

DISCOVERIES

By Mark Finley

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The Mark of the Beast, the Mysterious Number 666 and Last Day Predictions

Some people are so afraid of it they try to avoid having a Social Security number. Others worry about the bar codes scanned at check-out stands—what could be behind it all? Our topic is the mark of the beast—a subject that’s inspired a lot of speculation—and some strange ideas. But it remains one of the VITAL subjects in the Book of Revelation. We wonder: Who is the BEAST? Is it a *person* or an *organization*? What does **666** mean? What’s the MARK of the beast? More importantly, how can I AVOID that mark?

Let’s go to the Book of Revelation for answers. That’s where the beast figure is introduced and where we find clues to his identity. In **Revelation 13:1** John says, “I saw a *beast* rising up out of the sea. . . .” We speak of America as an *eagle* and Russia as a *bear*. Those are symbols that represent nations, powers in the world. Here Revelation describes a great power rising up out of the sea. The SEA in Bible prophecy represents nations or people, for **Revelation 17:15** says, “the waters which you saw . . . are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” So the beast arose out of a populated area. **Revelation 13:2** continues, “The beast which I saw was like a LEOPARD, his feet were like the feet of a BEAR, and his mouth like the mouth of a LION.” Here is a *composite* beast. John uses the same symbols Daniel used when he symbolized Babylon as a lion, Medo-Persia as a bear, Greece as a leopard, and the Roman Empire as a dragon-like beast. This beast of Revelation 13 SUCCEEDS those four world empires. Let’s look at SEVEN CLUES which identify the beast power. Sacred Scripture and secular history combine to make the identification sure.

Clue Number One: The last part of **Revelation 13:2** tells us, “The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” The dragon here represents *pagan Rome*. **Revelation 12:9** tells us the dragon is a symbol of Satan, but Satan works through human agencies. In Revelation 12 the dragon tried to destroy Jesus through pagan Rome. A Roman official, Herod, tried to kill baby Jesus (**Matthew 2**). A Roman governor, Pilate, condemned Jesus. A Roman executioner crucified Him. A Roman emblem sealed Jesus’ tomb. A Roman guard watched that tomb. So the dragon represents Satan working through PAGAN Rome. But pagan Rome became PAPAL Rome, for when Emperor Constantine MOVED his headquarters to Constantinople, he left a power vacuum filled by the pontiff of Rome. Prominent historian Arthur P. Stanley describes the shift from a political power to a religious hierarchy: “The popes filled the place of the vacant emperors at Rome, inheriting their *power, prestige, and titles* from paganism.” Thomas Hobbes could truly say that the Papacy was “the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon its grave.”

Clue Number Two: This power in Revelation 13 would become a worldwide *religious* power, not a *political* one. **Revelation 13:8** says, “ALL who dwell on the earth will WORSHIP him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” All who dwell on earth will worship him. So it’s a UNIVERSAL power that initiates worship. And, of course, the Papacy is a universal religious power that transcends geographic boundaries. This is our second clue.

Clue Number Three: Revelation 13:5 says the beast “was given a mouth speaking GREAT THINGS and BLASPHEMIES.” Christ Himself was twice accused of blasphemy—once in Luke 5:20-21, because He *claimed the power to forgive sins*, and again in **John 10:30-33**, because He *claimed to be God*. Jesus wasn’t guilty of blasphemy because He really *was* God, and He really *could* forgive sins! For a mere man to claim such things is indeed blasphemous. Read blasphemous statements **1-4** from the Roman church on page 3.

Clue Number Four: Revelation 13:7 says, speaking of the beast: “It was granted to him to MAKE WAR with the saints and to OVERCOME them.” Persecution! A conservative estimate puts those Christians martyred by the state church during the Dark Ages at over 30 million. In the Catholic Inquisition, people were tortured and burned alive at the stake. Whole families or communities were wiped out for no other crime than “heresy”—they dared to believe something other than what the church taught. Interestingly enough, the Roman Church ADMITS to the persecution it inflicted. See statements **5-6** on page 3.

Clue Number Five: Revelation 13:5 says, “He was given authority to continue for 42 months.” The Bible reckons 30 days to a month. (**Genesis 7:11 & 24, 8:34** shows a five-month period stretched 150 days: thirty days to a month.) And a DAY stands for a YEAR in Bible prophecy. **Ezekiel 4:6**. So 42 months x 30 days = 1260 prophetic days, or 1260 actual years. History books show that A.D. 538 was an important date for the papacy. In that year the decree of Justinian, the Emperor, went into effect making the bishop of Rome head of all the churches. Thus **A.D. 538** marked the BEGINNING of papal supremacy. Now adding 1260 years to A.D. 538 we come to the year **1798**. In that year Papal power was indeed seriously wounded. In 1798 Napoleon’s army took the pope captive and he later died in exile. Prophecy and history agree perfectly—the **1260** years fit precisely! But had Napoleon consulted Scripture, he’d have realized that the papacy was not finished, only wounded. **Revelation 13:3** tells us that “deadly wound” would be “healed.” And all the world would marvel and follow the beast in the last days.

Clue Number Six: Revelation 13:18 challenges us to “calculate the *number* of the beast, for it is the number of a *man*: His number is **666**.” In the Bible the number seven represents perfection, completeness. On the other hand, the number six represents human error, imperfection. So a *triple six* represents something *very wrong!* **Revelation 13:17-18** says quite plainly that “the number of the beast . . . is the number of a MAN.” More specifically, it’s “the number of his NAME.” Still more to the point, a footnote in the Douay Version of the Catholic Bible says: “Verse 18. *Six hundred sixty-six*. The NUMERAL LETTERS of his name shall make up this number.” Individual popes have had *many different* names, but the official title—the umbrella title that covers them all—the title that’s used in coronation ceremonies of each new pope, is VICARIUS FILII DEI, which is Latin for “Vicar of the Son of God.” Since this is a Roman title, we’d expect to use Roman numerals to calculate it. See the COMPUTATION, **#7** on page three.

Clue Number Seven: Revelation 13:16-17 says the beast forces all “to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark. . . .” The mark of the beast is a symbol of REBELLION against God, of DISLOYALTY to God’s government. Those allied with the beast receive this mark. But *another* group receive a *different* mark. Revelation 7:2-3 says “the servants of our God” will be SEALED “on their foreheads” with “the SEAL of the living God.” They’re God’s faithful people, the remnant. **Revelation 14:12** calls them “the SAINTS . . . those who KEEP the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” The seal of God is contained in His law. **Isaiah 8:16** says, “SEAL the law among my disciples.” See brief explanation **#8** on page 3.

God calls the Sabbath His sign or seal, His mark of authority. What does the beast power claim as its mark of authority? See sample statements from Catholic sources **9-10** on page 3.

In the last days, two groups, two different marks: The MARK of the beast and the SEAL of the living God. On one side, the divine commandments of God. On the other, the beast proclaiming traditions of men and enforcing a substitute Sabbath—Satan’s counterfeit.

#7 – Counting the Beast’s Number

Meet Mr. 666, whose numerical code-name, like that of Agent 007, has become increasingly talked about.

V	.....	5
I	.....	1
C	.....	100
A	.....	0 (not used as a numeral)
R	.....	0 (not used as a numeral)
I	.....	1
U	.....	5 (formerly the same as V)*
S	.....	0 (not used as a numeral)
F	.....	0 (not used as a numeral)
I	.....	1
L	.....	50
I	.....	1
I	.....	1
D	.....	500
E	.....	0 (not used as a numeral)
I	.....	1
Total		= 666

The computation totals **666** *exactly*—no more, no

* The letter “V” was the same as “U” until recent centuries. The Romans wrote the letter “V” for both *U* and *V* sounds, just as today we still write the letter “C” for both *K* and *S* sounds in words like *calculate* and *certainty*. Later, Medieval scholars began writing “U” for a vowel and “V” for a consonant. Encyclopedias confirm this fact. You may see names engraved on buildings that look like “PVBLC LIBRARY.” (Think of our letter “W.” It looks like two letter V’s written together. But when we pronounce its name, we call it a “double-you,” not a “double-vee.”)

1. “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that *he is not a mere man*, but as it were GOD, and the vicar of God. . . . The Pope is as it were GOD on earth.”—Lucius Ferraris, “Papa,” article 2 in his *Prompta Bibliotheca* (Handy Library), Volume 6, pages 26-29.
2. “We [the Popes] hold upon this earth the place of GOD Almighty.”—Pope Leo XIII, *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, page 304.
3. “Seek where you will, through heaven and earth, and you will find *but one* created being *who can forgive the sinner*. . . . That extraordinary being is the priest, the Catholic priest.”—Michael Muller, *The Catholic Priest*, page 78.
4. “To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . The Jews justly said: ‘Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ But *what only GOD can do* by His omnipotence, *the PRIEST can ALSO do* by saying ‘Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis’ [I absolve you from your sin].”—Alphonsus de Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, pages 34-35.
5. The Catholic publication *Western Watchman*, December 24, 1908, makes this admission: “The Church HAS persecuted. Only a tyro [a raw beginner] in church history will deny that. . . . When the church thinks it GOOD to use physical force, she WILL use it.”
6. Even more disturbing is this statement from a Catholic textbook: “The church may *by divine right* confiscate the property of heretics, imprison their persons, and condemn them to the FLAMES. . . . The RIGHT to inflict the severest penalties, even death, belongs to the church. . . . There is no graver offense than heresy . . . therefore it must be rooted out.” *Public Ecclesiastical Law*, Volume 2, page 142.
9. “SUNDAY is our MARK of authority. . . . The church is ABOVE the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.”—*Catholic Record*, September 1, 1923.
10. “The Bible says, remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. The Catholic Church says, No! By my divine power I *abolish* the Sabbath day, and command you to keep holy the FIRST day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church.”—Father Enright, former President of Redemptorist College.

#8 – An official seal or authoritative signature always contains THREE ELEMENTS:

- A. The **NAME** of the law-giver.
- B. His **OFFICE** or **TITLE**—his right to rule.
- C. The **TERRITORY** which he rules—his jurisdictional area.

For example:

Name	George Washington	Winston Churchill
Title	President	Prime Minister
Territory	United States	United Kingdom

GOD’S SEAL or signature is found in His Law, specifically in the Fourth Commandment. **Exodus 20:8-11** contains all of the three following elements:

Name **The LORD**
Isaiah 42:8, Jeremiah 16:21, Exodus 15:3, and Amos 5:8 show that *Jehovah’s name* is “the Lord..”

Title **CREATOR or MAKER**
Exodus 20:11 declares: “The Lord **MADE** . . .”!

Territory **HEAVEN and EARTH**

Just as the seals of earthly rulers are found in connection with *their* laws, so we find the Seal of the living God in *His* Law of Ten Commandments. The Lord—writing with His own finger—formally SIGNED and SEALED His divine Law!

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#21 - The Mark of the Beast, the Mysterious Number 666 and Last Day Predictions

1. The Bible says the Beast power would be a universal system, for “_____ the world wondered after the Beast . . . and power was given him over _____ kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” But it would also be a religious system, for “they _____ the Beast.” It’s a *universal system of worship*.

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:3, 7, and 4.

2. T The Biblical *counterpart* of the MARK of the Beast is “the SEAL of the living God,” and the F Bible uses the words “seal” and “sign” interchangeably.

To check your answer, see Revelation 7:2-3, Romans 4:11. Compare Esther 8:8 & Daniel 6:8, and Ezekiel 20:12 & 20.

3. The Bible says the Beast wore “upon his heads the name of _____” And there was given unto him a *mouth* speaking *great* things and _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:1 & 5. Compare Daniel 7:8 & 20.

4. The Bible predicted the Beast power would persecute God’s faithful people, for “it was given to him to _____ with the saints, and to _____ them.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:7. Compare Daniel 7:21 & 25.

5. “Power was given unto him [the Beast] to continue _____ and _____ months,” which equals—since the Bible month is *thirty days*—1260 prophetic days or 1260 actual years, when understood on the Scriptural principle of “each _____ for a _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:5 & 12:6, and Ezekiel 4:6.

6. At the end of the 1260 years, the Beast would have “one of his heads as it were wounded to death” and “go into _____” but that later “his deadly wound was _____.”

To check your answer, see Revelation 13:3 & 10.

A Thought for Today

Revelation 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.