

The Beast of Revelation 13, part 1

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Text

13:1 Now I was standing on the seashore, and I saw a Beast of prey coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten diadems and on his heads blasphemous names. 2 The beast that I saw was similar to a leopard, his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 3 And one of his heads was as if it had been mortally wounded, but his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth marveled after the Beast.

4 And they did obeisance to the dragon who had given the authority to the Beast, and they did obeisance to the Beast saying, "Who is like the Beast, and who is able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things, that is, blasphemy; and he was given authority to make war forty-two months. 6 So he opened that mouth of his in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, those who dwell in Heaven. 7 And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given him over every tribe and language and ethnic nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will do obeisance to him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slaughtered from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone has captivity, he goes away. If anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

I. Introduction - why the controversy?

Based on the number of books and articles that have been written on the Beast of Revelation, it seems to be a fascinating subject to Americans. And actually, it has fascinated Christians all over the world. Over the past 1500 years, literally hundreds of candidates have been suggested as being the beast - in their generation of course. In my opinion, it is because they focus only on a handful of the internal clues and they neglect many others. Let me give you a sampling of some of the candidates that have been proposed.

At the time of the Reformation and beyond there were many godly people

who thought the Beast was either the Roman Catholic church as a system¹ or some individual pope.² The Papists returned the favor and said that Martin Luther was the Beast.³ In Napoleon's time, many people thought Napoleon just had to be the Beast.⁴ During World War II, some thought that Hitler was the Beast, and Robert Van Kampen actually continues to think that Hitler will rise again.⁵ And while I don't doubt that some of these characters took on some of the Beasts characteristics, we will be seeing that they simply do not fit all of the evidence of who the text was originally pointing towards. I've got books that have suggested Mussolini,⁶ Henry Kissinger,⁷ Anwar Sadat,⁸ and Pope John Paul II.⁹ Christians like Gary Blevins made absolute fools of themselves when they identified Ronald Reagan as the Beast, since each of his three names just happen to have six letters in them - Ronald Wilson Reagan.¹⁰ Obvious, right? No. It is ridiculous. It ignores the thirty rules of interpretation that John laid down in the first chapter of Revelation. I remember back in the 1980's that Mikhail Gorbachev was a very popular candidate for the Beast.¹¹ On KCRO radio I heard a speaker seriously claiming that a computer in Belgium tracks information on every person in the world, and it is called the Beast, so it fits. No! We will be seeing that it absolutely cannot fit. One of the weirdest interpretations I have ever run across was a proof that Bill Gates was the beast and no one could buy and sell without using his computer system. And it went through a complicated conversion of his abbreviated name into ASCII code numbers with an Arabic

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- 1 An example would be Ray Summers, *Worthy is the Lamb: An Interpretation of Revelation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1951), p. 176.
 - 2 Most of the reformers and Puritans took this position. Also some recent books. See also Internet <http://www.pacinst.com/antichri.htm>
 - 3 See discussion in Paul Hoffman, *Archimedes' Revenge: The Joys and Perils of Mathematics* (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 22.
 - 4 Clarke Garrett gives examples from Napoleon's time in *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 211.
 - 5 Many authors during World War II came to this conclusion. Interestingly, Robert Van Kampen, in *The Sign* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992), pp. 204-206, says that Hitler will be brought to life as the beast.
 - 6 Leonard Sale-Harrison is identified as one with this view in Robert Clouse, "The Danger of Mistaken Hopes," in *Handbook of Biblical Prophecy*, eds. Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 33-36. See also David A. Lewis, "The Antichrist: Number, Number, Who's Got the Number?"
 - 7 Salem Kirban, *Kissenger: Man of Peace?* (Huntingdon Valley, PA: Salem Kirban, 1974).
 - 8 Mary S. Relfe, *When Your Money Fails... the '666 System' is Here* (Montgomery, AL: Ministries, 1981), pp. 143-145.
 - 9 See discussion in J. P. Slavin, "Pope runs into hostility in Jamaica," *Atlanta Journal/Constitution* (11 August, 1993), A2.
 - 10 Gary D. Blevins, *666: The Final Warning!* (Kingsport, TN: Vision of the End Ministries, 1990). Several other teachers have given variations on this theme. One variation ties in James Brady (who was shot in the head) with Revelation 13:3.
 - 11 Several authors favored him as the beast, including Robert W. Faid, *Gorbachev! Has the Real Antichrist Come?* (Tulsa, OK: Victory House, 1988).

number 3 at the end because he is Bill Gates III, but since the ASCII code for the Roman numeral III didn't work, they substituted the Arabic 3.¹² And the sad thing about these interpretations is that they make unbelievers think the Bible has no objective meaning.

But when you scan through the lists of hundreds of candidates that have been identified, at least 95% of them get two things right - even a broken clock has the right time twice a day, right? So before I give my identity, I want to give credit where credit is due. What 95% of these interpretations get right is that the Beast stands for civil government that is thoroughly statist. On that the vast majority seem to be agreed.

Let me define the word "statism," because that is going to be one of the central themes of this chapter. Statism in a nutshell is the control of everything by the state - or at least any attempt to move in that direction. It is any theory of civics that believes it is good for the civil government to get involved in, to control, and/or to solve major or minor social, economic, medical, food, distribution, or other problems that a society may face. Well, if that is the definition of statism, then America is statist to the core. So the lessons of this chapter are going to be very important lessons for America.

But it's not just unbelievers we have supported statism. Unfortunately, American Christians from both main political parties tend to be statist. And it is my hope that Christians will learn to see the incredible danger of statism, whether that is manifested in the local city council, the county, the state, or the Federal government. The book of Revelation makes clear that even the most benign forms of statism (such as the highly praised forms under the previous emperor, Claudius) are treated by God in chapter 6 as demonic. And certainly this chapter treats all forms of statism as demonic. God has made this world in such a way where it is guaranteed that if Jesus is rejected as the sovereign and if His laws are cast off, then something will fill the void. And the book of Revelation identifies that "something" as demonic.

12 Here is his full text: > Warning! Bill Gates (the president of the Microsoft corporation, USA) may be the next antichrist: Revelation 13:18 says: Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. The real name of Bill Gates is William Henry Gates III. Nowadays he is known as Bill Gates (III), where "III" means the order of third (3rd.) By converting the letters of his current name to the ASCII- values (which are used in computers) you will get the following: > B I L L G A T E S 3
>66 + 73 + 76 + 76 + 71 +65+84+ 69 +83 +3 = 666
> Daniel 7:23 says: "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on Earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole Earth, trample it and break it in pieces. Current history knows three antichrists: Adolf Hitler - Joseph Stalin - The Pope. Is the fourth beast Microsoft corporation which represents the power of money? Revelation 13:16 and 13:18 says: He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.

Today we are barely going to have an introduction to the topic, and will focus on the clues in verse 1.

II. What part of the world is this "beast" associated with? (v. 1a)

A. Geography shows this to be the Mediterranean (chapters 8,10,12)

The first phrase says, "Now I was standing on the seashore..." Unlike verse 11 which sees the second beast from the viewpoint of the land of Israel, this is standing on the Mediterranean seashore, looking out toward Rome. And his face would be pointing toward Rome whether he was seeing this while he was literally on the seashore of the island of Patmos, or whether (as I believe) he was transported by vision to the seashore of Israel looking West. I think the context of the second beast indicates the seashore of Israel. But either way, he is gazing toward Rome and toward the ocean waters that Rome controlled. So right off the bat we can rule out any interpretation that makes the beast arise from China, Russia, or the United States of America. The focus was on the Mediterranean Ocean.

B. The background of Daniel 7 shows this to be the Mediterranean

And Daniel 7 confirms this interpretation. Virtually all commentators agree that Daniel 7 forms the background to this beast of Revelation. And the next phrase in verse 1, "and I saw a Beast of prey coming up out of the sea..." are words just like Daniel wrote. Those words would have immediately reminded the Hebrew audience of Daniel 7's vision where Daniel was standing by the Mediterranean and saw one beast after another arising out of the Mediterranean - especially when this beast is described as having the characteristics of the fourth.

Well, that immediately gives huge definition to this beast. In Daniel, the four beasts represented four demonic rulers who ruled over the four world-empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. And it is this last beast of Rome that Revelation refers to. Now, Dispensationalists admit that the fourth beast is Rome, but they like to claim that some time in the future the Roman Empire will be revived and we are going to go through this all over again - the same empire, but somehow revived. But that is an exegetical stretch, and I don't think there is any need for that. It all perfectly fits in the first century. In any case, I just wanted to point out that everyone agrees that

Daniel's fourth empire of Rome is in view.

III. Earlier context of "the beast" - Revelation 11:7. The beast is a demon who ascends out of Abyss (11:7; 17:8). The term "abyss" is used of both the Mediterranean Ocean (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; etc; Ps. 77:16; 106:9; Is. 44:27; 63:13; etc.) and hell (Ezek. 31:15; Amos 7:4; Ps. 71:20; Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3)

So if the beasts of Daniel 7 are demonic princes who rule over empires, then one would expect Revelation to identify this beast as a demon as well. And it does so in several places. The first place was Revelation 11:7. Why don't you go ahead and turn there. It's been a while since we looked at that chapter, so let me remind you of the important interpretive principle of "first reference." John typically gives us interpretive clues about a subject the very first time that the subject comes up in the book of Revelation. So look at Revelation 11:7 - the very first time that the Beast is mentioned. Speaking of the last two prophets, it says,

Revelation 11:7. When they finish their witness, the Beast of prey that comes up out of the Abyss will make war with them, overcome them and kill them

The primary thing I want you to notice is that the Beast of prey comes up out of the Abyss, or hell, just like the cloud of demons in chapter 9 came up out of the Abyss, or hell. So we saw that the beast is a demon.

And people have sometimes wondered why a demon would be called a "beast." Aren't demons simply fallen angels? Yes, that is true. They are. But there were different kinds of angels - one group of which had shapes like an animal; like a beast.

You may remember way back in Revelation 4-5 that there were four godly living creatures (what the King James Bible calls "four beasts") around the throne of God worshiping God. It's a different word for "beast" than this one. That is a positive term for beast because they are godly beasts who did not fall with Satan. The word beast used for them is the word we get Zoology from. This word for beast is a negative term - beast of prey or savage beast. But in Revelation 4, those godly beasts weren't like any other kind of beast that you might have confronted. They were rational creatures who spoke and worshiped even though some looked like a calf, some like a man, some like an eagle and some like a lion. And they had eyes all over their body. Some had one head, and some had more than one head. In fact, in both Ezekiel and

Revelation some of the beasts had many eyes and four heads with four faces.

Anyway, it is my belief that there were good beasts similar to those described in Revelation 4-5 who fell with Lucifer and became particularly dangerous demons. And it is those kinds of demons that are called beasts in Daniel and in Revelation. The Fall into sin had changed those creatures into something hideous and horrible. The beasts were scary enough when they were godly, but when they fell into sin they became terrifying monsters. And this demon is described as an attacking beast of prey.

So to refresh your memory on the sermon on chapter 11:7, the Beast was first and foremost an invisible demonic monster. In that sermon we saw that the Abyss is a prison God made for demons in the heart of the earth - often associated with the ocean or the deep. In fact, in your outline I give several verses that show this connection. Sometimes the word "Abyss" refers to the ocean, and sometimes it refers to hell. So even if John had not given us the heads-up in chapter 11:7 on the identity of this beast, we could have assumed that whatever is coming out of the Mediterranean ocean here is probably evil. In chapter 17 he again says that the beast came up out of the Abyss and would soon be heading back to the Abyss. So the Abyss is used to describe a subterranean hell and it is used to describe the Ocean - perhaps some place in the ocean being the gateway to that place.

- So the first point I made in that sermon was that the origin of the beast was in the Abyss.
- Second, this makes the beast a demon just like the beast in Daniel 7 was a demonic prince.
- Third, this parallels the earlier demons that moved emperors in chapter 6 and again in chapter 9. Those were described in bestial language as well. Don't ever think of the kingdoms and empires of men as neutral. They are either in Christ's kingdom and ruled by Him or they are in Satan's kingdom and ruled by Satan's demons. So in the book of Revelation you see a fluid movement back and forth between discussing the Beast as demon and the Beast as the visible men or the visible kingdom that the beast controls. And this is exactly the way God discussed other demons and emperors of the past. In that sermon I demonstrated from Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that God addressed earthly kings as being the problem and then switched to speaking to Satan who controlled that king. Satan clearly possessed those kings and controlled them and controlled the policies of their empire.
- Fourth, we saw that the article "the" in "the beast" of Revelation 11:7 points to a specific beast in Scripture - Daniel's fourth beast.
- Fifth, the word used for "beast" is not used of clean animals, but of unclean animals, and anywhere this beast had been at work, uncleanness followed in the actions of men; homosexuality, blasphemy, and every kind of perversion and corruption.
- Sixth, we saw that this beast had previously been bound. I believe that the binding

probably happened at the time of Jesus' ministry. But this beast had been responsible for the rise of Rome right from the beginning, just as other demonic beasts had been responsible for the rise and domination of other earlier empires. And we looked a bit at the power that the Gospel has to bind, and how national apostasy sometimes unleashes demons upon a nation. But we saw that is high time for the church to learn the Biblical principles of spiritual warfare for binding the strong-man demons and plundering their houses.

- Seventh, we saw that the beast hates everything that Christ and His prophets stand for, and he persecutes prophets and Christians alike.
- And finally, we saw that though this beast was released to possess Nero, and then Vespasian, and then Titus for the last few months of the campaign, that he was permanently bound in the Abyss in AD 70.

I don't have time to re-discuss and to re-prove each of those points. I think I nailed each point pretty solidly the first time. So I am just reminding you of that demonic background. And with that said, let's dig a bit more into the nature of statism in this passage.

IV. The beast symbolically described

A. *The beast has seven heads (v. 1d)*

First, verse 1 says that he had seven heads. Did the demon literally have seven heads? Possibly. There were angelic beasts in Ezekiel who had more than one head. But I only want to focus on the symbolical use of this in the book of Revelation. These things are primarily symbols. Revelation 17:9-10 identifies the seven heads this way. It says,

9 Here is the mind that has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10 They are also seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not come yet. And whenever he comes he must continue a short time.

So John is defining these seven heads. He clearly says that the seven heads symbolize two different things: 1) First, they symbolize the empire of Rome that the Beast controlled. 2) Second, those seven heads symbolize the first seven emperors of the Roman empire. As is common in Revelation, there is a corporate and an individual aspect that almost all commentators recognize. And John will go back and forth between the corporate and the individual.

Let's talk about the corporate aspect first. Revelation 17:9 says first, "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits." Anyone who had Roman coins in his pocket would not need pastor Kayser to explain this. He would instantly know this image. He would have seen the image of the woman sitting on the seven hills of Rome hundreds if not thousands of times. I've put an example of one of Vespasian's coins from the war period that we have been discussing, and you can see Vespasian on one side and the harlot woman on the other side. And what is she sitting on? The seven

mountains or hills of Rome.



First century readers would have known that the mountains represent the empire as a whole. At a later time we will look at how the harlot woman is yet another demon that goes back to Babylonian times and is tightly connected with all four empires and with apostate Israel and with the Babylonian Talmud. But I want to focus this morning, not on the woman, but on the seven mountains. The seven heads are symbolic of seven mountains. Those seven mountains represent Rome corporately considered. That would be the first and immediate thought that would pop into any first century person who read that definition. So the Beast controls the empire. It controlled the seven mountains, or Rome itself.

But according to the same passage he also controls the emperors of the empire, so Revelation 17:10 goes on to say,

They are also seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not come yet. And whenever he comes he must continue a short time.

So it is not just the empire that is tightly connected to the demonic; the kings are too. And Revelation 17:11 will make clear that when Nero dies, the Beast demon is bound in the Abyss during the short reign of three of the next rulers: Galba, Otho, and Vitellius - perhaps explaining why they couldn't keep the empire together - they didn't have the beast behind them to help them. But Revelation 17:11 says that the Beast was once again about to be released from the Abyss and inhabit the seventh and eighth emperors, Vespasian and Titus.

Don't worry if you don't catch all the details of the human kings right now. But hopefully you are at least catching the drift of what is going on - empires are not just ruled by men. They are ruled by demons. When we get to

chapter 17 we will dig into this amazing imagery that flows back and forth between the human and the demonic, but for now, it is enough to know that there are seven human emperors that serve under the demonic Beast and do his bidding, and then there is an eighth king who will succeed them. The seven human kings that are represented here are:

- Julius Caesar (49-44 BC)
- Augustus (31 BC- AD 14)
- Tiberius (AD 14-37)
- Caligula (AD 37-41)
- Claudius (AD 41-54)
- Nero (AD 54-68)
- Vespasian (AD 69-79)

Between Nero and Vespasian there were no emperors because the empire died. But let me repeat the names of those seven heads of Rome for you.

They are:

- Julius Caesar (49-44 BC)
- Augustus (31 BC- AD 14)
- Tiberius (AD 14-37)
- Caligula (AD 37-41)
- Claudius (AD 41-54)
- Nero (AD 54-68)
- Vespasian (AD 69-79)

B. ten horns (v. 1e)

But back to chapter 13, verse 1. This verse also mentions ten horns on the seven heads. And this is all too frequently just skipped over hurriedly, but it is a very important clue. Daniel 7:24 says that the ten horns are ten kings and so does Revelation 17:12. Everyone agrees with that. But that's about as far as the agreement goes. Some people make the ten horns symbolize exactly the same thing that the seven heads do. That makes no sense. They are obviously connected, but the symbolism distinguishes between them. As I have mentioned before, there are some head-scratcher puzzles in reconciling these two chapters.

Because there are some commentaries that think that chapter 17 is irreconcilable with this chapter or with Daniel 7, and because you may run across those books, let me briefly mention two or three of the problems they see. They say that Revelation 13 lines up with Daniel 7 in indicating that the ten kings are sequential kings of Rome, one rising after the other. But in stark contrast, Revelation 17 seems to focus on ten kings who live at the same time and are about rule at the same time and who are not sequential. How can such opposite things be symbolized by the same ten horns? They

say that there is no way of reconciling that. Actually, there is - and it is beautiful. Another problem they see is that in chapter 13 these ten horns have crowns and a kingdom whereas in chapter 17 they have no crowns and are waiting for a kingdom. In chapter 13 they work for the Beast, in chapter 17 they are waiting for the beast to get released. And there are other puzzles. For example, what do the two texts mean by "kings"? If the seven heads are human rulers from Caesar to Vespasian, how could the ten horns be ten human kings from Caesar to Vespasian? And when we get to chapter 17 you will be seeing that the answer to that puzzle is amazingly cool. I gave you a sneak preview of it when we looked at chapter 11:7.

And though I don't have time to delve into these puzzles in detail today, let me assure you that any apparent contradictions completely evaporate when you realize two things: first, the horns in both chapters are demon-kings (and they are the same demon kings) who have been around since at least the time of Julius Caesar, and second, chapter 13 looks at these demons as ruling and standing behind the Roman emperors, whereas chapter 17 looks at a very short period of time after the Beast is bound in AD 68, and the empire has fallen apart, and these demons basically have completely lost control of the empire. They are no longer riding on a head; there is no head. It was mortally wounded. So, to try to regain a kingdom, they take possession of the ten provincial governors to fight side by side with Vespasian against Israel. Chapter 13 deals with the work of these demons with all the Caesars; chapter 17 deals with the one and a half years that the empire fell apart and how these ten demons were now scrambling to put Rome back together again.

So there is no contradiction when you get the timing right. The seven heads are the first seven human emperors and the ten horns are the demonic rulers that the Beast used to rule the empire. It's only when they lose the empire that in chapter 17 they are said to no longer have crowns, no longer have a kingdom, and to scatter around the empire to move ten provincial leaders to get with the program and to make Vespasian the new head of a revived empire. Don't worry about it if you don't understand what is happening completely at this point. I'll tease apart and sort through those things more thoroughly when we get to chapter 17. But there is a perfect reconciliation between the two chapters.

What I want you to focus on right now is that in both chapters the ten horns are ten demons who work behind the scenes to maintain power for human rulers. In other words, the demon-Beast has ten demon-kings (General, so-to-speak) who help him to rule the entire empire of Rome - no doubt

traveling back and forth from the ten imperial provinces.

C. on his horns ten diadem-crowns (v. 1f)

Verse 1 goes on to say that on the horns were ten diadem crowns. There are three facts that at least a couple of commentators have pointed out. Actually, the first fact has been pointed out by quite a few commentators. They point out that it is extremely odd to have the horns crowned rather than the heads. Almost always you think of heads being crowned, not horns. And at least one of these heads has more than one horn on it. But it is the horns that get the crown. Some commentators are puzzled by that, but to me that illustrates who really is in charge. Humans may think they are the heads of an empire and calling the shots, but there are demons behind the scenes that truly wear the crown. John is building a gradual case in this chapter against statism, and making the point that statism is demonic. By the time we get to the end of the chapter you will see that message crystal clear. So the first thing commentators point out is that the horns wear the crowns, not the heads. And my application is that the demons controlled the empire more than the emperors did.

And the second thing that commentators point out is that these crowns are not victory crowns, but diadem crowns. Revelation elsewhere indicates that Christ is the only one who rightfully wears the diadem crown. So when these demons wear diadem crowns, they are usurpers. They are taking the place of Christ.

But there is one more significant fact about these horns that should not be skipped over. Since a horn is always a sign of power and force (in fact, usually it is a symbol of military force), the fact that horns are crowned rather than heads shows that these demons move men to exercise power rather than true authority under Christ. And demons like to do this in every government - family, church, and state. How many men respond to lack of submission by trying to force submission rather than gently and confidently exercising the authority of Christ? There is a vast difference between ruling by power and ruling by authority. It is one of the biggest characteristics of statism and it is one of the biggest characteristics of families and churches that are trouble. Rushdoony commented on this verse and applied it to the issue of statism, saying this:

The fact that the horns rather than the heads are crowned signifies that in this world, power is the source of authority and sovereignty, and men give obedience, not to legitimate leadership, but to power as such. "Might makes right," and might is worshiped and obeyed in its every implication. The names of blasphemy indicate that human

governments arrogate to themselves the authority and sovereignty which properly belong to God.¹³

So as we go through this chapter, you might want to piece together the underlying spiritual issues that define statism. There are quite a few. One of them is that statism substitutes power for true authority. In America the Constitution no longer has authority in just about anything that Congressmen, Senators, President, or Courts do. And men go into Congress hoping to change that, and after a few years of trying, they despair. They don't realize that this is a demonically entrenched issue. Statism cannot be resolved by a different variety of statism. It can only be resolved by repentance, faith in Christ, and submission to Christ's kingship. Nothing else will solve the demonic problems. The demons will certainly not give up their control without a fight.

D. on his heads a blasphemous name (v. 1g)

Now we are going to be seeing next week that the evil of statism really begins to come to the fore in some of the next phrases. We will only be able to look at one more phrase today. The last phrase of verse 1 says, "and on his heads blasphemous names." The Majority Text makes clear that there was not just one name, but names (plural). So if the heads were emperors, and if John later brings to mind the emperor's coins that were in people's pockets, what blasphemous names are written on the heads side of each coin? Let me give you a list.

I already pointed to the first coin on the bottom of your outline. But take a look at the second one. The second coin on your outline is a gold coin found in northern Israel.

13 R. J. Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come*, (Fairfax, VA: Thoburn Press, 1978), p. 172.



It says, "Divine Augustus." What is remarkable about finding coins like this in Israel is that most Israelites refused to use Roman money until the mid 60s.¹⁴ The pro-Roman Jews did, but the purists in Israel used Tyrian money which did not have images. It was not until the reign of Nero, when people throughout the empire began recognizing that Roman money was being debased by Nero, that Nero finally had to put a stop to Tyrian money being used in the empire. Gresham's law is that bad money drives out good money. People were hanging on the Tyrian coins, and Nero didn't like that. So Nero made it illegal to buy or sell with any other coinage than Roman coinage, and those coins had blasphemous names on the heads-side of the coin. And I will later show how Nero, Vespasian, and Titus' names on the coins all literally add up to 666. But that is the subject for another sermon. But in terms of blasphemous names being found on the heads, very literally, the seven heads of the Roman beast (Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Vespasian) all had blasphemous names written right on them. And if you go to the numismatics websites, you can find numerous blasphemous names connected with those emperors.

The third coin in your outline simply says, "Divine Augustus Vespasianus." The word "divine" is obvious - it is a claim to divinity. "Augustus" means either majestic or worthy of worship.

¹⁴ See Deborah Furlan Taylor, "The Monetary Crisis in Revelation 13:17 and the Provenance of the Book of Revelation," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, volume 71, no 3 (July 2009), pp. 580-596.



Chilton writes,

According to the Roman imperial theology, the Caesars were gods. Each emperor was called Augustus or Sebastos, meaning One to be worshiped; they also took on the name divus (god) and even Deus and Theos (God). Many temples were erected to them throughout the Empire, especially... in Asia Minor. The Roman Caesars received honor belonging only to the one true God.¹⁵

Joel McDurmon comments,

The denarius itself — most likely a coin from the current Emperor — carried not only his image but an inscription that read TIBERIUS CAESAR DIVI AVGVSTI FILIVS AVGVSTVS (“Tiberius Caesar August Son of the August God”), and the back side continued PONTIFEX MAXIMVS (“High Priest”). If this was not a graven image of a false god, nothing is.¹⁶

I haven't seen the coin myself, but Stauffer claims that one Roman coin has written on it, “No other name for man's salvation.” And Stauffer points out

15 • Chilton, [David Days of Vengeance](#), (Fort Worth: Dominion Press, 1987), p. 328.

16 <https://americanvision.org/3570/render-unto-god-what-is-gods-you-too-caesar/>

that when Peter says of Jesus in Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved," that he was directly contradicting that coin. Peter was engaged in treason. Now, I don't have a picture of that coin. But I have seen plenty of coins that call the emperor the following blasphemous names and titles: "Lord," "Father," "Life-Giver," "Son of God," "high priest," "gracious savior," "God," "of the gods," "savior," and "the citizens having been saved." Those are all blasphemous names because they are calling each head of state, God and Savior. And those names were literally on their heads.

We like to call the modern state a Messianic State, and think we have a new problem, but that is really nothing new. Demonic states (however nice they might be in some respects) have always seen themselves as Messiah, Savior, Father, Guardian, and Life-Giver. And as we move through the chapter we will see that the state wants to have a monopolistic claim on delivering people from floods, famines, health issues (in fact, one coin claims Caesar was the healer), economic woes, and other problems. By the time we get through this chapter you will not be mystified by the control that the government wants to have over vitamins, food, travel, and even things like charity. Statism wants a monopoly or at least a say on everything.

Just to illustrate this, let me read a quote from Alexander Solzhenitsyn. He said that the Soviet Union did not allow the church or Christian individuals or any other organizations to

set up benefit societies, cooperatives of industrial societies; to offer material aid to members; to organize children's and young persons' groups for prayer and other purposes, or general biblical, literary or handicraft groups for the purpose of work or religious instruction or the like, or to organize groups, circles, or sections; to arrange excursions and kindergartens, open libraries and reading rooms, organize sanatoria or medical aid.

Now I can understand why tyrants would not want libraries, schools or other institutions which could potentially undermine their statism. But why, why, why would they stop people from feeding the poor, or giving money to the poor, or setting up benefit societies, giving medical aid, caring for the dying, or doing other mercy ministries? And the answer is that people who do such things attract loyalty, and the demons behind the state are jealous of that and don't like that competition for their loyalty.

Hundreds of stories could be given of people who were even martyred simply because they engaged in mercy ministries. Let me tell you about Barlaam of Antioch. Barlaam of Antioch was a cobbler for the imperial forces who devoted all his free time to the care of orphans and widows in the church. When he was an infant, his parents had abandoned him to die of

exposure outside the city or be eaten by animals. Christians picked up these babies routinely even though it was illegal, and he was raised in a Christian home. Because he was rescued from infanticide, he had a special place in his heart for exposed children. He never was a church leader, but his good deeds for the poor and hurting became so well known that that people were becoming Christians and declaring loyalty to Jesus. You would think the state would praise him for his good works. But, no, he was literally martyred for caring for orphans and widows without the state's permission.

You might think that is as far as we could ever get from America. But it really is not. Try to start a charity, or a homeless shelter, or a nursing home for the elderly, or a hospital without a license and myriad regulations of the state, and if you persist, you will be jailed. Try to start a private bank. Can't be done. I know people who spent time in jail for starting an alternative currency. Try to arrange for adoption of a child without government permits. Sorry, you will be in big trouble. Try to start an orphanage? Don't even think about it. Try to start a seminary. I can give you the names of numerous attempted seminaries that were shut down because they did not get permission and follow all the government regulations for seminaries. When they asked what would happen if they didn't comply, they were threatened with fines and prison time. These and hundreds of other examples show that America is statist to the core and resembles the beast of Revelation far more than it resembles what our founding fathers set up.

Now, we are going to have to end there. And though we have barely given an introduction to this chapter today, there are still some concluding applications that we need to make just from verse 1.

First, ask yourself if you see statism as beautiful and necessary or as ugly and dangerous. We need to align our thinking with God's Word and not be the frog in the kettle that doesn't notice the change in temperature. God wants us to see the ugly demonic monster behind all statism and to not allow our country to head towards its logical trajectory of total control. That's where it is heading.

Second, do you see the blasphemous names on the Roman coins as a necessary evil or as blasphemy? Let's consider some of those names.

What about the name "Lord." Early Christians were willing to die rather than to say that Caesar was lord of all of life. But Christians today gladly call for licensing and submit to licensing of everything - including marriage. Even when it comes to the church, there has been a mad rush of churches to get incorporated in the last four decades and to seek 501c3 licensing from the

IRS. Why? It is a declaration of Caesar's lordship. The Puritans said that they would rather die than do that. Christians send their children to be disciplined by the state. I don't think we Christians see the name "Lord" as blasphemous at all. But we should.

What about the name "savior." The reasons the emperors claimed the status of savior is that when famine came, they saw it as their responsibility to redirect shipping traffic of wheat to the famine areas. So there was an equivalent to our Department of Agriculture and our Department of Transportation. When an earthquake hit a city, Rome was quick to offer aid and wanted to be the primary one to rescue that city. Very few cities refused such handouts. There were a few (like Laodicea) that did, and Rome didn't like their refusal. Rome kept pestering them to take the money. And most cities treated Rome as Savior from such disasters. When flooding took out areas of empire, Claudius through Nero provided assistance of army, food, and temporary shelter. Does this sound strangely familiar? This idea that the Feds must step in for every flood is a rather new idea in America. Private charity helped these things in the past and did so in a far superior way. And interestingly, private charity arrived faster and helped more people than the feds did in Houston. The same would have been true in New Orleans if the Feds hadn't chased private help away. They turned away semi trucks full of privately donated food and water. I think this chapter explains why the Feds acted as they did in New Orleans. It is consistent with the jealousy that the demonic spirit of statism has for our loyalty.

Claudius, the emperor who ruled from 41-54, is admired by modern statist, who look at his achievements with admiration. He massively centralized planning and made it more efficient. He set up numerous boards and agencies that parallel what we have in America. When I preached on Revelation 6, I showed how he took control of shipping, agriculture, and many other aspects of Roman life. He gave jobs to the jobless. But his agencies that made the people call him Savior pale when compared to our massive agencies. For all practical purposes, America has become like the beast by becoming the go-to-Savior. And sadly, Christians expect it. When there is a flood, they expect the Feds to step in. When there is food poisoning, they expect the FDA to exert more controls. When there is an airline crash, they expect the FAA to be even more intrusive. And as we go through the next verses of this chapter I hope you will see how incredibly dangerous such thinking is.

We have one Lord and Savior and there is only one name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And that Savior calls us to

quit going back to the statism and welfare programs of Egypt and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. It is my prayer that by the time we are done with this chapter, you will get such a colorful picture of the dangerous evil of statism that you will hate it and resist it with the spiritual weapons that the book of Revelation will give to us.

But I want to end by pointing to the true Savior that the Beast is the lousy counterfeit of. The true Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a Lord worth submitting to. He has majesty worth admiring and worshiping. He is a Provider for those who put their trust in Him. He is a true fortress. But above all things, He is a Savior who is capable of saving not just from current crises that we face, but saving us for all of eternity. Psalm 118:9 says, "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes." And the Psalm of response that we will be singing in a couple of minutes says the same thing, and points out that our Savior can provide and protect us in floods, famines, wars, when we are strangers, or orphaned, or widowed. You don't need the state to be Savior when you have the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 146 lists all the things that we tend to trust the state to do and tells us, "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help." And it goes on to say that men will let you down as Savior, but Christ will never let you down. You can trust Him for time and for eternity. May we do so. Amen. Let's pray.

(to be continued)