**The Two Beasts**

**13:1**The beast comes out of the sea. Sea monsters in the Old Testament typically represents evil kingdoms that persecute God’s people. This beast seems based on Daniel 7:2-7.

**13:2** The dragon gives the beast its authority, which is an illusion, because the dragon is limited by what God grants to it. Some commentators identify the beast with the Roman emperor Nero. But the beast may represent evil forces raised up by the dragon throughout history to oppose God and his people.

**13:3** The wound on the head may be an allusion to Genesis 3:15 as well as Isaiah 27:1.

**13:4** The dragon and the beasts are a parody of God. They mimic him. The praise they give to the beast is like that typically given to God (Ex. 8:10; 15:11; Ps. 35:10; 71:19; 86:8; 89:8; 113:5; Is. 40:18; Mic. 7:18)

**13:5** The beast’spowers come primarily from his mouth and his ability to deceive. Much of this is based on Daniel 7:6, 8, 11, 20, 25.

**13:8** Those who belonged to God had their names written in the book of life from the beginning of time. This book is mentioned five times in Revelation besides here (3:5, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27).

**13:10** This is drawn from Jeremiah 15:2; 43:11.

**13:11** This is a collection of the beasts from Daniel 7. Its 2 horns may parallel the two witnesses. This beast is later called the “false prophet” which may indicate his role is primarily religious (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

**13:12** Its primary purpose is to drive people to worship the beast and will be the source of many false prophecies.

**13:13** There are allusions here to Moses and Elijah.

**13:15** Killing those who don’t worship the beast parallels the story of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego. These may involve magic tricks or demonic activity. A colossal statue of Domitian was erected in Ephesus and people were pressured to worship it, around this time.

**13:16-17** The mark of the beast is a parody on the seal of God (7:3-8). It may refer to the ancient practice of tattooing soldiers or slaves, and loyal devotees to various religions.

The forehead represents ideological commitment and the hand, the outworking of that commitment. The seal may be figurative and represent the economic, political pressure of people to conform to a world system and values.

**13:18** The number 666 does not match exactly any particular name, although many have tried to match it with Nero. Just as 777 represents completeness, 666 represents falling short, incompleteness. Just as the dragon, beast, and false prophet represent an evil trinity, so they are a parody of the triune God.

The article “the” is missing before “man.” This may indicate that this may not represent one specific person but a series. Perhaps at the end time, the ultimate deceiver may arise.

**The lamb and the 144,000**

**14:1** Normally the lamb is seen in heaven. Mount Zion typically refers to the new Jerusalem on earth. Zion is used over 150 times in the Old Testament to refer to the true city of God while Mount Zion is used only 19 times. The 144,000, the same as in 7:4, may refer to all believers from all the ages.

**14:2-5** Some view these as special saints. But being virgins and not lying could also mean they have remained chaste. Babylon is presented as a great harlot, so remaining chaste can mean they did not compromise themselves in the world’s economic and immoral system.

First fruits can represent the initial harvest that represent the whole, or it can represent the whole (Jer. 2:2-3).

No lies found in their mouth alludes to Isaiah 53:9.

**14:6-7** The Gospel is both good news to the saved, and bad news to those facing judgment. Verse 6 shifts focus from the redeemed to the unredeemed.

**Verses 6-8** are drawn from a series of expressions concerning King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4.

The “hour” usually represents the time of judgment.

**14:8** Babylon represents the ungodly social, political, and economic system that was perpetrated by Rome, and all evil nations afterward.

Drunkenness alludes to Jeremiah 51:7-8.

**14:10** Fire represents judgment (1:14; 2:18; 3:18; 4:5).

Torment is primarily spiritual and psychological.

**14:11** This draws from Isaiah 34:9-10 which spoke of Edom’s judgment.

**14:13** Dying in the Lord does not necessarily refer to martyrdom, but those who persevered in their faith until they died.

**14:14** This is an allusion to Daniel 7:13.

A sharp sickle refers to judgment.

**14:20** Blood up to a horse’s bridal is hyperbolic, indicating the magnitude and universality of judgment. 200 miles would be the approximate length of Israel, north to south.

**The bowls of judgment**

**15:1** Seven bowls complete God’s wrath, poured out upon the world. The seals, trumpets, and bowls could be the same plagues, described in different ways. They each follow the general outline of the plagues against Egypt.

**15:2** Sea of glass is the heavenly counterpart to the Red Sea. The sea normally represents cosmic evil (4:6; 13:1; 16:3; 21:1). Now God’s power has tamed the sea.

Fire represents God’s judgment.

Those who have overcome the beast, alludes back to Daniel 7:10-11. This would be the same group as 14:1-5.

**15:3** Just as the people sang the song of Moses after God judged the Egyptians at the Red Sea, now the saints who overcame sing a song of ultimate victory by the crystal sea (Ex. 15). God’s ways are just and true, in contrast to the dragon and the beasts.

**15:4** God alone is holy, he is unique from all creation, despite the dragon and beast trying to mimic him.

**15:7** Bowls were used by priests in the tabernacle and temple (1 Chron. 28:17; 2 Chron. 4:8, 22). Here they may be drawn in part from Isaiah 51:17, 22.

**15:8** Usually Scripture refers to the temple being filled with God’s glory (Ex. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; Is. 6:4). Only Isaiah 6:4 in the Old Testament speaks of the temple filling with smoke.

**16:1** The loud voice may be God’s (Isaiah 66:6).

To pour out God’s wrath is used in the Old Testament to describe God judging covenant breakers or those who persecute God’s people (Ezek. 14:9; Jer. 10:25; Ps. 69:24; Zeph. 3:8).

**16:2** The first plague draws on the Egyptian plague of boils (Ex. 9:9-11). This may be symbolic of extreme suffering.

**16:3-4** The second and third bowls relate to the Egyptian plague (Ex. 7:17-21). The second bowl is similar to the second trumpet. The third bowl is similar to the third trumpet.

This may be an assault on the economic world system that promotes idolatry and immorality.

**16:6** God gives to the oppressors what they did to his people (Ps. 79:3, 10, 12; Is. 49:25)

**16:8** Fire is closely related to God’s judgment on evil (Jer. 7:20; Ezek. 22:21-22).

**16:9** Rather than repent, the people blasphemed, becoming like the beast. Outside of here, only the beast is described as blaspheming God (13:1, 5, 6; 17:3).

**16:12** Cyrus diverted the Euphrates River so he could capture Babylon. God will prepare the way for judgment to fall on the evil kings and nations. The Old Testament prophesied that God would dry up the Euphrates River in judgment (Is. 11:15; 44:27-28; Jer. 50:38; 51:36; Zech. 10:11). In the Old Testament, God is always the one who dries up water.

**16:13** This is the first time the second beast is referred to as a false prophet.

The only other places where frogs are mentioned is connected with the Egyptian plague (Ex. 8:2-13; Ps. 78:45; 105:30). Frogs were unclean animals (Lev. 11:9-12). Perhaps they represent false prophecy because they croaked loudly but to no effect.

**16:14** The Egyptian goddess Heqt representing resurrection, was symbolized by a frog.

The false prophet will deceive the kings to gather to destroy God’s people in a final cataclysmic battle foretold in the Old Testament (Zech. 12-14; Zeph. 3:8-20; Ezek. 38:2-9; 39:1-8).

The parallel passages, Rev. 16:14; 19:19; 20:8 have the article “the” preceding war, indicating it is the great, final war of the end.

**16:15** Indicates the suddenness of these events, calling on God’s people to be prepared.

**16:16** Har-Magedon or Armageddon, means the mountain of Meggido. Meggido is a two-day journey from Jerusalem. Two great battles were fought there in the Old Testament. Barak and Sisera (Judg. 5:19); Josiah and Neco (2 Kings 23:29). There is no mountain at Meggido, but Mt. Carmel is nearby and represents a titanic battle between good and evil during Elijah’s time.

Most prophecies wrote that the final battle would be near Jerusalem (Joel 2:1; Mic. 4:11-12; Zech. 12:3-4; 14:2, 13-14; Ezek. 38:8; 39:2-8).

**16:17** This bowl seems associated with the Egyptian plague of hail (Ex. 9:22-35).

Satan is associated with the air (Eph. 2:2).

**16:18** This draws on Exodus 19:16-18 and Daniel 12:1.

**16:19** The earthquake reflects Hag 2:6; Zech. 14:4; Heb. 12:26-27.

Daniel 4:30 is the only place in the Old Testament where “Babylon the great” occurs.