Understanding the book of Revelation

Fall 2017 | Session #6

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Thought For The Day: ***“When death stung Jesus Christ it stung itself to death.”* *Peter Joshua – Welsh Pastor***

1. Introduction –– The Seventh Seal Is Opened:
   1. 7 Trumpets revealing 7 images of heavenly & earthly realities. Realities that address the shape of history as it moves to the fulfillment of God’s purposes and images that speak to the role that Jesus’ people are play in the world.
      1. The role that Jesus’ people in the midst of earthly tribulations is summed up in the words:
      2. This role is seen powerfully in the story of the ministry, death by persecution, and resurrection of the martyrs, and the two prophetic witnesses (Ch. 11) who like Jesus persist in their prophetic ministry as faithful witnesses, even to the death.
2. The Seventh Trumpet And The 3rd Woe (11:15-19).
   1. Once again are swept up into the throne room and as the 7th trumpet sounds a grand announcement is proclaimed in the heavens.  **–– *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”* (Chapter 11:15–19).**
      1. **The Text: 15** “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." 16And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. 18 The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth." 19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.”
      2. A loud voice announces: *"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”*
      3. Once again the 24 Elders hit the dust, lost in worship. This time the theme of their song is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the end appears to have come. **(v.18)**
      4. A Brief Digression On The Theme Of Human & Demonic Anger and Wrath and God’s Justice & Judgments.
         1. The presence of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are profound themes in Revelation. Human & demonic wrath and injustice are tied up in the question of rebellion and pride. God and the Lamb’s wrath and judgments/justice are connected to the issue of unrepentant and growing evil.
         2. We read that the nations are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ & full of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (v.18)

We will soon read of the “great dragon” who is full of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and that the Beast from the Sea is full of blasphemous speech (angry, insulting, profane speech against God). – The nations and the Beast are described as having hearts of profound arrogance and intense anger? (Ps. 2) ––– “Out of the heart the mouth speaks.” –– Jesus

* + - 1. Note the “justice” that is alluded to in the words, “The time has come… **“ *for destroying those who destroy the earth.”*** Judgment is a real challenge for the reader who holds that values are simply the product of human culture and are never absolute. Such a reader is hard pressed to argue for any clear response to the evils of injustice and the destructiveness of sin. It is a contradicting paradox for the person who says that values are simply cultural constructions, to then come out using language of good and evil in regards to such issues as earth keeping, animal care, or other concerns that students are often times passionate about. Where does this yearning for a kinder, truer, gentler world come from? Where does this sense of “judgment” come from with regards to right and wrong?
      2. A Door to the temple opens: the Ark of the Covenant? (v.19)

1. The\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ War (Chapter 12–14)
   1. What is to follow (Chapters12-14) is a long section that deals with the war of light & darkness, goodness & evil. A war that mixes the past, present, and future together. The war is centered in and around the Messiah and his people and will finally give way to the pouring out of 7 Bowls Of Final Judgment and the Restoration of Creation. (Chapters16-22).
   2. This section (Chapter 12–15:1–4) is composed of 4 dominating signs.
   * 12:1-17:
   * 13:1-10:
   * 13:11-18:
   1. Signs In The Bible And In Revelation? A number of actions or images are called “signs” (the star crowned woman; the Red Dragon; etc. A sign is something that points us to a greater reality. A biblical “sign” tells us that something larger lies behind the image that is being shown to us. ––In John’s Gospel Jesus miracles are called “signs.” (7 Signs & 7 Sermons)
   2. **The Text: –– *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”* –– Chapter 12:1–17**

**REVELATION 12:1** A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 2She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. 3Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. 4His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. 5She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. 7And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. 10Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. *11They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.* 12Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." 13When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

* 1. The Star Crowned Woman and the Great Red Dragon –– Revelation 12:1–17
     1. Who Is The Woman? —> Hints At Her Identity.
     + Fancy **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: C**lothed in the sun; the moon below her feet; and crowned with 12 stars. She is God’s people Israel. (Genesis 37:9 Joseph’s Dream)
     + She is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and cries out in her labor pains. (Echo of Isaiah 26:17-18 and 66:7-11) She births a son “who will rule all the nations with his rod of iron”. –– She is the Mother of Messiah; the obedient & faithful Israelite –– Mary.
     + She Has \_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?** In v.17 when we are told that her children are *“those who obey God’s commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”* –– She is the mother of all the saints. Israel, Mary, the Church. God’s true people.
     + A retelling of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ story. Without Christmas carols. As soon as he is birthed he is snatched up to heaven, saved by God from the clutches of his enemies.
     + Birth and Ascension but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! Why?
     + What The Messiah’s birth/rising \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (12:10)

**His birth/rising stirs up aggressive \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** **The great bloody dragon seeks to destroy both the Messiah** **and the community of God’s people**.

* + - Messiah’s birth/rising results in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ both in\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. **Note:** John focus regarding Satan’s defeat and his being cast out of heaven is seen in the light of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus not the original fall.
    - The Wars \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? This struggle between the Dragon/Snake and the Messiah covers the whole period of history from the birth/catching up of the son (birth/life/death/resurrection/ascension) to the end of this age of evil and darkness.
    - 1260 days evil battles God’s good. (The “magical 3.5 years of apocalyptic literature).
    1. Who Is This Dragon? —> Hints At His Identity.
       1. He is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (More than man; violence of blood/death); contrasted to the identity of other great angelic beings in Revelation. Like Gollum (once a river folk) he is profoundly distorted by his rebellion and sin.
       - **Seven Heads:**
       - **Ten Horns**:
       - **Seven Crowns**:

— The Images meant to convey to the readers the pervasive primeval power of evil and its origins in the serpent/dragon of Eden. Later named for us: The Satan & The Devil.

* + - 1. He is cast down from the heavens and a third of the stars fall at the striking of his tail from the sky. (Echo of the fall of 1/3 or the angels.)
      2. Brief Digression: His Role As An Angel? As A Fallen Angel?
      * His role as an angel? It would have been ***to carry out the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.***  But in the story of the fall and in the book of Job we find the snake (serpent) willingly provoking evil (and accusing) in order to prosecute evil. He is profoundly twisted in his corruption. He is the devil (*diabolis*).
      * He is ***pictured here as “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” and a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*** (12:9-10) “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.” –– (2John1:7) “I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.”
      * He aggressively seeks to destroy the people of God, and their mission.
      * Dr. Larry Hurtado suggests that he is a type of twisted “*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*.” “*He [Satan] thinks that prosecuting and judgment are the most important realities.*” –– His last word is judgment and this puts him profoundly in conflict with God whose deepest purpose (even in wrath) is redemptive forgiveness and reconciliation. God’s last word is merciful forgiveness in Christ.
      * Hurtado’s further pondering, **—>** *“Is this the deep basis of the great conflict between good and evil? Is the deepest essence of evil in Satan a rebellion against c*ooperating with God’s divine character and his creational and now redemptive intentions”?
      * (Jonah: the Diabolical prophet; –– Jesus on the “*father*” of the twisted religious leaders being the devil? (Jn. 8:44)
      1. He spews a river of water out of his mouth (12:15) –– a flood of accusations/deceptions/intimidations/fear of death –– **a reversal of the “river of life.”**

But she is saved (on eagles wings) from them all as the earth swallows up the torrential flood **(a reversed of the Red Sea Story?)** and then the Dragon turns on her “other children” who hold true to their testimony of Jesus. –– Note the means by which the people of Jesus overcome the assault of the devil. v***. 11They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.***

* + - 1. Pastoral Point: *All of Satan’s works, are meant to bring the believer, (out of the fear of suffering or death) to a place of silence about the Messiah and His Gospel.*
      * Silent private Christians is a denial of our purpose in the world. –– A silent non-confessing Christian is a contradiction of terms.
      1. The Beast Out of the Sea **– Chapter 13:1-10 –– *“Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.”***
         1. **The Text:** And the dragonstood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2The 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. 3One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. 4Men 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 make war against him?" 5The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. 9 He who has an ear, let him hear. 10 If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killedwith the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.
         2. The Dragon’s **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:** In Revelation 12:17 we are told that the dragon goes off in a rage to make war against the “rest” of the woman’s offspring. We should ask, “Where, How, and When”, questions.

Where:

When:

How:

The Sea Beast: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! In Daniel there are 4 separate beasts (Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece) but here all are morphed into one great evil sea beast. [Dan. 7: 2-8] –– He is Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece –– Empires of conquest and destruction leading up to and eclipsed by Rome!

Echo of the Sea Monster \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Connected to the mythical sea monster Leviathan, the ruler of the sea. Remember the sea is often an image of chaos. (Job 3:8, 26; 41:1; Ps 74:14; 104: 26; Isaiah 27:1) –– Perhaps also an allusion from 1Enoch 60:7–8) “And that day will two monsters be parted, one monster, a female named Leviathan in order to dwell in the abyss of the ocean over the fountains of water; and (the other), a male called Behemoth, which holds his chest in an invisible desert whose name is Dundayin, east of the garden of Eden.” [[1]](#footnote-2)

The Sea Beast Is An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Of The Dragon: The Dragon (Satan) is pictured standing by the water’s edge. (A Contrasted to the heavenly angels calling Forth God’s work.)

Primary Attributes Of The Sea Beast:

The beast is given great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [ten horns] and has great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and wealth –– 7 heads with ten crowns which are ten kings (17:12).

Many believe this is a reference to the 10 Cesars from Tiberius to Domitian, which covers the time of Emperor worship and the time of sporadic persecutions of Christians.

Has a head that was fatally wounded but healed: This may refer to the Nero Ridivius story and fear the story generated in Rome. The Sibylline Oracles (5:361-364): had stated that in the last terrible days a king … a matricide shall come from the east and bring ruin on the world.” (See brief description of Nero Redivivus at end of notes).

The Sea Beast is blasphemous and deceitful (deceiving the nations). This is a striking contrast to the nature of the Lamb and the lamb’s army **––** whom are marked by worship and truth telling.

The sea beast is described in both **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** images. People worship the Beast but in doing so are worshiping the Dragon too. The Beast claims the place of ultimate power, truth, and loyalty. It has a throne and receives the worship of men **––** this Beast claims to be god. (Cesar Worship).

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Of His Rule? The Beast’s authority and oppression are worldwide. All will serve him except those who truly belong to the lamb. –– He exercises his authority for the full 42 months of earthly tribulation.

He wars against the saints and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ them. (13:2)

The readers could see all of this being fulfilled in the power and authority of the Caesars of Rome. But, Jesus, Paul and John [1John] all speak of a battle that is both present and will continue to the end of the age. (1Jn.4:2–3; 2 Thessalonians: 2:5–10; 2Timothy 3:1-5)

This conquering is \_\_\_\_\_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** in that the death (martyrdom) of God’s people is from an earth bound view a victory for the Beast, –– but from the view of heaven and final outcomes we discover that the martyr’s faithfulness to death is in fact a victory over the Beast. –– In 15:2 John sees those who have conquered the beast and his image. –– Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants.

Is it small wonder that many ages have believed they were facing Revelation’s Beast? Indeed they were.

Pastoral Point: Once again the question is: “Which viewpoint are you as a reader going to embrace? Is it the earthly one or the heavenly one? Which world do you live for? The present one that is passing away or the one that will last?

John’s Prophetic Pastoral Call [v.9-10] —> ***“This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.”*** And this of course is a prophetic message for all Christians in all ages, in all cultures, at all times.

The Beast Out of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Ch. 13:11-18 **–– *“Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.”***

The Text: **Revelation 13:11 T**hen I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. 14 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

The Mythical “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” **––** The ruler of the land. (See Job 40:15-24)

Looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon.

Pastoral Point:Wisdom is called for. (Epistle of James also deals with trials, temptations, and the need for discerning wisdom. (James 1:2–8; 3:13–18)

Discerning is more of the ear then the eye. “He who has an ear…” Falsehood is not always readily seen [looks like a lamb] but is discerned by its words [out of the heart the mouth speaks]. John reminds us that we must not look to the exterior world of “signs, wonders, and the crowd,” we must learn to hear what the message is and think through clearly the messages implications.

George Orwell’s 1984 and the role of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.(Definition: Doublespeak is the intentional changing of words in order to distort what would have been seen as a negative and to make it palatable if now desirable to the hearer. –– Orwell’s Doublethink describes a persons ability to embrace completely contradictory ideas at the same time while believing both to be true.

Who Is This Land Beast?

He Is A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the Sea Beast’s Agenda & by association the Dragon!

His Purpose? —> To compel humanity to worship the first beast instead of the true and living. God. ***He is a false prophet!***

c. This beast clearly has to do with outward religion affirmed by the political and spiritual Beast. —This could readily be seen by the readers in the organized imperial priesthood and its’ advancing of the idol of Roma and Caesars.

He Has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Satanic Power —> and is a clear imitation of true religion. (2Tim3:1-5 esp. v.5).

**2 Timothy 3:1** But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2**People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3**without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4**treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ***5having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.***

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Of The Land Beast: This religion is co-opted by the political power of the 1st Beast and is entangled in the realm of economics. No buying and selling without the *“mark”* of the Beast. A counterpoint to 7:3 and the mark of the “living God.”

The Two Marks?

These two marks (Gods and the Beasts) create two people groups. One lives by the systems and heart of the world while the other refuses to beco-opted by the world and lives for God even if it means persecution and death.

The use of economics as a form of oppression to create conformity? –– Remember the trade guilds in the 7 letters? That is what they faced.

***The Goal?*** **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** of their testimony (witness).

A Pastoral Question: Are we prayerful and discerning about the constant attempt of political powers to co-opt the believing community for its own purposes? What insidious economic appeals and pressures will we face in our jobs in the future?

The Beasts’ Number: Finally, we are given the number of the Beast –– the number 666! All Kinds of Ideas.

The Gematria School —>”let him count” —>numerical value of letters in Greek equaling 666. Some have suggested Nero and Domition but it takes an awful lot of messing around with their names to ever get there.

Is It Purely Symbolic? Others focus on “it is a human number” —> and think it is purely symbolic.

“It is a human number, not a divine number; it’s a person not a god so don’t be taken in.”

Hurtado —> It’s 6 not 7. The six days of creation verses the Creator himself.

Ladd —> If 7 is the perfect number of God fullness than 666 is the best Satan and rebellious humanity can muster.

Hendricson —> God is trinity and 777 is His number. 666 would be a symbolic means to speak of a demonic trinity [Dragon, and 2 Beasts] represented by failure after failure after failure, never reaching fullness.

John’s Prophetic Pastoral Call: This time, as we have seen, it is for discerning, insightful, wisdom. (v.**18)** This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

**Nero Redivivus Legend** From Wikipedia

**Nero Redivivus Legend** was a belief popular during the last part of the 1st century that Nero would return after his death in 68 AD. The legend was a common belief as late as the 5th century.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero_Redivivus_legend%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-ReferenceA-1) The belief was either the result or cause of [several pretenders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudo-Nero%22%20%5Co%20%22Pseudo-Nero) who posed as Nero leading rebellions.

Several variations of the legend exist, playing on both hope and fear of Nero's return. The earliest written version of this legend is found in the [Sibylline Oracles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sibylline_Oracles%22%20%5Co%20%22Sibylline%20Oracles). It claims that Nero did not really die but fled to [Parthia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthia%22%20%5Co%20%22Parthia), where he would amass a large army and would return to [Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome%22%20%5Co%20%22Rome) to destroy it. [Dio Chrysostom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dio_Chrysostom%22%20%5Co%20%22Dio%20Chrysostom), a Greek philosopher and historian, wrote "seeing that even now everybody wishes [Nero] were still alive. And the great majority do believe that he still is, although in a certain sense he has died not once but often along with those who had been firmly convinced that he was still alive." Augustin of Hippo wrote that some believed "he now lives in concealment in the vigor of that same age which he had reached when he was believed to have perished, and will live until he is revealed in his own time and restored to his kingdom." In later forms of the legend, among many early [Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christians%22%20%5Co%20%22Christians), this legend shifted to a belief that Nero was the [Antichrist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antichrist%22%20%5Co%20%22Antichrist)

At least three Nero imposters emerged leading rebellions. The first, who sang and played the cithara or lyre and whose face was similar to that of the dead emperor, appeared in 69 during the reign of [Vitellius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitellius%22%20%5Co%20%22Vitellius). During the reign of [Titus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titus%22%20%5Co%20%22Titus) (c 79-81) there was another impostor who appeared in [Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia_(Roman_province)%22%20%5Co%20%22Asia%20(Roman%20province)) and also sang to the accompaniment of the lyre and looked like Nero but he, too, was exposed.Twenty years after Nero's death, during the reign of [Domitian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domitian%22%20%5Co%20%22Domitian), there was a third pretender. Supported by the [Parthians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthians%22%20%5Co%20%22Parthians), who hardly could be persuaded to give him up, the matter almost came to war. Some Bible scholars see the description of the wounding and healing of the [Beast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beast_(Bible)%22%20%5Co%20%22The%20Beast%20(Bible)) in Revelation 13:3 and the mention of the eighth king who is also one of the earlier seven kings in Revelation 17:8-11 as allusions to the Nero redivivus legend.

1. The Book of 1 Enoch is one of a number of pseudepigraphal writings that claim to be authored by a person of renown but whose claim is untrue. –– The Old Testament tells us of Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah ([Genesis 5:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%205.18%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)). Enoch, like Elijah is said to have been taken up into heaven by the Lord without dying. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." (Gen. 5:24) ––The NT book of Jude quotes from the Book of Enoch (v.14-15), “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)