelation 13:11** *Then I saw another beast coming up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but was speaking like a dragon.*

This is a different beast, and unlike the first, this one comes up out of the earth. Allegorists like to try to explain this beast, as they do almost everything in Revelation, as a movement or institution. This cannot be true, because the text here and to come shows clearly that he is a real individual. The Antichrist is a political leader; this individual will be a religious leader. He is also called the False Prophet, and functions much like an (un)holy spirit. Together with the Dragon and the Antichrist, he forms an evil trinity:

*He is the third person of the Trinity of Evil. As there is to be an Antichrist who will both counterfeit and oppose the Christ of God, so there will be an Anti-spirit who will simulate and oppose the Spirit of God. Just as the great work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, so the one aim of the Anti-spirit will be to magnify the false christ (see Rev. 13:12). Just as the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was visibly attended by 'cloven tongues like as of fire' (Acts 2:3), so we read of the Anti-spirit that 'he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men' (Rev. 13:13). And just as it is the Holy Spirit who now quickens dead sinners into newness of life, so of the Anti-spirit we are told, 'He had power to give life unto the image of the Beast' (Rev. 13:15) Arthur Pink*

This beast comes from the earth, which causes some to believe he will be Jewish, possibly even from the tribe of Dan, since that tribe was not represented in the 144,000 witnesses and Jacob's prophecy about him was very negative (Genesis 49:17). But it is also possible that coming up from the earth just represents his humanity.

This beast has two horns, and so has lesser authority than the first beast, which has seven. And "like a lamb" indicates that he will be like the false prophets Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7:15-16. He will probably preach a lot about love, acceptance, tolerance, diversity, etc. He will probably condemn racism, sexism, poverty, and all discrimination. But his works will reveal his true monstrous nature.

*"The two horns have a pertinent significance, for two is the number of witness and just as Christ declared the Spirit of God should 'testify (lit., bear witness) of Me' (John 15:26), so the third person in the Trinity of Evil bears witness to the first Beast." Pink*

And he speaks like a dragon, with the authority of Satan.



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

He exercises the authority of the Antichrist, but apparently only in his presence. The False Prophet's main function is to make everyone worship the Antichrist. It will be much easier for him to deceive the world into thinking the Antichrist is god than it would be now, because the true Christians will have been raptured (although many of those left will turn to Christ in sincere faith).

*"True children of God are to be found in many varying shades of Christianity, sprinkled throughout Christendom. There are undoubtedly born-again individuals in the midst of all churches. They are saved in spite of the organizations and not because of the organizations. What is going to happen to all of these organizations when the true believers are removed from the world? Already, in our own day, we see indications that much of the guiding force of these great organizations is in the hands of those who would deny essential truths of Scripture. This tendency will increase, and at the coming of Christ for the believers, the tares in the midst of the wheat will go on functioning as usual, all moving rapidly into one great church union, with one head of all. This religious leader will work together with the political dictator." Barnhouse*

**Revelation 13:13** He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

The False Prophet will perform amazing miracles, and I doubt if they will just be tricks. He will have powers similar to the Two Witnesses. And the fact that the fire comes down from heaven will make it look like it's from God, because He has brought fire down from heaven many times in the Bible (2 Kings 1:9-12, Numbers 16:35, 1 Kings 18:38). See what Paul says:

**2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, (10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. (11) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, (12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

So it looks like the miracles will be real, but what the False Prophet will be teaching will be false. This just goes to show that you cannot trust signs and wonders – they do not prove that someone is from God. This is important today as it will be important then. Satan has power, and can imitate or mimic many works of God. Just because you may see something miraculous does not mean it is a work of God! There are people today that claim to have supernatural power from God, and will do things that seem like miracles. The miracles many times are not real, but even if they are, how do you know that power is from God (Matthew 7:22-23)?

*"Christ's miracles, as miracles, were no evidence of His Divine mission. The real evidence was that the miracles which He wrought were the very miracles which the Prophetic Word had declared He should work, and which were on that account the sign and seal of His ministry, and formed His credentials from on high. This is clear from Mtt. 11:1-6. It was not that they were mere miraculous acts, but that they were what God had foretold, and the essence of their testimony was to the truth of God's word, rather than the power of Christ. Hence it is that they are so generally called "signs," and not merely "wonders.""* Bullinger

The earth-dwellers of that time will believe that the Antichrist is god because of the signs and wonders.

What do you base your belief on today? Do you base it on your personal experience, or on what the Bible says? Basing your faith on your experience, or even the experiences of others completely opens you up to deception. People today who use experience as their foundation then bend and reinterpret the Bible to fit their experience. If the Word of God goes against their experience, they will reject it in favor of their experience, which means their experience is judging God's Word.

Biblical believers are just the opposite. The proper foundation for our faith is the Word of God. Then every experience we have should be tested against what God has already revealed in his Word. We interpret our experiences through the lens of the Bible. If an experience doesn't line up with what the Bible says, then we reject the experience, not what the Bible says (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).

**Revelation 13:14** **And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who \*had the wound of the sword and has come to life.**

The power of his deception will be so convincing that only those protected by the Holy Spirit will be able to resist it (Matthew 24:24-25). What is this "image"? Well, the Antichrist wants everyone to think he is God, but he is not omniscient. So he has some kind of statue made of him, and sets it up in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15), so that he can go on about his business and people will have something to worship there in the temple. Of course, this is a flagrant violation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment (Exodus 20:4)

*"The term abomination refers to an image or an idol. This even is also mentioned in Matthew 24:15-16: . . . The only clue given is that it will be something standing (like an image or idol) in the Holy Place. . . .the Abomination of Desolation must include something more than merely the Antichrist's selfproclamation of deity. Furthermore, the Daniel and Matthew passages implied an image or idol that would be erected in the Temple. . . . Thus, the two stages of the Abomination of Desolation, lasting a total of 1,290 days will be the declaration of deity by the Antichrist in the Holy of Holies followed by the setting up of his image in the same place." Fructenbaum*

**Revelation 13:15** **And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

This is probably the most power that God has ever allowed the enemy to have, the power to give life. It is the same language as in Genesis 2:7 when God breathed life into Adam, and when God breathed life back into the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:11. But this power only comes from God, and only for this particular use, so that the people who have set their hearts against God will be deceived even further. This will be the grand finale of all the signs and wonders the False Prophet performs.

Some don't like the idea that the image will actually come to life, and say that this only means it will be animated somehow, like a robot. But that doesn't do justice to the text. It will convince people that this is actually the Antichrist himself, and will be able to kill those who do not worship it. Here's another possibility of how this will work:

*The word in the Greek is pneuma, meaning "spirit" or "wind." The false prophet is enabled (by his own master, Satan) to impart a spirit to the image, but that spirit is one of Satan's unclean spirits, probably a highly placed demon in the satanic hierarchy. This is a striking case of demon possession, with the demon possessing the body of the image rather than that of a man or woman. Henry Morris*

So, we don't know for sure to what extent this thing will be alive. Will it truly be alive or will it be some kind of advanced robot? Whatever it is, it will be convincing enough that people will think it's actually their god, the antichrist, and they will worship it.

**Revelation 13:16** **And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,**

Here is the famous "mark of the beast". The "mark" means "a *scratch* or *etching*, that is, *stamp* (as a *badge* of servitude)". The mark would show people their devotion to the beast, that they worshipped him as divine, they were under his authority, and consider themselves to be his slave to command. And it seems they will be given a choice to have the mark on the hand or their forehead.

This must be more than just a tattoo or something like it:

*"If this mark were purely on the surface of the skin, the resultant loss of skin, as happens regularly with people, would mean the mark would disappear. For this mark to have any degree of permanence it must, in some sense, be "in" the tissue. The use of ἐπι [epi] doesn't really deny that. It is simply saying that the mark is visible to someone, or to some device such as a scanner. In fact the word "mark" (charagma) comes from the verb charasso which means "to cut to a point, then to inscribe." It is really not farfetched to see the phrase as describing some kind of minor surgery—a "cutting to a point"—for the insertion of a chip that will be "inscribed" with data." Spargimino*

Those people who take this mark will be accepting Antichrist as God, and choosing him over Jesus. This will be the end of their opportunities to be saved (Revelation 14:9-11). There will be no going back, no chance for redemption for them. They will face the final judgments, the wrath of God still to come.

**Revelation 13:17** **and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.**

*"This mark has nothing to do with credit, as is often taught today. In a credit system, everyone must have a different number. In this case, everyone has the same number. The purpose of the mark will be to serve as a sign of identification of those who will own the Antichrist as their god. Only those who have this number will be permitted to work, to buy, to sell, or simply to make a living. The verse does not speak of credit cards, banking systems, a cashless society, a one-world money system, or computers, etc" Fructenbaum*

I agree with what he is saying, but that doesn't mean none of those things will be used. Those who refuse the mark are automatically cut off from the global economy. Modern technology will most likely contribute to the success of this, like a cashless system of exchange, identification chips, etc., but that's just speculation. We're not given the details of how this will be enforced, but whereas a hundred years ago it seemed inconceivable, today with technology and a truly global economy it seems very possible.

**Revelation 13:18** **Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.**

The way this is worded indicates that this is like a riddle of some kind which requires great wisdom to solve. I believe this riddle can only be solved by people living in the time that this will happen. I don't think we can know who the Antichrist is today; it's just a waste of time trying to figure it out. Many many books have been written about the Antichrist and who he might be. A long line of emperors, dictators, and presidents

have been speculated to be the Antichrist. Discussions on the meaning of this number are endless: *“The interpretations of this number form a jungle from which escape is apparently hopeless.” Vincent, Vincent's Word Studies*

In ancient languages they used one alphanumeric system. That is, each character represented both a letter and a number. The Jews and the Greeks would just add up the numbers for the letters in their names to arrive at a number that would represent that person. This is called Gematria. We can't really do that in English, because we have different characters for letters and numbers. But just for fun, let's imagine that each letter in the alphabet is represented by its place in A to Z order. A=1, B=2, all the way to Z=26. Got it? Using this system, my number would be 186. It doesn't mean anything, but it's kind of fun.

Well, typically the number 6 in scripture represents the number of man, 7 is the number of God, and 8 is the number of Jesus. *“According to the Greek numbering scheme Christ's name is represented by I=10, η=8, σ=200, ο=70, υ=400, ς=200, which add up to 888.” Wong, “The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13.”*

The problem is, there are all kinds of ways I could do this. In Jewish tradition, there are seven ways of calculating Gematria, and that's in Hebrew. And, the number 666 may have nothing to do with Gematria. One thing we can tell about this number is that it represents how the Beast, the epitome of human achievement and government at the end, falls short.

Ultimately, it is useless for us to try to figure out who the Beast is by using this number.

1. The value of the number in and of itself is too broad—too many historic names can be made to generate “666.”
2. The church will not be present when the Beast becomes known to the world, for she will have been taken in the Rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:1-8).
3. The number of his name is probably the least important clue among many attributes which Scripture gives concerning the identity and ministry of this person.
4. While the Restrainer remains (2 Thessalonians 2:7), he will not be revealed. No amount of speculation or analysis will bring him out before God is ready for him to be revealed. The Restrainer could continue to restrain for decades or even centuries beyond our present time.

*“The better part of wisdom is to be content that the identification is not yet available, but will be when the future false Christ ascends to his throne. The person to whom 666 applies must have been future to John's time, because John clearly meant the number to be recognizable to someone. If it was not discernible to his generation and those immediately following him—and it was not—the generation to whom it will be discernible must have lain (and still lies) in the future. Past generations have provided many illustrations of this future personage, but all past candidates have proven inadequate as fulfillments. Christians from generation to generation may manifest the same curiosity as the prophets of old regarding their own prophecies (cf. 1Pe. 1:10-11), but their curiosity will remain unsatisfied until the time of fulfillment arrives.”*  
Robert Thomas

Having said all that, I think it is very possible that both of these beasts are alive today somewhere in the world. But the important lesson for us today as we approach the times spoken of here in Revelation is to be discerning. As we get nearer to the end of the age, there will be more and more false prophets, new religions, and spiritual darkness in the world. There will be increasing apostasy in our own churches. Am I being too negative? No, I am a realist. That is what the Bible teaches, not that the world will get better and better and that the Church will become stronger and take over the world for Christ.

So we must be faithful, and we must be very careful about things that come into our lives and our churches.