QUICK LINKS

1. What the text meant.
   Historical Aspects:
      External History
      Internal History
   Literary Aspects:
      Genre
      Literary Setting
      Literary Structure

Exegesis of the Text:
A. Appearance of the second beast, v. 11
B. Actions of the second beast, vv. 12-17
C. Application of the vision, v. 18

2. What the text means.

The Second Beast

Greek NT	Gute Nachricht Bibel	NRSV	NLT
11 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων. 12 καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ. 13 καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 14 καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν. 15 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ [ἵνα] ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν. 16 καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχούς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν 17 καὶ ἵνα	11 Dann sah ich ein anderes Tier aus der Erde heraufsteigen. Es hatte zwei Hörner wie ein Lamm, aber es redete wie ein Drache. 12 Unter den Augen des ersten Tieres übte es dessen ganze Macht aus. Es brachte die Erde und alle ihre Bewohner dazu, das erste Tier mit der verheilten Todeswunde anzubeten. 13 Das zweite Tier tat große Wunder: Vor allen Menschen ließ es sogar Feuer vom Himmel auf die Erde herabfallen. 14 Durch die Wunder, die es im Dienst des ersten Tieres tun konnte, täuschte es alle Menschen, die auf der Erde lebten. Es überredete sie, ein Standbild zu errichten zu Ehren des ersten Tieres, das mit dem Schwert tödlich verwundet worden und wieder ins Leben zurückgekehrt war. 15 Das zweite Tier bekam sogar die Macht, das Standbild des ersten Tieres zu beleben, sodass dieses Bild sprechen konnte und dafür sorgte, dass alle getötet wurden, die es nicht anbeteten. 16 Dieses Tier hatte alle Menschen in seiner Gewalt: Hohe und Niedrige, Reiche und Arme, Sklaven und Freie. Sie mussten sich ein Zeichen auf ihre rechte Hand oder ihre Stirn	11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all; 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived; 15 and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. 18 This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding	11 Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, and he spoke with the voice of a dragon. 12 He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and those who belong to this world to worship the first beast, whose death-wound had been healed. 13 He did astounding miracles, such as making fire flash down to earth from heaven while everyone was watching. 14 And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people of the world to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. 15 He was permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die. 16 He required everyone -- great and small, rich and poor, slave and free -- to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead. 17 And no one could buy or sell

μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

18 Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

machen. 17 Nur wer dieses Zeichen hatte, konnte kaufen oder verkaufen. Das Zeichen bestand aus dem Namen des ersten Tieres oder der Zahl für diesen Namen.

18 Hier braucht es Weisheit! Wer Verstand hat, kann herausfinden, was die Zahl des Tieres bedeutet, denn sie steht für den Namen eines Menschen. Es ist die Zahl sechshundertsechsundsechzig.

calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.

18 Wisdom is needed to understand this. Let the one who has understanding solve the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.

anything without that mark, which was either the name of the beast or the number representing his name.

18 Wisdom is needed to understand this. Let the one who has understanding solve the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.

INTRODUCTION

With Satan stung by two defeats in his efforts to attack God by killing the man child and his mother (chap. 12), he turned to attacking the 'other children' (τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, 12:17) of the mother. But before launching his attacks he sought the help of two cohorts who would basically carry out his warfare. First, as the old sea based serpent dragon he turned to a sea monster (13:1-10) for help. But this was not enough help and now he turns to a land based monster θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς who rises up out of a cave in the earth from the underworld below. Thus his team is assembled and ready to begin the attacks during the 42 months of time alloted to him for his dastardly work.

John's depiction of the second monster generally follows a literary pattern similar to that of the first monster in vv. 1-10. One difference is less description of appearance and most emphasis on function. Also, the people of the earth do not voluntarily follow after him; instead they are compelled to do so (e.g., v. 12). His role is something of the 'enforcer' who takes control over the peoples of the earth to compel loyalty to the dragon and the first beast. Of course, this places believers whose loyalty is exclusively in Christ in terrible jeopardy because of their non-compliance.

Thus the picture darkens considerably for the people of God on earth. And yet a bright light of victory is just around the bend of the tunnel in chapter fourteen with the victory of the Lamb on Mt. Zion. Then a new song of victory will break out celebrating the triumph of believers on earth that number 144,000.

1. What did the text mean to the first readers?

Historical Aspects:

External History. In the history of the hand copying of this passage variations in wording have surfaced in the several thou-

sand now existing ancient manuscripts. The editors of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev. ed.) list three places where these variations can impact the translation of the passage into other languages.

13:15 ποιήσῃ [ἵνα] ὅσοι... The issue centers around the position of the conjunction ἵνα, -- either after ποιήσῃ or just before ἀποκτανθῶσιν.[1] The essential meaning remains the same regardless of the position.[2] The evidence both external and internal is rather evenly divided and thus no conclusive conclusions can be reached, although locating ἵνα after ποιήσῃ is more typical for the grammar construction of such purpose clauses: in order that the image of the beast might both speak and bring it about so that as many as would not worship the image of the beast would be killed.

[1]{C} ποιήσῃ ἵνα ὅσοι A P 1006 1841 (2329 ποιήσει) it[ar, gig] vg[cl, ww] cop[sa] (Hippolytusmss); (Primasius) (Beatus) // ποιήσῃ ὅσοι (ℵ 2351 ποιήσει) 205 209 1611 2377 Byz [046] vg[st] (Irenaeus[lat], arm) Hippolytus Andrew // ποιήσῃ ὅσοι … ἵνα ἀποκτανθῶσιν 051 1854 // ὅσοι cop[bo]

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

[2]"The word ἵνα, which seems to be required with the subjunctive verb ἀποκτανθῶσιν (to be put to death), stands after the verb ποιήσῃ in the best witnesses but before ἀποκτανθῶσιν in the Textus Receptus and a few manuscripts. The variant reading is an obvious change by copyists to improve the difficult style in which ἵνα … ἐάν is followed by two verbs in the subjunctive (προσκυνήσωσιν [worship] and ἀποκτανθῶσιν [put to death]); but the meaning is the same. The omission of ἵνα in a few manuscripts appears to be accidental, resulting in a shift of subject so that it is the second beast, and not the image of the beast, that causes people to be killed ("that even the image of the beast should speak; and he shall cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed" ASVmg). Of the several readings, none clearly explains the origin of the others, so ἵνα is included in the text but put in brackets to indicate uncertainty regarding the original text." [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 538.]
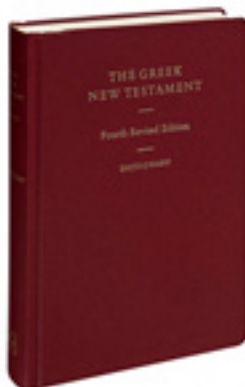
13:17 καὶ ἵνα.... The issue here is the presence or absence of the conjunction καί.[3] This impacts the relationship between verses 16 and 17. With καί present the two ἵνα clauses in 16-17 express the intention of the verb ποιεῖ (ποιεῖ... ἵνα δῶσιν... καὶ ἵνα μή τις δύνηται....). But with καί absence, the purpose clause ἵνα μή τις δύνηται... modifies δῶσιν in the first ἵνα clause. Thus are the two purpose clauses parallel to one another, or stair cased with the second one growing out of the first one. The evidence is decisively in favor of the presence of ἵνα making them parallel to one another.[4]

13:18 ἑξήκοντα ἕξ. Here the number is at issue, as to whether it is 666 or 616, with the 66 or 16 part unclear.[5] Most languages in the ancient world assigned numeric value to letters of the alphabet (e.g, a = 1 etc.). And oftentimes individuals were identified (= gematria) by the sum total of the numeric value of the letters of their name. Interestingly what stands behind this shift in numbers is the name Neron Caesar (in Greek) which when counted up in the Hebrew sum number is 666, but Nero Caesar in Latin it equals 616. Behind this stands the quite popular belief among Romans by the end of the first century that Nero who died in 68 AD was going to come back to life and regain control of the empire at some future date. The weight of manuscript evidence favors the Hebrew sum total rather than the Latin one.[6]

As we have consistently noticed these three places where variations occur represent only a small portion of the total number of variations. Most of these are recorded in the Text Apparatus of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A 27th rev. ed.), where some 32 places of variation are listed.[7]

[6]"The number ἑξήκοντα (sixty) is strongly supported by several uncials, all existing minuscules, and the ancient versions. But the number δέκα (ten) is read by manuscript C and some manuscripts known to the second century Church Father Irenaeus (who, however, says that 666 is found 'in all good and ancient copies,' and is 'attested by those who had themselves seen John face to face') and Tyconius in the fourth century. According to Tischendorf's 8th ed. of *Novum Testamentum Graece*, the numeral 616 was also read by two minuscule manuscripts that unfortunately no longer exist.

"In languages of the ancient world, letters of the alphabet were used for numerals. Gematria was the practice of representing words and names by the sum total of their numerical equivalents (Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, pp. 718–19). When Greek letters are used as numerals, the difference between 666 and 616 is merely a change from ξ to ι (666 = χξϛ and 616 = χιϛ). (The letter στίγμα [ϛ], which stood for six, was a sign drawn from older forms of the alphabet.) Perhaps the change was intentional, seeing that the Greek form Neron Caesar written in Hebrew characters (נרון קסר) is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin form Nero Caesar (נרו קסר) is equivalent to 616. (For a more thorough discussion of this textual problem and the significance of the number, see Aune, Revelation 6–16, pp. 722, 770–73; Bauckham, The Climax of Prophecy, pp. 384–407; and Smalley, The Revelation to John, pp. 350–53.)."

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 539.]

[7]**Offenbarung 13,11**
* –νων P[47] pc (alternative spelling for ἀναβαῖνον)
* 2377 *M*[K] (δύο is omitted)
* ομοιω P[47] (ὅμοια is replaced)
*[1] λαλει P[47] gig (alternative spelling for ἐλάλει)
Offenbarung 13,12
* εποιει 1611. (2329) pc lat sy[h] bo; Ir[lat] (alternative spelling for the first ποιεῖ)
* εποιει 051. 1611. 2329. 2351. 2377 *M*[K] ar vg[cl] sy[h] (co) (alternative spelling for second ποιεῖ)
* ινα –σωσιν 051 *M* (ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν is replaced)
  | προσκυνειν ℵ ar vg
  | txt P[47] A C 2053. 2351 pc
* 1 2 P 1006. 2329 pc vg; Prim (alternative sequencing of τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ)
  | 3 A
Offenbarung 13,13
* εποιει 051* pc lat bo; Prim (alternative spelling for ποιεῖ)

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[3]{A} καὶ P[47] A[vid] 051 205 209 1006 1841 1854 2329 2344 2351 2377 *Byz* [P 046] it[gig] vg arm eth Hippolytus[1/2] Andrew; Beatus[1/2] // omit ℵ* C 1611 it[ar] vg[mss] syr[ph, h] cop[sa, bo] Irenaeus[lat] Hippolytus[1/2]; Maternus Primasius Beatus[1/2]

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

[4]"The absence of καί in some witnesses appears to be a change made by copyists who misunderstood the relationship between vv. 16 and 17. When the ἵνα μή clause was taken to be dependent upon the verb δῶσιν,καί was naturally regarded as unnecessary: 'that there be given [ἵνα δῶσιν] them a mark on their right hand or upon their forehead so that no one (ἵνα μή τί) should be able to buy or sell'. The clause ἵνα μή, however, is to be taken as dependent upon the verb ποιεῖ (causes) in v. 16 and is therefore coordinate with the ἵνα δῶσιν clause in v. 16. That is, the second beast causes (a) everyone to be marked (ἵνα δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα) and (b) everyone to not be able to buy (καὶ ἵνα μή τί δύνηται ἀγοράσαι). This coordinate structure is clearly expressed in the following translation: 'It caused [ποιεῖ] everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free man and slave, to have a mark put on his right hand or his forehead, and no one was allowed to buy or sell …' (REB; see also NJB)." [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 538–539.]

[5]{A} ἑξήκοντα ἕξ P[47] ℵ A 051 205 209 1006 1611 1841 1854 2053 2329 2351 2377 Byz [P 046] it[gig] vg syr[ph, h] cop[sa, bo] arm eth Irenaeus Hippolytus Andrew; Victorinus-Pettau Gregory-Elvira Primasius Beatus // ἑξήκοντα πέντε 2344 // Τεσσεράκοντα ἕξ i[tar] // δέκα ἕξ P115 (χίϛ) C vg[ms] mss[acc. to Irenaeus]; Caesarius

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

| ποιησει 1006 pc sa bo^mss; Ir^lat

* 2 3 1 et –νη 2351. 2377 *M*^K (alternative sequence or replacement for ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ)

* 4 1-3 ℵ P 051. 2329 al sy (alternative sequence for ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν)

*¹ επι P^47 2377 *M*^K (εἰς is replaced)

Offenbarung 13,14

* τους εμους 051. 2377 *M*^K (after πλανᾷ, τοὺς ἐμοὺς is inserted)

* ὃ ℵ 1006. 1611. 1841. 2053. 2329. 2351. 2377 *M*^K ar vg (ὃς is replaced)

* ειχεν 1006. 1841. 2351. 2377 *M*^K vg^ms sy^h (ἔχει is replaced)

* (ℵ) 2377 *M*^K (τὴν is omitted)

* κ. εζ. απο τ. μαχ. 2351. 2377 *M*^K (τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν is replaced)

Offenbarung 13,15

* αυτη A C (αὐτῷ is replaced)

| txt P^47.115 ℵ 051 *M* sy

* του ποιησαι P^47vid (τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ is replaced)

* –σει ℵ 2329. 2351 al vg^mss (alternative spelling for ποιήσῃ)

* pon. a. αποκτ. 051. 1. 1854 al (ἵνα is transposed)

  * – ℵ 1611. 2351. 2377 *M* vg^st

  * txt A P 1006. 1841. 2329. 2344 al (C : h.t.)

*¹ –σουσιν ℵ 051. 1006^c. 2351 pc (alternative spelling for προσκυνήσωσιν)

*την εικονα A 1 al (τῇ εἰκόνι is replaced)

Offenbarung 13,16

* ποιησει ℵ²^a (1854). 2329 pc vg co; Vic (alternative spelling for ποιεῖ)

  | εποιει 1611 pc; Prim

* δωσωσιν (2377 al) *M*^K (δῶσιν is replaced)

  | δωση 051c. (1. 2053: –σει). 2329 pc

  | λαβωσιν 1841^vid pc; Vic

¹ –ματα P^47 051. 2351. 2377 *M*^K sa (alternative spelling for χάραγμα)

* των –πων P47 046. 051. 1854 *M*^A latt (alternative spelling for τὸ μέτωπον)

Offenbarung 13,17

* ℵ* C 1611 al vg^mss sy co; Ir^lat Prim (καὶ is omitted)

* δυναται 051 *M* (alternative spelling for δύνηται)

  | txt P^47 ℵ A C 1841. 2351 al

* 3 4 1611 pc (alternative spelling, shift in sequence, or replacement for τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου)

  | του ονοματος τ. θ. C pc ar vg^ww sy; Ir^lat

  | ἢ το ον. τ. θ. P^47 pc gig vg^cl; Bea

  | του θ. ἢ το ον. αυτου ℵ pc vg^ms co

  | επι του μετωπου αυτου· το ονομα τ. θ. 2329

  | txt A 051 *M* vg^st

Offenbarung 13,18

* P^47 ℵ pc sy^ph sa (, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ is omitted)

* εστιν (P^47: + δε) C 051. 1006. 1611. 1841. 1854. 2053. 2329. 2344 *M*^A sy^h (εστιν is inserted after αὐτοῦ)

  | txt ℵ A 2377 *M*^K

* –σιαι εξ. εξ ℵ (ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ is replaced)

  | –σιαι δεκα εξ C (χ̅ι̅ς̅ P^115); Ir^mss

  | –σια εξ. πεντε 2344

  | –σια εξ. εξ P 1006. 1841. 1854. 2053^vid al

  | txt A (χ̅ξ̅ς̅´ P^47 051 *M*); Ir Hipp

[Eberhard Nestle et al., Universität Münster. Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 658–659.]

As is generally the case with these variations, one discovers mostly efforts at stylistic improvements for the sake of clarity to the readers contemporary to the copyist, a few careless copying errors, and a fair amount of confusion over the meaning of some phrases and thus attempts to make sense of them. None of the variations alters the essential meaning of the passage. Plus the vast majority of these variations surface only in isolated manuscripts usually very late in time and which have little impact on the understanding of the original reading.

Thus we can exegete the adopted reading of the passage in full confidence of it being the most likely original reading.

Internal History. Again the apocalyptic visionary nature of the passage limits the historical references. The only aspect that merits background consideration is the obvious use of gematria in regard to the number 666 given at the end of verse 18.

As mentioned above under External History for the text variant in verse 18, the two numbers -- 666 or 616 -- surface in later copies of this passage, both of them taken to refer to Emperor Nero and the *Nero redivivus* myth that he would come back to life after his death in 68 AD and regain control of the empire. This was very popular among people generally in the Roman empire primarily because of his continued popularity in the eastern parts of the empire. John seems to be playing off of this myth in this text.[8] Where John

[8]"Nero Claudius Caesar was born on 15 December 37 and was the emperor of Rome A.D. 54–68. On 8 June 68 he was deposed by the Senate and declared a public enemy. He committed suicide on 9 June 68, but confusion surrounding his death together with the paucity of witnesses who actually saw his corpse and his burial (for details see Chilver, Commentary, 42) made it possible for rumors that he was still alive to circulate widely. Suetonius was the first to record the belief that Nero would shortly return and visit destruction on his enemies (Nero 57). The belief that Nero escaped to Parthia and would return with an army is reflected in the Sibylline Oracles (Sib. Or. 4.119–22, 137–39; 5.137–54, 214–27; 8.68–72; 12.78–94). This myth of *Nero redux*, i.e., 'Nero returned,' was based on a widespread refusal to accept the rumor of his death as true, while the related myth of *Nero redivivus*, i.e., 'living again,' was based on the notion that, though dead, he would return to life. During his lifetime, Nero had fostered good relations with the Parthians, and that contributed to the belief that he had sought asylum with them. Dio Chrysostom (A.D. 40–after 112) wrote 'Even now everyone wishes that Nero were alive and most people actually believe it' (Orat. 21.10). After Nero's suicide, fictitious edicts were posted under his name threatening his enemies, revealing his high standing with many people.

"Nero was as popular in the Greek east as he was despised in the west, and several false Neros appeared at various times. Lucian refers to ὁ ψευδονέρων in the singular (Adv. ign. 20), though a number of scholars think that *two* false Neros appeared (Bastomsky, JQR n.s. 59 [1969] 321–25; Henderson, Life, 420; Momigliano, CAH 10:741; Bishop, Nero, 167; Scullard, Gracchi to Nero,

332). Yet it is possible that there were as many as *three* false Neros (Syme, *Arval*, 87; id., *CAH* 11:144–45; id., *Tacitus*, 518; Gallivan, *Historia* 22 [1973] 364–65; Bradley, *Suetonius' Life*, 295; Pappano, *CJ* 32 [1937] 385–92; E. Hohl, *RE*, suppl. III, col. 393): **(1)** An unnamed impostor (Dio Cassius 63.9.3) who resembled Nero, either a slave from Pontus or a freedman from Italy (Tacitus *Hist.* 2.8), appeared in A.D. 69. Gathering an army of deserters, he sailed east from Greece and was forced by a storm to land on the island of Cynthus in the Cyclades. There he was executed by Calpurnius Asprenas, the new governor of Galatia and Pamphilia. The body was taken via Asia to Rome (Tacitus *Hist.* 2.8–9; Zonaras 11.15, p. 45, 11-16D). **(2)** The false Nero of A.D. 80 was Terentius Maximus, an Asiatic who looked and spoke like Nero (Dio Cassius 66.19.3) and who gathered an increasing number of followers from Asia to the Euphrates. **(3)** A third pretender, referred to in Suetonius *Nero* 57.2 (Gallivan, *Historia* 22 [1973] 365; against Bastomsky, *JQR* n.s. 59 [1969] 321–25), appeared in A.D. 88 (similarities to Terentius Maximus can be accounted for by the tendency of pretenders to imitate the outward form of a royal march 'in which the pretender assumes the outward appearance of the man whose identity he claims, and is given an escort and appropriate supplies and honors' [Millar, *Study*, 217]). Tacitus (*Hist.* 2.8.1) observes *ceterorum casus conatusque in contextu operis dicemus*, 'the adventures and enterprises of the other pretenders we will relate in the course of the work,' which indicates that Tacitus intended to discuss the brief careers of at least two other pretenders, though unfortunately those parts of Tacitus' work are lost. It is certainly significant in this context to note that Domitian was called 'Nero' by Juvenal (*Satires* 4.38).

"The oldest form of the *Nero redux* myth, which appears to have originated in Asia, is that Nero would return from the east as the champion of the east at the head of a Parthian army to retake the imperial throne in Rome. This basic version of the myth is reflected in Sib. Or. 4.138–39 (tr. Charlesworth, OTP 1:387), 'the fugitive from Rome will also come, brandishing a great spear, having crossed the Euphrates with many myriads' (cf. Sib. Or. 5.28–34, 138–53, 215–24, 363–70; 3.63–74; 8.70–72, 140–47; cf. Jakob-Sonnabend, *Nero-Bild*, 138–44).

"In Jewish and Christian tradition, however, this usually positive image of a triumphant messianic figure was transformed into a monstrous incarnation of evil and became part of the eschatological-antagonist myth. In Jewish tradition Nero is identified with Belial (Sib. Or. 3.63–74; Asc. Isa. 4:1–14), as revealed in Asc. Isa. 4:2 (tr. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 2:648):

> And after it [i.e., the world] has come to its consummation, Beliar, the great prince, the king of this world who has ruled it since it came into being, shall descend; he will come down from his firmament in the form of a man, a lawless king, a slayer of his mother, who himself (even) this king will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the beloved have planted; and one of the twelve [i.e., Peter] will be delivered into his hand.

"In Christian tradition, Commodian (*Instr.* 41.7; Martin, *Commodiani*, 33) expected the resurrection of Nero from hell (*Cum fuerit autem Nero de inferno leuatus*), while at the same time Elijah would seal the beloved ones (*Instr.* 41.8; Martin, *Commodiani,* 34).

"It is not difficult to understand how the Nero myth could be understood in a wholly negative manner and Nero himself could be considered a personification of evil by Jews and Christians. Both groups would be repelled by the imperial propaganda, spread throughout the eastern part of the Roman empire during the emperor's lifetime, retailing the notion of Nero's divinity (Griffin, *Nero*, 215–20). Nero, for example, authorized the minting of coins on

lived and wrote, Nero was the ultimate personification of evil, and the idea that he could come back to life (since having claimed to be a god) would represent the worst nightmare imaginable for the people of Asia and the western part of the Roman empire.[9] This created just the right atmosphere for John to allude to with the second beast representing the ultimate of evil and cha-

which he was depicted wearing the radiate crown appropriate for the sun god (K. Scott, *Imperial Cult*, 32–33; Griffin, *Nero*, 217–18; Bodinger, *RHR* 206 [1989] 26–27). At the beginning of his reign Nero was more modest, for he vetoed the dedication of gold and silver statues of himself, metals that were normally reserved for statues of deities (Tacitus *Annals* 13.10). In Sib. Or. 5.28–34 (tr. J. J. Collins in Charlesworth, OTP 1:393), *Nero redux* is described metaphorically as a 'terrible snake [δεινὸς ὄφις],' in a way comparable to Rev 17:8:

> One who has fifty as an initial [N = 50] will be commander,
> a terrible snake, breathing out grievous war, who one day
> will lay hands on his own family and slay them, and throw everything
>   into confusion,
> athlete, charioteer, murderer, one who dares ten thousand things.
> He will also cut the mountain between two seas and defile it with
>   gore.
> But even when he disappears he will be destructive. Then he will return
> declaring himself equal to God. But he will prove that he is not.

"What factors encouraged the formation and circulation of the *Nero redux* or *redivivus myth*? Confusion surrounding the death of Nero certainly fueled the circulation of the myth. Further, it is possible that the *Nero redivivus* myth was encouraged by an atmosphere of 'messianic' expectation that pervaded the Levant during the second half of the first century A.D. (Bodinger, *RHR* 206 [1989] 22).

"There are other examples of rumors that great men of the past reappeared. A false Alexander the Great appeared in A.D. 221 (Dio Cassius 80.18.1–3; Lucian *Adv. indoctum* 20). A ψευδοφίλιππος, 'false Philip' of Macedon, who was really Andriscus of Adramyttium, pretended to be Philip, the son of Perseus king of Macedon (d. 165 or 162 B.C.), though the real Philip had died in internment at Alba Fucens two years after the death of Perseus in 163 or 160 B.C. (Diodorus Siculus 32.17.1–7; Lucian *Adv. indoctum* 20; Strabo 13.4.2; Polybius 36.10.1–7; for a discussion of this figure, cf. Walbank, *Polybius* 3:668–69). Appian refers to a ψευδομάριος, a 'false Marius,' who pretended to be the grandson of Marius (*Bell. civ.* 3.1.2). Another false Alexander, this one pretending to be a son of the same name whom Herod the Great executed in 7 B.C., appeared in Crete shortly after the death of Herod in 4 B.C. (Jos. *J. W.* 2.101–10; *Ant.* 7.24–38). In A.D. 34 a false Drusus who arose in the Cyclades was eventually arrested and sent to Tiberius (Dio Cassius 58.25; Tacitus *Annals* 5.10). A ψευδοαντωνῖνος, a 'false Antoninus,' is mentioned several times in the fragments of Dio Cassius (80.17–19). Many years later impostors impersonated Frederick the Great and Louis XVI after their deaths. Even in late twentieth-century America, Elvis Presley has been sighted by hundreds of people."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 738–740.]

[9]In a few secular texts of the late first century the emperor Domitian, in power at the time, was referred to "Nero" come back to life, e.g., Juvenal, *Satires* 4.38.

os on the earth.

Literary Aspects:

As typically is the case with apocalyptic visionary writing, the literary aspects play a more important role than the historical ones in the interpretive process.

Genre: Clearly 13:11-18 continues the apocalyptic vision of John that occupies the entire book of Revelation. The standard apocalyptic signal εἶδον, I saw, language introduces the passage. The depiction of a grotesque creature is the central focus along with his destructive actions on the earth. But in a manner similar to the end of 13:1-10 in vv. 9-10 John inserts his commentary observation about the vision. Just as the application statement ῟Ωδέ ἐστιν... in v. 10c brought the commentary to a close, a similar ῟Ωδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν in v. 18 opens his commentary statements in application of the vision to his readers. Here John applies the vision through the use of gematria calculation of the id of the beast by assigning numerical value in the Hebrew letters equivalent to Nero's name in Greek.

Literary Setting: Again the literary setting of 13:11-18 is relatively easy to determine. It represents the continuation of the apocalyptic narrative begun chapter two of the narration of the activities of the dragon who summons the help of two monsters -- the first from the sea (13:1-10) and the second out of the earth (13:11-18) -- in his desperation efforts to strike at God by inflicting injury upon the people of God on the earth. Chapter 14 brings this to a climax with the depiction of the victory of the Lamb over Satan at the close of human history. These three chapters stand as a "pause" between the blowing of the seventh trumpet (11:15-19) and the activation (chap. 16) of the seven bowls of wrath as the final temporal judgments of God upon the earth prior to the very end of human history. In this "pause" John prepares his readers for the extreme severity of these bowls of wrath to be poured out upon the evil people of this world at the very end, prior to the final day of judgment.

Literary Structure: The block diagram below represents a visual presentation of the internal connection of primary and secondary ideas inside vv. 11-18.

```
13.11       And
409     I saw another beast
                    coming up out of the earth,


            and
410     he had horns
                two
                like to a lamb
            and
411     he was speaking
             as a dragon.


13.12       And
412     it was exercising all the authority of the first beast
             before it,
            and
413     he makes the earth
                    and
                the inhabitants dwelling in it

                    to worship the beast
                                the first
                                regarding whom his plague of death was healed.


13.13       And
414     he does great signs
             so that he also makes fire
                                    out of heaven
                            to come down
                                upon the earth
                                before men,
13.14       and
415     he deceives those dwelling
                        upon the earth
            because of the signs
```

```
                              which were given to him
                                   to do
                                       before the beast
               telling those dwelling ---------|
                              upon the earth |
                                           to make an image to the beast
                                                /----------------|
                                                    which has the wound of the sword
                                                         and
                                                    ----- lives
```

^{13.15} And
416   was given to him

                to give breath to the image of the beast
```
                              so that also the image of the beast could speak
                                    and do -
                              /------------|
                              |       as many as might not worship the image
                              |      |                         of the beast
                              so that -. . . . might be killed.
```

^{13.16} And
417   he makes all
```
                   the small and the great
                         and
                   the rich and the poor
                         and
                   the free and the slaves
                so that they give upon them a mark
                              upon their right hand
                                    or
                              upon their forehead
```
^{13.17}
```
                      and
             so that anyone cannot buy or sell
                              unless he is the one having the mark
                                            the name of the beast
                                                or
                                            the number of his name.
```

418 ^{13.18} **Here is wisdom**
      the one having a mind
419   **let him calculate the number of the beast,**
        for
420   **a human number exists**
        and
421   **its number is 666.**

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

Just as with the depiction of the first beast in 13:1-10, John first gives a description of his appearance (#s 409-411). This is followed by a detailed depiction of what this beast does (#s 412-417). Then John concludes with an application (#s. 418-421).

The depiction of appearance (#s 409-411) is brief and centers on its origin (# 409), its two horns (# 410), and its ability to speak (# 411).

The actions of the beast (#s 412-417) are given in much greater detail. These are signaled by the repeated use of two verbs ποιεῖ, he does, and ἐδόθη, was given. They also define a distinctive role for the second beast, that of coercion. This beast forces the people on earth to worship the first beast under threat of execution.

Just as John did in the description of the first beast (cf. vv. 9-10), in the third place (#s 418-421) he inserts a commentary application of his vision to his initial readers using a form of ancient middle eastern gematria that tags the ID of the second beast with a number equal to the numerical sum value of the letters of his name. This has intrigued readers since the early second century, although its meaning is rather clear.

Exegesis of the Text:

The exegesis of the passage will thus follow the structural arrangement of ideas in the passage as made clear in the above diagram of the text. This three-fold division centers on two primary themes, that of the second beast and how to identify him at the time of the initial reading of the passage.

A. The appearance of the second beast, v. 11

11 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων.

11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

Quite interesting is to compare the appearances of the three creatures, the dragon and the two beasts, given by John in chapters twelve and thirteen:

Item:	Dragon, 12:3-4, 9	Beast 1, 13:2-3	Beast 2, 13:11
Head:	7 heads	7 heads	-----
Horns:	10 horns	10 horns	2 lamb's
Crowns:	7 Diadems	10 diadems	----
Mouth:	----	lion's	dragon's
Names:	Satan, serpent, deceiver	blasphemous names on heads	----
Body:	Red	leopard's	----
Feet:	----	bear's	----
Tail:	Swept 1/3 stars	----	----
Origin:	From sky	Out of sea	Out of earth

Clearly one can sense from the description of the three creatures, the first beast receives the greatest attention. But the dragon, who is identified as Satan (12:9) stands as the chief power for evil, and the two beasts are assisting him to carry out his evil plans on earth.

Using the standard introductory expression Καὶ εἶδον, and I saw, for visionary description,[10] the apostle

introduces us to ἄλλο θηρίον, another beast. The use of the adjective ἄλλος stresses the essential similarity of this beast to the first one, in spite of one coming out of the sea and the other coming out of a cave opening in the earth. Both have the same point of orgin -- and eventual eternal destiny-- the ἄβυσσος, abyss. (cf. Rev. 9:1, 11, 11:7, 17:8; 20:1-3). Out of the 39 uses of θηρίον to refer to one of these two beasts, the cluster of references surface in chapters thirteen and seventeen, with scattered references from chapter fourteen through twenty. These two creatures will play a role in the narrative of Revelation consistently from chapter thirteen onward.

One should understand clearly the perspective of John in how he presents these two beasts. He describes them from his apocalyptic visionary view that underscores the totality of evil present in these two creatures. This is accomplished through the grotesque imagery used in describing their appearance. The true evil nature is then presented in the depiction of their actions. But when he presents them as enormously popular to the non-believing people living on the earth, one wonders how this could be possible, given their appearance and actions. Here the reader must realize a fundamental point: John is describing them apocalyptically, but the people on earth see them from a human view and they appear to be enormously attractive. Plus, these beasts are not seen by non-believing people as surrealistic creatures out of the abyss. Instead, they are seen as powerful, charismatic human leaders both religious and political in their day. These beasts arise with every resurgence of such human leaders in our world.

The description of this second beast is less detailed than of either the dragon or the first beast. Just three traits are depicted, rather than the numerous

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[10]"καὶ εἶδον functions in three ways: (1) It introduces a new vision narrative (8:2; 10:1; 13:1; 14:1, 6, 14; 15:1; 19:11, 17; 20:1, 4, 12; 21:1; cf. Acts 11:5; Dan 8:2; 10:5; 12:5; Ezek 1:4; 3:13; 8:2; 13:1). (2) It introduces a major scene within a continuing vision narrative (5:1; 6:1; 8:13; **13:11**; 15:2; 19:19; 21:2; 21:22; cf. Ezek 2:9). (3) It is used to focus on a new or significant figure or action that occurs within a continuing vision narrative (5:2, 6, 11; 6:2, 5, 8, 12; 7:2; 9:1; 16:13; 17:3, 6; cf. Acts 11:6; Dan 12:5; Ezek 37:8; 44:4). See also μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον in the Comment on 4:1a." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5,* vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 338.]

ones given for the first beast.[11]

1) ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς. The rising up of this beast from the earth is clearly intended as parallel to the first beast rising up out of the sea (ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, 13:1).[12] Although the specific identity of this beast remains hidden, it is clear that the creature is an excellent communicator and a brutal enforcer of worship of the first beast by the people on earth. This strongly suggests a religious figure being used to do the 'dirty work' of the first beast. This finds confirmation in the subsequent labeling of this second beast as a 'false prophet.' Again a lot of useless speculation about its historical identity surfaces in the commentaries.[13]

What John himself clearly indicates is that this second beast is a religious figure who, as a false prophet, promotes worship of the first beast. The text is left ambiguous for the purpose of noting any and every religious figure who promotes a political figure and becomes his 'handy man' in promoting loyalty to the political figure. Given how religion in the first century Greco-Roman world was perceived as a tool of the state to promote loyalty to Rome, and especially to the emperor, any number of historical figures would have been suggested by this image of the second beast to the initial readers of this text. The same is true in our contemporary age as well.

[11]"This second beast is referred to as a θηρίον, 'beast,' only here in Revelation, for throughout the remainder of this pericope (vv 11–18), it/he is referred to only by a series of eight third-person singular verbs (13:11[2x], 12[2x], 13[2x], 14, 16) and two occurrences of the pronoun αὐτός (13:14, 15). This figure is elsewhere referred to as the 'false prophet' (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), which clearly conveys the role the author assigns him. By referring to this figure as a beast (the result of a reworking of the Leviathan-Behemoth myth), the author-editor forestalls using the designation 'false prophet'." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 755.]

[12]"The phrase 'ascending from the earth' is expressly formulated as a complementary parallel to the description of the first beast 'ascending from the sea.' While it is clear what 'emerging from the sea' means (i.e., emerging from the abyss), it is not at all clear what 'ascending from the earth' means. Surely an opening of some kind in the surface of the earth, such as a cave or fissure, is imagined. In 11:7 'the beast who ascends from the abyss' is mentioned in a proleptic gloss, but it is not immediately clear whether this refers to the beast from the sea or the beast from the land, though it almost certainly refers to the former.

"This mention of a second beast from the land is clearly an allusion to Behemoth, a mythical male monster who, according to Jewish tradition, was separated from Leviathan on the fifth day of creation and assigned to the land (1 Enoch 60:7–11, 24; 4 Ezra 6:47–54; 2 Apoc. Bar. 29:4); on Leviathan, see Comment on 13:1. The version of the myth in b. B. Bat. 74b–75a mentions the castration of Behemoth by God. In several Greek myths of Near Eastern origin, the separation of Sky from Earth is achieved only by the castration of the former (Hesiod Theog. 178–87; see H. Staudacher, Die Trennung von Himmel und Erde [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1942])."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 755–756.]

[13]"The identity of the beast from the earth is problematic. While it is clear that his behavior is sketched with the aid of that aspect of the eschatological-antagonist myth that anticipates the coming of a false prophet at the end, it is not clear whether the author thinks simply of the eschatological false prophet (whom Irenaeus calls the 'armor bearer' of the Antichrist, *Adv. Haer.* 5.28.2) or has in mind a specific contemporary individual or institution that promotes the imperial cult, e.g., the Roman emperor himself (Koester, *Introduction* 2:255), Roman provincial governors (Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*), the Greco-Roman priesthood, the provincial imperial priesthood (Bousset [1906] 365–66; J. Weiss, Offenbarung; Charles, 1:357; Müller, 253–54; Talbert, 55), the province of Asia in its double aspect of civil and religious administration, the proconsul and the commune (Ramsay, *Letters,* 97), a more general conception of propaganda for the imperial cult (Sweet, 214), the *koinon* of Asia as represented by priests of the imperial cult (Caird, 171), or all those individuals and institutions that actively promote the imperial cult (Roloff, [ET] 161).

"Of these possibilities, the most likely solution is that the beast from the earth represents the imperial priesthood, which was centrally concerned with promoting the imperial cult (Cuss, *Imperial Cult*, 96; Beasley-Murray, 216). Very little is really known about priests in imperial cults, however. Between 29 B.C. and A.D. 26, there was just one priest in the imperial provincial cult in Asia (at Pergamon), who had the title ἀρχιερεὺς θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, 'the high priest of the goddess Roma and the Emperor Caesar Augustus son of God.' After the time of Augustus, the high priest of the first provincial imperial cult of Asia was also known as the ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀσίας, 'high priest of Asia' (see Friesen, Twice Neokoros, 77–81). While scholars have generally accepted the notion that the high priestesses mentioned in inscriptions were wives of high priests (Magie, *Roman Rule* 1:149; Deininger, *Provinziallandtage*, 154), it appears that these high priestesses were legitimate cultic functionaries in their own right (Kearsley, *GRBS* 27 [1986] 183–92; Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 81–89) and functioned as high priests in the province of Asia by the middle of the first century A.D. Despite claims to the contrary (LSJ, 256), there does not appear to be any evidence suggesting that those who held the office of Asiarch functioned as priests in the imperial cult of Roman Asia (Acts 19:31; Strabo 14.1.42; Digest 27.1.6.14); see Friesen, *Twice Neokoros*, 92–112.

"Priests of the imperial cult wore crowns that displayed the busts of the deified emperors and the gods whose cult they served. Suetonius reports how Domitian presided at athletic competitions wearing a golden crown depicting Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, while the priest of Jupiter and the college of Flaviales (flamens or priests of deified Flavian emperors) had crowns depicting Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Domitian (Dom. 4.4). Priests of the imperial cult in the provinces were apparently persons of importance who wore their priestly crowns in public (see Acts Paul 26–39 and Price, *Rituals*, 170–71). Several sculptures have been preserved from the first to the third century A.D. depicting imperial priests wearing crowns on which were mounted miniature busts of deified Roman emperors (Inan and Rosenbaum, Sculpture, 109 [plate LXV], 124 [plate LXXXV, 1–2], 139–40 [plate CIII, 1–2]; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Porträtplastik*, no. 230, pp. 252–53, plate in vol. 2, no. 164; Hanfmann, Sardis, 65, figure 43), though some depict deities and not deified emperors (Inan and Rosenbaum, Sculpture, 31–32)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 756–757.]

2) καὶ εἶχεν κέρατα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ. The image painted here of the second beast having only two horns that looked like those of a lamb. Ordinarily only male sheep beyond the lamb stage would possess horns. But this is an apocalyptic beast with 'horns' pointing to a lamb like appearance. Clearly Jesus as the slaughtered Lamb in Rev. 5:6 possessed seven horns. The allusion to the 'lamb's horns' suggests the religious role for the second beast, which is confirmed with the label 'false prophet' in 16:13; 19:20, and 20:10. Highly doubtful is the sometimes suggestion of an allusion to Den. 8:3 where a ram is described with two horns.[14] Almost no similarity beyond 'two horns' exists between the Daniel text and here.

The OT often uses horns as a symbol of power, and from the subsequent depiction of the actions of this beast he certainly possessed considerable power.[15]

3) καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων. The most curious aspect of this depiction of appearance is the voice of this beast. What kind of sound did an ancient 'dragon' make? Since this dragon -- unlike the dragon of medieval literature -- was a serpent like sea creature, one would expect a hissing sound of some sort. The second century Greek writer Aelian in *De Natura Animalium* describes the 'dragons' as hissing sometimes loud enough to sound like a roar.[16] In the fictitious apocryphal *Acts of Andrew* an 80 foot long dragon like snake 'roars' (*emittens gravem rugitum*) at Andrew before backing

down and slithering away in the presence of this saint of God! Andrew then raises from the dead the child that the snake had killed.[17]

But here the point of the dragon like voice is to stress that this second beast works in behalf of the old dragon, who interestingly enough does not speak at all in the depiction found in chapter twelve. This beast does his talking for him.

One further id depiction will be given three times later in Rev. 16:13; 19:20, and 20:10 in the phrase τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου, false prophet.[18] This becomes the confirming label for a religious role by the second beast. But the religious image is not that of one powerless and unwilling to inflict brutal, cruel injury on the people of God. The description of his actions in vv. 12-17 make this abundantly clear.

B. The actions of the second beast, vv. 12-17

12 καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν **ποιεῖ** ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ **ποιεῖ** τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ. 13 καὶ **ποιεῖ** σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ **ποιῇ** ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν

[14]**Dan. 8:3.** ἀναβλέψας εἶδον κριὸν ἕνα μέγαν ἑστῶτα ἀπέναντι τῆς πύλης, καὶ εἶχε κέρατα, καὶ τὸ ἓν ὑψηλότερον τοῦ ἑτέρου, καὶ τὸ ὑψηλότερον ἀνέβαινε.†

3 I looked up and saw a ram standing beside the river. It had two horns. Both horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up second.

[15]"Horns are used as symbols of power and authority in the OT (KB3, 1068–69), sometimes of powerful nations (Zech 1:18–21[MT 2:1–4]), of the power exercised by a particular nation (Jer 48:25), or of kings (the future Davidic king in Ezek 29:21 and Ps 132:17; Alexander the Great in Dan 8:8a; the Macedonian successors of Alexander, or Diadochi, in Dan 8:8b)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 757.]

[16]"What does it mean to 'speak like a dragon'? Aelian observes that a δράκων makes a hissing or whistling sound (he uses the verb συρίζειν in *De nat. anim.* 6.63; in 16.39 he uses the cognate nouns συριγμός and σῦριγξ). Aelian uses the terms συριγμός, "hiss," and φύσημα, "roar," together in De nat. anim. 15.21. In the Acts of Andrew, Gregory's Epitome 19 (ed. MacDonald, The Acts of Andrew, 262–63), an eighty-foot snake "gave a deep roar [*emittens gravem rugitum*]" and then retreated before Andrew. In a novella about Pinus and the dragon, Aelian implies that though Pinus could not see who was speaking, he heard a voice [φωνή], presumably the dragon's, which said "Touch not the fawns" (De nat. anim. 10.48). However, here "to speak like a dragon" undoubtedly means that the second beast acted as the agent or plenipotentiary of the first beast." [David E. Aune, Revelation 6–16, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 757.]

[17]"19 After this a youth who followed the apostle sent for his mother to meet Andrew. She came, and after being instructed, begged him to come to their house, which was devastated by a great serpent. As Andrew approached, it hissed loudly and with raised head came to meet him; it was fifty cubits long: every one fell down in fear. Andrew said: 'Hide thy head, foul one, which thou didst raise in the beginning for the hurt of mankind, and obey the servants of God, and die.' The serpent roared, and coiled about a great oak near by and vomited poison and blood and died." ["Acts of Andrew," Apocryphal New Testament by M.R. James at Early Christian Writings.org, Epitome 19]

[18]**Rev. 16:13**. Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ **ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου** πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι·

13 And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and **from the mouth of the false prophet**.

Rev. 19:20. καὶ ἐπιάσθη τὸ θηρίον καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ **ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης** ὁ ποιήσας τὰ σημεῖα ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐπλάνησεν τοὺς λαβόντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ· ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς τῆς καιομένης ἐν θείῳ.

20 And the beast was captured, and with it **the false prophet** who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

Rev. 20:10. καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ θείου ὅπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον **καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης,** καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

10 And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast **and the false prophet** were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

ἀνθρώπων, 14 καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ **ἐδόθη** αὐτῷ **ποιῆσαι** ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς **ποιῆσαι** εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν.

15 Καὶ **ἐδόθη** αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ **ποιήσῃ** [ἵνα] ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν. 16 καὶ **ποιεῖ** πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχούς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν 17 καὶ ἵνα μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all; 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived;

15 and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

Although the depiction of appearance of this beast is minimal, the description of his actions is quited detailed. The repeated use of the verb ποιέω highlights this description. The meaning ranges from simple actions to coercion of people.[19] Although most translations -- and some printed Greek texts -- insert a paragraph break between verses 14 and 15, it is hard to justify this. Clearly nothing in the terminology of the passage signals this. Such a break is inserted largely on perceived idea expression with vv. 15-17 stressing the demands of the second beast upon the people of the earth.

The beginning assertion claims a transfer of all the authority of the first beast to the second one: καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, and he placed all the authorization of the first beast before it. This literalistic translation does not make much

sense because of very specialized uses of verbs and prepositions here. The direct object of the verb ποιεῖ is τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου πᾶσαν and is better translated as the full authorization of the first beast. The point is that the authority possessed by the first beast is given to the second beast to exercise. But of course this authority had been given to the first beast from the dragon who initially possessed it: καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, and the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority (13:2). The extent of this power granted to the first beast from Satan is defined somewhat in 13:7 as καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος, Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation.

The point of this second granting of authority is then defined by the prepositional phrase ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, which literally translated means in his presence, but this doesn't make much sense in this context. The sense of face-to-face that is at the core of this adverbial preposition here shades off into the derived idea of the second beast using the first beast's power in the presence of the first beast. This pictures from an ancient view the idea of functioning as a representative of the first beast.[20] This suggests a priestly function for the second beast who will promoted the worship of the first beast. Therefore it is more accurately translated as in his behalf. This is the distinct meaning of this prepositional phrase, ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, found in 13:12, 14; 19:20. John uses the preposition ἐνώπιον some 34 times in Revelation but only in these three places with this distinct meaning.[21] Thus rather than using more custom-

[19]The distinction in meaning between simple action and coercion is signaled by the simple direct object for the first meaning and the double accusative objects (personal / impersonal) for the second meaning. Both uses of ποιέω were very common in ancient Greek generally: I do something / I make someone do something.

[20]**4. special uses**
 a. *in relation to* ἁμαρτάνειν ἐ. τινος sin against someone **Lk 15:18, 21** (cp. Jdth 5:17; 1 Km 7:6; 20:1).
 b. *by the authority of, on behalf of* **Rv 13:12, 14; 19:20**. Also simply by **Lk 3:7 D** (but s. 2a).—Johannessohn, Präpositionen 194–97; 359–61; AWikenhauser, Ἐνώπιος—ἐνώπιον—κατενώπιον: BZ 8, 1910, 263–70.—DELG s.v. ἐνῶπα. M-M.
 [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 342.]

[21]"The view that ἐνώπιον + genitive should be taken literally as 'in the presence of' the first beast (Beckwith, 640; Bratcher-Hatton, 201–2) or 'in the presence of' the official representatives of the emperor (Charles,1:360) is doubtful, for the first beast is never referred to in vv 11–18 in an active way. ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ is a Semitic idiom also used in 13:14, where the second beast performs miracles ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, 'by the authority of the beast' (13:14), a passage alluded to later in 19:20, where it is said that the false prophet performed miracles ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, 'on his authority,' i.e., the authority of the beast. This expression appears to have been

Page 702

ary terms for 'in behalf of,' common in ancient Greek,[22] John chose to use this prepositional construction that normally suggests the presence of God in order to underscore the phony and ultimately futile attempt of the 'priestly' second beast to force the people of the world to worship the first beast as god.

The verb used here ποιεῖ from ποιέω is used somewhat differently from its normal range of meaning from to do (something) to cause (something) to happen. Although used here with a simple direct object τὴν ἐξουσίαν, the sense is better rendered as 'he exercises' in the sense of carry out the authorization of the first beast. The verb ποιέω is closely linked to this derived authorization first in 13:7 as ποιῆσαι πόλεμον, to make war. In the second use in 13:12 the authorization is used ποιεῖ to force the earth to worship the second beast. In 13:13, it enables the second beast ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, to do spectacular signs such as πῦρ ποιῇ to make fire come out of the sky. In 13:14 this is repeated as διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, through the signs which were given to him to do on behalf of the (first) beast. Through stacking a repeated succession of ποιέω expression in regard to the work of the second beast on behalf of the first one John highlights dramatically the full activity of this second beast. While the first beast becomes almost completely passive in this narrative of chapter thirteen somewhat in the regal manner of a reigning king, the second beast as his representative is quite busy implementing this derived authority on earth.

Verses 12b - 17 specifies a list of those actions taken by the second beast in behalf of the first beast. These stand as the implementation of the authorization first granted by Satan to the first beast (13:2) that were then defined more specifically in vv. 4-7.[23] In order to achieve these 'objectives' possessed by the first beast, the second beast takes the actions listed below to accomplish their combined 'mission' on earth. Also important to remember is that this 'plan' had only a short time, i.e., μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο, 42 months (13:5) to be completed. Thus a tone of desperation surrounds all this activity. Satan and his two cohorts are in a hurry to get their mission done.

1) καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσκυνήσουσιν τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ. and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed.

Objectives one and four, listed in the above footnote, are now addressed in the actions of the second beast. This allows us to see how the plan was carried out: by coercion from the second beast. Although 13:4 seems to imply a voluntary worshiping of both Satan and the first beast, the statement here gives greater insight into this 'worship.'[24] The chart below lists out the references to προσκυνέω as it appears inside Revelation in 34 uses (out of 60 total NT uses). When προσκυνέω refers to activities in heaven, God or Christ are the object of worship. But when it refers to activities taking place on earth God is not the object of worship. Instead the worship of the people on earth is directed to τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα, demons and idols (12:20); τῷ δράκοντι, the dragon (13:4); αὐτόν, him, i.e., the first beast (13:8); also τὸ θηρίον τὸ πρῶτον, the first beast (13:12); τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν, the image of the beast (13:15); τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, the beast and his image (14:9, 11); τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ, his image (16:2; 19:20).

Another distinctive phrase is used by John to refer to the people on earth: τὴν γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας, the earth and those dwelling in it. The fuller expression is in v. 7, πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος, every tribe and people and tongue and nation. Similar is v. 8, πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, all

formulated by the author in antithesis to the way in which this improper preposition is normally used in Revelation, that is, with reference to the presence of God.

"ἐνώπιον + genitive is primarily used in Revelation in expressions such as ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, 'before God' (3:2; 8:2; 9:13; 11:16; 12:10; 16:19; cf. 15:4), ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου [τοῦ θεοῦ], 'before the throne [of God]' (1:4; 4:5, 6, 10; 7:9, 11, 15; 8:3; 14:3; 20:12), ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, 'before the one seated on the throne' (4:10), ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου, 'before the Lord' (11:4), ἐνώπιον τοῦ πατρός μου, 'before my Father' (3:5), and ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου, 'before the Lamb' (5:8; 7:9; 14:10). That the second beast or the false prophet is said to exercise authority and perform miracles in the presence of the beast hints at a priestly role for the false prophet."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 757–758.]

[22]See Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains.* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996) topics 90.36 - 90.42 for a listing of available alternatives that John could have chosen.

[23]**These objectives are defined as**

1) To be worshiped by people on earth: 4 καὶ προσεκύνησαν

τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

2) To be able to use arrogant and blasphemous speeches to impress and deceive people on the earth: 5 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. 6 καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

3) To make war against the people of God on earth: 7a καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς,

4) To exercise authority over all humanity in order to compel worship of the beast: 7b καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. 8 καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

[24]Tracing out the use of προσκυνέω in the 24 uses inside Revelation is helpful.

προσκυνέω
to worship

bow — worship, worshiped, worshiping

Re 4:10   the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and **worship** the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

Re 5:14   And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and **worshiped.**

Re 7:11   And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and **worshiped** God,

Re 9:20   The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up **worshiping** demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.

Re 11:1   Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who **worship** there,

Re 11:16   Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and **worshiped** God,

Re 13:4   They **worshiped** the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they **worshiped** the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

Re 13:8   and all the inhabitants of the earth will **worship** it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

Re 13:12   It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants **worship** the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed.

Re 13:15   and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not **worship** the image of the beast to be killed.

Re 14:7   He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and **worship** him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Re 14:9   Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, "Those who **worship** the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands,

Re 14:11   And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who **worship** the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

Re 15:4   Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and **worship** before you, for your judgments have been revealed."

Re 16:2   So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and a foul and painful sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and who **worshiped** its image.

Re 19:4   And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and **worshiped** God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

Re 19:10   Then I fell down at his feet to **worship** him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. **Worship** God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Re 19:20   And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who **worshiped** its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

Re 20:4   Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not **worshiped** the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Re 22:8   I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to **worship** at the feet of the angel who showed them to me;

Re 22:9   but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. **Worship** God!"

Re 3:9   I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying— I will make them come and **bow** down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

those dwelling on the earth. In v. 3b they are labeled ὅλη ἡ γῆ, the entire earth. Clearly by these labels John is referring to the world without Christ since he clearly marks the believers off with τῶν ἁγίων, the saints (v. 7) and οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered (v. 8). Also interesting is the latter defining of believers as οἵτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον οὐδὲ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, everyone who had not

worshiped the beast nor his image (20:4).

For the second time the unusual phrase οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, whose mortal wound had been healed, surfaces. In the depiction of the first beast in v. 3a, the initial reference surfaces: καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη, One of its heads had received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed. A bit of tension is present here. In v. 3a one of the seven heads of the beast is killed and then brought back to life. But here in v. 12 it is the beast who was killed and brought back to life. And a similar reference in v. 14 asserts this second perspective: ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν, who has the wound of the sword and lived. The apocalyptic nature of the depiction can easily allow for such variation of referencing. Does this allude to the *Nero redivivus* tradition circulating across the Roman empire in the last decades of the first century?[25] The likelihood is that John's first

[25]"Nero Claudius Caesar was born on 15 December 37 and was the emperor of Rome A.D. 54–68. On 8 June 68 he was deposed by the Senate and declared a public enemy. He committed suicide on 9 June 68, but confusion surrounding his death together with the paucity of witnesses who actually saw his corpse and his burial (for details see Chilver, Commentary, 42) made it possible for rumors that he was still alive to circulate widely. Suetonius was the first to record the belief that Nero would shortly return and visit destruction on his enemies (Nero 57). The belief that Nero escaped to Parthia and would return with an army is reflected in the Sibylline Oracles (Sib. Or. 4.119–22, 137–39; 5.137–54, 214–27; 8.68–72; 12.78–94). This myth of *Nero redux*, i.e., 'Nero returned,' was based on a widespread refusal to accept the rumor of his death as true, while the related myth of *Nero redivivus*, i.e., 'living again,' was based on the notion that, though dead, he would return to life. During his lifetime, Nero had fostered good relations with the Parthians, and that contributed to the belief that he had sought asylum with them. Dio Chrysostom (A.D. 40–after 112) wrote 'Even now everyone wishes that Nero were alive and most people actually believe it' (Orat. 21.10). After Nero's suicide, fictitious edicts were posted under his name threatening his enemies, revealing his high standing with many people.

"Nero was as popular in the Greek east as he was despised in the west, and several false Neros appeared at various times. Lucian refers to ὁ ψευδονέρων in the singular (Adv. ign. 20), though a number of scholars think that *two* false Neros appeared (Bastomsky, JQR n.s. 59 [1969] 321–25; Henderson, Life, 420; Momigliano, CAH 10:741; Bishop, Nero, 167; Scullard, Gracchi to Nero, 332). Yet it is possible that there were as many as *three* false Neros (Syme, Arval, 87; id., CAH 11:144–45; id., Tacitus, 518; Gallivan, Historia 22 [1973] 364–65; Bradley, Suetonius' Life, 295; Pappano, CJ 32 [1937] 385–92; E. Hohl, RE, suppl. III, col. 393): **(1)** An unnamed impostor (Dio Cassius 63.9.3) who resembled Nero, either a slave from Pontus or a freedman from Italy (Tacitus *Hist.* 2.8), appeared in A.D. 69. Gathering an army of deserters, he sailed east from Greece and was forced by a storm to land on the island of Cynthus in the Cyclades. There he was executed by Calpurnius Asprenas, the new governor of Galatia and Pamphilia. The body was taken via Asia to Rome (Tacitus Hist. 2.8–9; Zonaras 11.15, p. 45, 11-16D). **(2)** The false Nero of A.D. 80 was Terentius Maximus, an Asiatic who looked and spoke like Nero (Dio Cassius 66.19.3)

and who gathered an increasing number of followers from Asia to the Euphrates. **(3)** A third pretender, referred to in Suetonius Nero 57.2 (Gallivan, Historia 22 [1973] 365; against Bastomsky, JQR n.s. 59 [1969] 321–25), appeared in A.D. 88 (similarities to Terentius Maximus can be accounted for by the tendency of pretenders to imitate the outward form of a royal march 'in which the pretender assumes the outward appearance of the man whose identity he claims, and is given an escort and appropriate supplies and honors' [Millar, Study, 217]). Tacitus (Hist. 2.8.1) observes ceterorum casus conatusque in contextu operis dicemus, 'the adventures and enterprises of the other pretenders we will relate in the course of the work,' which indicates that Tacitus intended to discuss the brief careers of at least two other pretenders, though unfortunately those parts of Tacitus' work are lost. It is certainly significant in this context to note that Domitian was called 'Nero' by Juvenal (Satires 4.38).

"The oldest form of the *Nero redux* myth, which appears to have originated in Asia, is that Nero would return from the east as the champion of the east at the head of a Parthian army to retake the imperial throne in Rome. This basic version of the myth is reflected in Sib. Or. 4.138–39 (tr. Charlesworth, OTP 1:387), 'the fugitive from Rome will also come, brandishing a great spear, having crossed the Euphrates with many myriads' (cf. Sib. Or. 5.28–34, 138–53, 215–24, 363–70; 3.63–74; 8.70–72, 140–47; cf. Jakob-Sonnabend, Nero-Bild, 138–44).

"In Jewish and Christian tradition, however, this usually positive image of a triumphant messianic figure was transformed into a monstrous incarnation of evil and became part of the eschatological-antagonist myth. In Jewish tradition Nero is identified with Belial (Sib. Or. 3.63–74; Asc. Isa. 4:1–14), as revealed in Asc. Isa. 4:2 (tr. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 2:648):

> And after it [i.e., the world] has come to its consummation, Beliar, the great prince, the king of this world who has ruled it since it came into being, shall descend; he will come down from his firmament in the form of a man, a lawless king, a slayer of his mother, who himself (even) this king will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the beloved have planted; and one of the twelve [i.e., Peter] will be delivered into his hand.

"In Christian tradition, Commodian (Instr. 41.7; Martin, *Commodiani*, 33) expected the resurrection of Nero from hell (*Cum fuerit autem Nero de inferno leuatus*), while at the same time Elijah would seal the beloved ones (Instr. 41.8; Martin, *Commodiani,* 34).

"It is not difficult to understand how the Nero myth could be understood in a wholly negative manner and Nero himself could be considered a personification of evil by Jews and Christians. Both groups would be repelled by the imperial propaganda, spread throughout the eastern part of the Roman empire during the emperor's lifetime, retailing the notion of Nero's divinity (Griffin, *Nero*, 215–20). Nero, for example, authorized the minting of coins on which he was depicted wearing the radiate crown appropriate for the sun god (K. Scott, Imperial Cult, 32–33; Griffin, Nero, 217–18; Bodinger, RHR 206 [1989] 26–27). At the beginning of his reign Nero was more modest, for he vetoed the dedication of gold and silver statues of himself, metals that were normally reserved for statues of deities (Tacitus Annals 13.10). In Sib. Or. 5.28–34 (tr. J. J. Collins in Charlesworth, OTP 1:393), *Nero redux* is described metaphorically as a 'terrible snake [δεινὸς ὄφις],' in a way comparable to Rev 17:8:

> One who has fifty as an initial [N = 50] will be commander, a terrible snake, breathing out grievous war, who one day will lay hands on his own family and slay them, and throw everything

readers made this association. Yet the larger principle here is of a figure with seeming miraculous powers that he can use to 'hypnotize' the masses of people in convincing them to worship the first beast. It is no accident in v. 3 that Καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὀπίσω τοῦ θηρίου, In amazement the whole earth followed the beast, follows the first reference to this death and coming back to life.

This strong emphasis upon the second beast demanding worship from the people on earth points toward it symbolizing the imperial priesthood in the Roman empire of John's day that was charged with the duty of enforcing the worship of the Roman emperor.[26]

> into confusion,
> athlete, charioteer, murderer, one who dares ten thousand things.
> He will also cut the mountain between two seas and defile it with gore.
> But even when he disappears he will be destructive. Then he will return
> declaring himself equal to God. But he will prove that he is not.

"What factors encouraged the formation and circulation of the *Nero redux* or *redivivus myth*? Confusion surrounding the death of Nero certainly fueled the circulation of the myth. Further, it is possible that the *Nero redivivus* myth was encouraged by an atmosphere of 'messianic' expectation that pervaded the Levant during the second half of the first century A.D. (Bodinger, RHR 206 [1989] 22).

"There are other examples of rumors that great men of the past reappeared. A false Alexander the Great appeared in A.D. 221 (Dio Cassius 80.18.1–3; Lucian Adv. indoctum 20). A ψευδοφίλιππος, 'false Philip' of Macedon, who was really Andriscus of Adramyttium, pretended to be Philip, the son of Perseus king of Macedon (d. 165 or 162 B.C.), though the real Philip had died in internment at Alba Fucens two years after the death of Perseus in 163 or 160 B.C. (Diodorus Siculus 32.17.1–7; Lucian Adv. indoctum 20; Strabo 13.4.2; Polybius 36.10.1–7; for a discussion of this figure, cf. Walbank, Polybius 3:668–69). Appian refers to a ψευδομάριος, a 'false Marius,' who pretended to be the grandson of Marius (Bell. civ. 3.1.2). Another false Alexander, this one pretending to be a son of the same name whom Herod the Great executed in 7 B.C., appeared in Crete shortly after the death of Herod in 4 B.C. (Jos. J. W. 2.101–10; Ant. 7.24–38). In A.D. 34 a false Drusus who arose in the Cyclades was eventually arrested and sent to Tiberius (Dio Cassius 58.25; Tacitus Annals 5.10). A ψευδοαντωνῖνος, a 'false Antoninus,' is mentioned several times in the fragments of Dio Cassius (80.17–19). Many years later impostors impersonated Frederick the Great and Louis XVI after their deaths. Even in late twentieth-century America, Elvis Presley has been sighted by hundreds of people."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 738–740.]

[26]"Of these possibilities, the most likely solution is that the beast from the earth represents the imperial priesthood, which was centrally concerned with promoting the imperial cult (Cuss, Imperial Cult, 96; Beasley-Murray, 216). Very little is really known about priests in imperial cults, however. Between 29 B.C. and A.D. 26, there was just one priest in the imperial provincial cult in Asia (at Pergamon), who had the title ἀρχιερεὺς θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος θεοῦ υἱοῦ Σεβαστοῦ, 'the high priest of the goddess Roma and the Emperor Caesar Augustus son of God.' After the time of Augustus, the high priest of the first provincial imperial cult of Asia was also known as the ἀρχιερεὺς Ἀσίας,

Clearly this would have been the association made by the believers who were the first ones to hear this text read in their house church meetings in the seven cities of Asia. The larger symbolism points to anyone promoting loyalty and devotion to political leaders that detracts from and contradicts commitment to God through Christ. And particularly does it point to religious figures guilty of such actions.[27]

2)   καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all;

The second implementing activity of this second beast is performing miracles. This relates somewhat to the second objective of the first beast.[28] By performing

'high priest of Asia' (see Friesen, Twice Neokoros, 77–81). While scholars have generally accepted the notion that the high priestesses mentioned in inscriptions were wives of high priests (Magie, Roman Rule 1:149; Deininger, Provinziallandtage, 154), it appears that these high priestesses were legitimate cultic functionaries in their own right (Kearsley, GRBS 27 [1986] 183–92; Friesen, Twice Neokoros, 81–89) and functioned as high priests in the province of Asia by the middle of the first century A.D. Despite claims to the contrary (LSJ, 256), there does not appear to be any evidence suggesting that those who held the office of Asiarch functioned as priests in the imperial cult of Roman Asia (Acts 19:31; Strabo 14.1.42; Digest 27.1.6.14); see Friesen, Twice Neokoros, 92–112.

"Priests of the imperial cult wore crowns that displayed the busts of the deified emperors and the gods whose cult they served. Suetonius reports how Domitian presided at athletic competitions wearing a golden crown depicting Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, while the priest of Jupiter and the college of Flaviales (flamens or priests of deified Flavian emperors) had crowns depicting Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Domitian (Dom. 4.4). Priests of the imperial cult in the provinces were apparently persons of importance who wore their priestly crowns in public (see Acts Paul 26–39 and Price, *Rituals*, 170–71). Several sculptures have been preserved from the first to the third century A.D. depicting imperial priests wearing crowns on which were mounted miniature busts of deified Roman emperors (Inan and Rosenbaum, *Sculpture*, 109 [plate LXV], 124 [plate LXXXV, 1–2], 139–40 [plate CIII, 1–2]; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, Porträtplastik, no. 230, pp. 252–53, plate in vol. 2, no. 164; Hanfmann, Sardis, 65, figure 43), though some depict deities and not deified emperors (Inan and Rosenbaum, Sculpture, 31–32)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 756–757.=

[27]This danger is illustrated by the recent exposé of Frank Schaeffer in his *Why I am an Atheist Who Believes in God: How to give love, create beauty and find peace*. (May 2014). Schaeffer, the son of the famous evangelical leader Francis Schaeffer, details with extensive evidence how his father and a few other evangelical leaders conspired with the GOP leaders working with Ronald Reagen to take over the US in the pushing of 'religious like devotion' to Reagen by conservative Christians across the US. Out of this effort was born the American Tea Party which has managed to paralyze the political process in the US Its poison spreads almost daily across the US in our time.

[28]**2) To be able to use arrogant and blasphemous speeches**

such σημεῖα μεγάλα, mighty signs, in the authorization of the first beast (v. 4), he could claim deity for the first beast as the real god who should be worshiped.[29] Of

to impress and deceive people on the earth: 5 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. 6 καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

[29]"The idiom ποιεῖν σημεῖα/σημεῖον, 'perform miracles/miracle,' occurs four times in Revelation (13:13, 14; 16:14; 19:20) but is a favorite expression in the Fourth Gospel, occurring thirteen times (John 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30); see Ruckstuhl-Dschulnigg, Stilkritik, 153. The 'impressive miracles' performed by the beast from the sea are reminiscent of Elijah's miracle of fire (1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 1:10; cf. Luke 9:54), on which they may have been intentionally modeled. So far as the Greco-Roman world is concerned, Artemidorus (Oneirocritica 2.9; tr. White, Dreams) observes that 'worst of all is a dream in which fire is seen being carried down to earth.' The miracles worked by this beast (= false prophet) are referred to again in 19:20, and the demonic spirits that came from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are also said to perform miracles (16:14). The performance of miracles by the eschatological antagonist links this passage closely to 2 Thess 2:9–10:

> The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan [κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ] will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

"In predictions of the coming of various evil eschatological figures (false Christs, false prophets, the eschatological antagonist), they are frequently expected to perform signs and wonders to lead people astray (Mark 13:21–23 = Matt 24:23–25; Did. 16:4; Asc. Isa. 4.10; Sib. Or. 2.167 [to Beliar]; 3.63–67; Apoc. El. 3:5–13; Apoc. Dan. 13:1–13; Gk Ap. Ezra 4:26–27 [the antagonist unsuccessfuly attempts to turn stones into bread]; Apoc. Pet. 2; Tertullian De anima 50.7; Hippolytus Haer. 528.2; Origen Contra Celsum 2.50; 6.45). The prediction that many will come saying "I am the Christ" is found in Apoc. Pet. 1–2, and the prediction that "many false messiahs and false apostles will arise and deceive many of the faithful" is found in Justin (Dial. 35.3). Simon Magus (never presented as the eschatological antagonist, though he is depicted as the adversary of Peter) purportedly performed miracles that persuaded people to follow him (Acts Pet. 12). According to Hartman (Prophecy, 199) and others (see Strecker, "Der Antichrist," 248–49, who suggests that Deut 13:2–6 may already have been eschatologized in early Judaism), it is likely that this sequence of motifs (false prophet/signs and wonders/deception) originated with Deut 13:1–3 (emphasis added):

> If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, "Let us go after other gods," which you have not known, "and let us serve them," you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you.

"However, references in early Jewish and early Christian literature to false prophets or false Christs who perform miracles to deceive people do not clearly allude to Deut 13, apparently because these motifs were quickly transformed into apocalyptic traditions, thereby losing any direct reference to Deut 13. The second beast in Rev 13:11–18 is referred to subsequently only as the false prophet (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), thereby linking these two eschatologi-

course, such "PR" guys like the second beast were expected to be able to perform all kinds of spectacular miracles in behalf of the fellow they were promoting.

Whether these miracles were real or fabricated is not made clear here. In 2 Thess. 2:9-10, the lawless one will be able to perform miracles through the power of Satan. Later on in 16:14, the first beast and the second one now called a false prophet will be able to perform miracles through the power of demons at work in them. Thus the surrounding signals point to authentic miracles using supernatural evil powers.

The most spectacular demonstration of miraculous power is ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, so that even fire is made to come out of the sky to the earth in the presence of men. In the very superstitious first century world, a large blast of lightening coming out of the sky and striking some building on the ground was perceived as one of the most spectacular miracles possible.[30] If some-

cal scenarios. For evidence that religious miracles were fabricated for political reasons in the Roman world, see G. W. Bowersock, "The Mechanics of Subversion in the Roman Provinces," in Opposition et Résistances a l'Empire d'Auguste a Trajan, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens 33 (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1987) 291–320."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 758–759.]

[30]"The motif of fire falling from heaven to earth (often understood as lightning; cf. 4 Ezra 4:16) as divine judgment is found in Rev 20:9, where fire falls from heaven and destroys the huge army that has surrounded Jerusalem. This motif occurs frequently in the OT and early Jewish literature (Gen 19:24 [cf. Wis 10:6; Gk Ap. Ezra 2:19]; 2 Kgs 1:10, 12, 14 [cf. Sir 48:3]; Job 1:16; Ps 11:6; Lam 1:13; Ezek 38:22; 39:6; Sib. Or. 2.196–200; 3.53–54, 84–85; 8.243; Aristeas Hist. frag. 1 [Holladay, FHJA 1:268–69; Denis, Fragmenta, 196]; Ep Jer 6:63; T. Abr. [A] 10:11). Several stories are told in the OT in which a man of God prays and fire comes down from heaven and consumes sacrifices (Lev 9:24; 1 Chr 21:26; 2 Chr 7:1 [cf. 2 Macc 2:10]; 1 Kgs 18:36–39 [cf. Vit. Proph. 21.10]). In some of these passages a person acting as an agent of God is able to call down fire from heaven (1 Kgs 18:38; 2 Kgs 1:10, 12, 14; T. Abr. [A] 10:11; T. Abr. [B] 12:3, 4; cf. Luke 9:54). There are several references to fire from heaven as divine judgment in early Christian literature (Luke 9:54; 1 Clem. 11:1; Rev 20:9). Sib. Or. 3.63–74 (an addition to the text made after ca. A.D. 70) deals with Nero (= Beliar), his performance of 'many signs for men' (σήματα πολλὰ ποιήσει ἀνθρώποις), and his fiery destruction (tr. Collins in Charlesworth, OTP 1:363):

> Then Beliar will come from the Sebastenoi
> and he will raise up the height of mountains,
> he will raise up the sea,
> the great fiery sun and shining moon,
> and he will raise up the dead, and perform many signs
> for men. But they will not be effective in him.
> But he will, indeed, also lead men astray,
> and he will lead astray many faithful, chosen Hebrews,
> and also other lawless men
> who have not yet listened to the word of God.
> But whenever the threats of the great God draw nigh
> and a burning power comes through the sea to land

one could control that and direct it to specific targets they were indeed powerful individuals. Here the image is simply of the second beast being able to cause a lightening strike but not to any specified target. On the other hand, in 20:9, God directs a lightening strike that destroys the entire army of Satan in one blast after it had surrounded the people of God anticipating victory over God's people.

But being able to cause a lightening strike was in itself enough to impress the people on earth of the supposed powers of the second beast.[31] And since this power was typically associated with deity, the propaganda of the second beast attributing this power to the first beast as a god worthy of worship seemed logical to the people on earth.

In today's world such demigods use supposed miracles to claim divine power for themselves and to solicit loyalty and devotion -- usually expressed by monetary donations -- from people across the world. And in absolutely astounding fashion, millions upon millions of people are deceived into believing this nonsense.

3)   καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν. and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived;

The consequence of these miracles by the second beast is that πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, he deceives those dwelling upon the earth. This core declaration in verse 14 defines what the 2nd beast did -- πλανᾷ --; to whom he did it -- τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς --; and how he did it -- διὰ τὰ σημεῖα... ---.

What he did: πλανᾷ. This present active indicative verb from πλανάω has the meaning of to lead people astray by convincing them of something that isn't so. Consequently they follow a false path that leads to disaster. Interestingly, in Revelation such action is

it will also burn Beliar and all overbearing men,

as many as put faith in him.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 759–760.]

[31]It is interesting to note that John uses his standard term for miracles σημεῖα rather than the more commonly used terms for miracle found both in the NT and in the surrounding literature.

Additionally the defining miracle here is a nature miracle rather than the types of miracles that Jesus did that healed people and made their lives whole in some manner. The adjective μεγάλα in σημεῖα μεγάλα stresses the spectacular orientation to the beast's miracles. This reflects the surrounding Greco-Roman cultural preference for such 'miracles' that give sensational confirmation to the claims of the miracle worker.

Thus John sends all kinds of signals that the 'miracles' of the second beast smell foul and have nothing to do with God or Christ.

attributed to the Satan (12:9; 20:3; 20:8,10); to the 2nd beast (13:14; 19:20); the Jezebel like woman at Thyatira (2:20); Babylon as the symbol of Rome (18:23). Thus Satan and the 2nd beast are the major culprits in deceiving people.[32]

Whom he deceived is stated simply as τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, those dwelling upon the earth. This continues the pattern of referencing the people on earth without Christ that has been consistently followed in chapter thirteen. See the discussion on pages 703ff for more details.

How the beast deceives is διὰ τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν, because of the signs which were allowed for him to do in behalf of the beast, thus telling those dwelling on the earth to make an image to the beast who has the wound of the sword and still lives. The prepositional phrase διὰ τὰ σημεῖα is causal rather than instrumental due to the use of the accusative case noun σημεῖα.[33] Although not a huge difference exists between these two ideas in ancient Greek, the causal meaning sets up these 'signs' as the basis of his deceiving πλανᾷ rather than merely the means of his deceiving. Thus the 2nd beast's deception was not in the miracles he did, for they represented a real power at work. Rather they became the foundation that he used to mislead the people. The interpretation given to his miracles by the beast led the people to believe that the first beast was a god and thus deserved a huge image whereby people then could worship him. Not the miracles themselves convinced the people to build the image; instead the interpretation of them by the beast led to the constructing of the image. This is John's point in using the accusative object of διὰ, rather than the ablative cause specifying agency.

This linking of the miracles to the first beast is again stressed in the unusual prepositional construction ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, in behalf of the beast. What is not specified beyond the 2nd beast's ability to command lightening (v. 13b) is exactly what miracles did he do. The relative clause ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι, which were allowed to him to do, sets definite God imposed limits on the kinds of miracles the 2nd beast could perform.[34]

[32]"The motif of the eschatological antagonist as a deceiver occurs occasionally in early Christian tradition (2 Thess 2:9–10; 2 John 7; Did. 16:4; Hippolytus Comm. in Dan. 4.7.1; 4.16.1; 4.21.3; de Ant. 6)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 760.]

[33]Thus the NRSV rendering "by the signs" is erroneous translation.

[34]"The phrase ἐδόθη αὐτῷ, literally 'it was given to him,' though more idiomatically translated 'he was permitted,' is another occurrence of the passivum divinum or 'divine passive,' used as a circumlocution for the name of God (see Comment on 9:3b)."

The likelihood is that they followed a similar path to the lightening miracle and focused on the sensational expression of power rather than the meeting of human needs. This clearly was the dominant orientation of supposed miracles that were done commonly in the Greco-Roman cultural world of that time.

Most importantly this deception using miracles had but one objective: λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν, telling those dwelling upon the earth to make an image to the beast who has the wound of the sword and still lives. This participle phrase is tacked on to the verb πλανᾷ in an adverbial circumstantial function which defines the consequence of the deceiving action in πλανᾷ. John hasn't lost sight of the satanic plan laid out in vv. 4-7, and especially the two most important parts of that plan.[35] The best way and the simplest way to get the world to worship the beast is to build an image of him that functions as the center of such worship. This has tones of the actions of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, in Daniel 3, and John has evidently modeled his description here after that depiction in Daniel.[36] People in the first century world sought portraits of their deities for worship purposes. Thousands of such images were created for use in temples, in road side altars, and in shrines in private homes.[37] Many of these have been uncovered in ar-

Temple of Augustus and Livia, Vienne (modern France). Originally dedicated to Augustus and Roma. Augustus was deified on his death in 14 AD: his widow Livia was deified in 42 AD by Claudius.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 760.]

[35]**1) To be worshiped by people on earth:** 4 καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

2) To be able to use arrogant and blasphemous speeches to impress and deceive people on the earth: 5 Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. 6 καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

[36]"The author has clearly modeled vv 14–15 on Dan 3:4, where Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon set up a golden image and ordered that all peoples, nations, and languages worship the image on pain of death. While nothing in Daniel suggests that the golden image represented the king, Hippolytus suggested that Nebuchadrezzar made this golden image of himself so that he might be worshiped by everyone as God (Comm. in Dan. 3.4). According to the version of the eschatological-antagonist myth found in Asc. Isa. 4:1–13 (part of the extensive Christian interpolation of 3:13–4:22 in an otherwise Jewish document), Beliar incarnate will set up images of himself in every city (4:11). Portraits were absolutely essential for the ruler cults of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and thousands of portraits, busts, and statues were produced for ruler-cult shrines." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 761.]

[37]"Two terms that can be translated 'statue' were used by the Greeks, ἄγαλμα and εἰκών (Isocrates Evagoras 57). Some scholars still reflect the older view that an ἄγαλμα (like the Latin term *simi-lacrum*) referred to a '(cult) statue,' i.e., the main statue of the deity

in a temple, while an εἰκών (like the Latin imago) referred to an 'image,' not used in connection with cultic worship (see Nock, Essays 1:204). F. W. Walbank (CAH 7/1:87–88), however, notes that the distinction between the two words was not always maintained. L. Robert proposed that an εἰκών was a representation of a human being, such as a living emperor or a local official, while an ἄγαλμα was a representation (normally a statue) of a god or a deified emperor. This distinction, borne out by the Latin equivalents *imago* (= εἰκών) and *simulacrum* (= ἄγαλμα) appears in Pliny Ep. 10.96.5–6: Pliny ordered Christians to make 'offerings of wine and incense to your [i.e., 'Trajan's'] statue [*imagini tuae*] (which I had ordered to be brought into court for this purpose along with the images [*simulacris*] of the gods).' However, in Tacitus *Hist.* 5.5 and Suetonius *Div. Iul.* 88, the term *similacrum* is used of a statue of Julius Caesar (see Schowalter, Emperor, 5 n. 22). According to Price (Rituals, 178), the difference between an εἰκών and an ἄγαλμα was primarily one of location. Images placed in temples were generally called ἀγάλματα and were not limited to deities or deified emperors but could also be representations of private citizens who did not receive a public cult (a point confirmed by Koonce, AJP 109 [1988] 109). Price emphasizes that both ἀγάλματα and εἰκόνες could receive cultic worship (Rituals, 78). According to Mart. Apollonius 7, Perennis the proconsul ordered Apollonius to sacrifice 'to the gods and to the image [εἰκόνι] of the emperor Commodus' (Commodus, A.D. 180–92, was the reigning emperor). In Mart. Pionius 5.2, the protagonist says, 'we do not worship your gods, nor will we adore the golden statue [τῇ εἰκόνι τῇ χρυσῇ]' (the latter is

chaeological investigation and are located in museums scattered across southern Europe today. The people's insistence on worshiping something visible rather than invisible presented a great challenge to Christianity,[38] and to which it surrendered by the end of the second century AD.

Again John mentions the 'mortal wound' of the first beast. This specifies the first beast clearly. The first mention of this came in v. 3 as καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη, and one of his heads was like having been slaughtered to death, and the wound of his death had been healed. This is repeated in v. 12 somewhat differently as οὗ ἐθεραπεύθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, regarding whom the wound of his death had been healed. Now in v. 14 it is stated as ὃς ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης καὶ ἔζησεν, who has the wound of the sword and lived. The new aspects of the reference are τῆς μαχαίρης, the sword, as the source of the wound. Also ἔζησεν, he lived, replaces ἐθεραπεύθη, it has been healed, in the first two references. The mentioning of the sword using μάχαιρα may possibly allude to Nero's committing suicide with a dagger shortly after the Senate removed him from power as emperor in 68 AD. If so then ἔζησεν would best be translated as an ingressive aorist function meaning he came to life. This would clearly be an allusion to the *Nero redivivus* myth in wide circulation by the end of the first century.[39] This

is the most likely conclusion that the initial hearers of this passage would have come to.

4) Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ [ἵνα] ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν. and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Here John describes a rather amazing phenomenon: the image of the first beast is made to speak. In an interesting phraseology John describes this first as ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι, it was given to him to give... The casting of the expression in this 'divine passive' suggests that God allowed the 2nd beast to give breath to the image of the first beast. The fuller expression δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, to give breath to the image of the beast, the ancient world of magic where animation of statues was an important means of securing oracles.[40] This idea of a image made of stone etc. could

an allusion to the golden statue of Nebuchadrezzar in Dan 3). In Mart. Dasius 7, Christians were asked to 'venerate the statues [τοῖς εἰκόσι] of our lords the emperors.' Koonce (AJP 109 [1988] 109–10) argues on the basis of a recently published inscription from the area of Thessaloniki, dated A.D. 1, that ἀγάλματα could be placed in conspicuous parts of an agora, i.e., in a nonsacral setting (a fact already known from Isocrates Evagoras 57). The mention of the εἰκών, 'image,' of the beast in Rev 13:14, therefore, refers to the fashioning of a cult image in honor of the emperor. On images in the imperial cult, see Cuss, Imperial Cult, 104–12."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 761–762.]

[38]Christianity's heritage of Judaism gave to it the same abhorrence of statues and images which regarded them as forbidden idols:

The general aniconic stance of ancient Judaism is well known; see P. Prigent, Le Judaïsme et l'image (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990). In the OT Jews were encouraged to destroy idols (Exod 32:20; 34:13; Deut 7:5; 12:3; Judg 6:25–26; 2 Kgs 10:26–27; 23:6, 11–15, 20; see also 1 Macc 5:68; 13:47–48; Jos. Ag. Ap. 2.75), while the aniconic stance in rabbinic Judaism avoided violence but utilized the strategy of disregarding or nullifying the sacred status of pagan idols (Blidstein, PAAJR 42–43 [1973–74] 1–44). Proscriptions against imperial images were particularly important in Palestinian Judaism; see Urbach, IEJ 9 (1959) 149ff., 229ff.

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 762.]

[39]"This is a relative clause used to identify the θηρίον, 'beast,' with the event narrated cryptically in v 3a and repeated in v 12 with

additional details: i.e., the wound was inflicted by a sword. The precise meaning of this detail is unknown, though historically it is true that Nero killed himself with a dagger (Suetonius Nero 49). For a similar relative clause, see v 12b. Like the relative clause in v 12, this one also appears to alter the event described in v 3, the mortal wounding of one of the seven heads of the beast (leaving six heads alive, whereas here the wound was suffered by the beast itself), and looks like an interpolation (J. Weiss, Offenbarung, 33–34), which functions analeptically; i.e., it refers back to the beast from the sea, linking this vision with that one." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 762.]

[40]"This reflects the world of ancient magic in which the animation of images of the gods was an important means for securing oracles. The general Greek view was that images of the gods were not the actual gods themselves but only reminiscent of them (Cicero De nat. deor. 2.17; Dio Chrysostom Or. 12.60–61; Origen Contra Celsum 7.62). According to Heraclitus, people who approach lifeless things as gods act like a man who holds conversations with houses; they have no idea of the nature of gods or heroes (H. Diels and W. Kranz, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, 6th ed. [Zürich; Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1951] 1:151–52 [Herakleitos, frag. B5]). Plato reflects this view: 'we set up statues as images, and we believe that when we worship these, lifeless though they be [ἀψύχους], the living gods [τοὺς ἐμψύχους] beyond feel great good-will towards us and gratitude' (Laws 11.931A; LCL tr.). While ceremonies were used to consecrate cult images (Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ant. Rom. 8.56.2; Minucius Felix Octavius 23; the term for dedication is often ἱδρύειν; see Dio Chrysostom Or. 12.84), there is no evidence that the ancient Greeks used magical rituals for the purpose of giving life to such images (E. Bevan, Holy Images: An Inquiry into Idolatry and Image-Worship in Ancient Paganism and in Christianity [London: Allen & Unwin, 1940] 32; Burkert, Greek Religion, 91). The popular view in the Hellenistic and Roman world, however, was that the gods inhabited their statues (Plutarch De Iside et Osiride 379C–D; MacMullen, Paganism, 59–60).

"There were many reports in the ancient world of statues turning (Dio Cassius 41.61; 54.7), sweating (Cicero, De div. 1.43.98;

Plutarch Cor. 38.1; Anton. 60), weeping (Augustine Civ. dei 3.11), or speaking (Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ant. Rom. 8.56.2); several similar stories are collected in Plutarch De pyth. orac. 397E–398B; see C. Clarc, Les théories relatives au Culte des Images chez les auteurs grecs du iime siècle aprés J.-C. (Paris: Fontemoing, 1915) 45–49, and O. Weinreich, Antike Heilungswunder (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1909) 146. This popular view has links with the doctrine of ἔμψυχα ἀγάλματα, 'animate images,' which was held by some Neoplatonists (such as Porphyry and Iambichus) and which is reflected in some of the Hermetic literature. Magical rituals for achieving animation are preserved in the magical papyri (see PGM XII.14–95; Hopfner, *Offenbarungszauber* 2:210–18). Christians such as Minucius Felix were convinced that unclean spirits concealed themselves inside cult images and were able to give oracles (Octavius 27). Much earlier, Babylonians had rituals intended to give life to statues of the gods (A. L. Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964] 186). In ancient Egypt, beginning at an even earlier period, statues of the gods were vitalized through a ceremony of 'opening the mouth' (Morenz, Egyptian Religion, 155–56; E. Otto, Das altägyptische Mundöffnungsritual [Wiesbaden, 1960]). Magical animation rituals were also performed on mummies (E. A. W. Budge, Egyptian Magic [New York: Dover, 1971] 201–3). The magical rituals for animating images of the gods in Egypt probably influenced that special branch of magic called theurgy, connected with Julian the Theurgist (the putative author of the Chaldean Oracles; see R. Majercik, The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary [Leiden: Brill, 1989] 1–5).

"Theurgists developed a special complex of rituals called τελεστική (also called ἡ θεουργικὴ τέχνη by Iamblichus De myst. 5.23), which was primarily concerned with the consecration and animation of statues in order to receive oracles from them (Proclus In Tim. 3.6.13; Asclepius 3.37; see H. Lewy, Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978] 495–96; E. R. Dodds, "Theurgy," Appendix II in *The Greeks and the Irrational* [Berkeley: University of California, 1951] 291–95). τελεστική apparently involved placing a selection of σύμβολα (various materia magica such as stones, herbs, animals, and scents) within the cavity of a statue for the purpose of establishing a sympathetic relationship with the god (Iamblichus De myst. 5.23; Asclepius 3.38; Chaldaean Oracles frag. 224). Images of the gods could thus be animated by placing those material elements that had a 'sympathetic' connection with the deity inside the image, and with the prompting of a consecration ritual, the divinity could be persuaded to appear and answer oracular inquiries put to him or her by the theurgist (see Majercik, Chaldean Oracles, 27). This procedure is reflected in the Hermetic treatise Asclepius 3.38 (tr. W. Scott, Hermetica 1:361):

> And these gods who are called "terrestrial," Trismegistus, by what means are they induced to take up their abode among us? They are induced, Asclepius, by means of herbs and stones and scents which have in them something divine.

"The doctrine of ἔμψυχα ἀγάλματα is also found in Asclepius 3.23B, 'But the gods whose shapes are fashioned by mankind are made of both substances, that is, of the divine substance, which is purer and far nobler, and the substance which is lower than man, namely, the material of which they are wrought' (tr. W. Scott, Hermetica 1:339). When Asclepius doubts that Trismegistus is referring to statues, the god replies (3.24a; W. Scott, Hermetica 1:339–41):

> I mean statues, but statues living and conscious, filled with the breath of life [statuas animatas sensu et spiritu plenas], and doing

actually come to life and speak was enormously commonplace in popular belief in the first century Roman world. Thus to John's initial readers such a depiction would seem normal and even expected.

The objective of this 'animation' of the image is stated as ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ποιήσῃ [ἵνα] ὅσοι ἐὰν μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου ἀποκτανθῶσιν, in order that the image of the beast might both speak and might kill as many as do not worship the image of the beast. The very tangled grammar of the Greek here underscores two points. First, the speaking of the image would provide religious oracles to inform the people worshiping it.[41] Although fraud was present in

> many mighty works; statues which have foreknowledge, and predict future events by the drawing of lots, and by prophetic inspiration, and by dreams and in many other ways; statues which inflict diseases and heal them, dispensing sorrow and joy according to men's deserts.

"The motif of statues coming to life occurs in Greek mythology; Ovid, for example, tells the story of Pygmalion, whose love turned an ivory statue named Galatea into a living woman (Metamorphoses 10.243–97)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 762–764.]

[41]"For the ancients, a statue that speaks is a statue that gives oracles. The Cynic philosopher Oenomaeus of Gadara (fl. A.D. 120), skeptical of oracles, wrote a lost work entitled Γοήτων φώρα, "On the Detection of Charlatans," preserved in fragmentary quotations in Eusebius, who summarizes his views (Praep. evang. 5.21.213c; Eusebius, Preparation for the Gospel, tr. E. H. Gifford [Oxford: Clarendon, 1903]):

> For he [Oenomaus] will not admit that the oracles which are admired among all the Greeks proceed from a daemon, much less from a god, but says that they are frauds and tricks of human imposters, cunningly contrived to deceive the multitude.

"Alexander of Abonuteichos was presented by Lucian (hardly an objective reporter) as a charlatan who constructed a serpentine image representing Glaucon-Asklepios, complete with a movable mouth and concealed speaking tubes for giving oracles (Alex. 12–26). Similarly, Hippolytus describes a 'talking skull' rigged up by combining a human skull with a windpipe of a crane to function as a speaking tube (Ref. 4.41). Other reports also mention talking statues (Suetonius Gaius 57.1; Ps.-Lucian De Syria Dea 10). According to Athenagoras (Legatio 26.3–4), statues of Nerullinus in Tralles and Peregrinus Proteus at Parium reportedly gave oracles (though whether such oracles were based on the interpretation of the 'behavior' of the statues, such as movement, sweating, etc., or were thought to be communicated in human language is not mentioned; the former is more probable than the latter); see Nilsson, GGR 2:525. There is no evidence that imperial cult images were believed to actually give oracles, however. A close parallel to Rev 13:15 is found in the *Oracle of Hystaspes* (Lactantius Div. Inst. 7.17.5; tr. McDonald, Lactantius, 518): 'He [a king from Syria] will order fire to descend from heaven, and the sun to stand still in its course and a statue to speak [imaginem loqui].' Plutarch reports that when a certain statue was set up in a temple, it spoke twice (Coriolanus 37.3). Plutarch, however, ever the rationalist, thought that articular speech from a lifeless object was impossible (Coriolanus 38.2). The third wonder, making a statue speak, was part of

'rigging' many statues of deities to 'talk' etc., John gives no signal in his depiction of any fraud present here. Much more likely for him this was a real phenomonon produced by Satan through one of his demons.

The second objective stated here turns to the third objective in the scheme of the first beast and Satan in vv. 4-7.[42] In John's 'round about way' of stating this in the second part of the ἵνα clause, he stresses that the 'oracle' of the image to the worshipers was to execute every person who would not worship the image. The image orders the worshipers to kill all who refuse to worship it.

In the assumption that the first implication of this text is in regard to emperor worship in the first century, the historical question arises as to what was implied in μὴ προσκυνήσωσιν? This historical evidence points toward offering sacrifices to the emperor in the appropriate temple before his image.[43] Most likely the state-

ment here should not be interpreted to demand exclusive worship only to the emperor. Such was clearly not the pattern in the highly polytheistic world of the first century. Quite informative is the letter from Pliny the Younger (61 - 113 AD), a Roman imperial magistrate in Asia, written to the emperor Trajan (his reign: 98-117 AD) who followed Domitian as emperor:[44]

> Those who denied they were, or had ever been, Christians, *who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered adoration, with wine and frankincense, to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for that purpose, together with those of the Gods, and who finally cursed Christ*—none of which acts, it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing—these I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by that informer at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion but they had quitted it, some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, and cursed Christ.
>
> They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses: but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition.

The demands were loyalty to the emperor were expressed in offering sacrifices to him as a god. This was

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the repertoire of ancient magicians.

"Religious fraud was not unknown in the ancient world. Scherrer (JBL 103 [1984] 601–10) has argued that 'special effects equipment' were used to produce speaking and moving statues as well as simulated thunder and lightning in the imperial cult. Athenaeus reports a moving image (Deipn. 5.198F). Simon Magus reportedly tells Peter statuas *moveri feci, animavi exanima*, 'I made statues move; I gave breath to inanimate objects' (Ps.-Clem. Recog. 3.47.2; cf. Ps.-Clem. Hom. 2.32). Theophilus Ad Autolycum 1.8, speaking to pagans, observes 'you believe that statues [ἀγάλματα] made by men are gods and work miracles.' According to Philostratus, Vita Apoll. 1.27, a satrap in charge of the gates of Babylon required that everyone who entered the city first worship a golden image (χρυσῆν εἰκόνα) of the king, though this requirement was not made of emissaries from the Roman emperor, and Apollonius himself also refused to perform this ritual (1.28)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 764.]

[42]**3) To make war against the people of God on earth:** 7a καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς,

[43]"According to some scholars, allegiance to Rome meant the worship of Caesar (Syme, Tacitus 2:469). Yet the primary issue reflected in the sources is not simply sacrificing to the emperor (strictly speaking the living emperor was not a *divus*, 'god,' until he was officially enrolled with the gods after his death by an act of the Senate, though two emperors, Gaius and Domitian, apparently claimed to be gods during their lifetime; see Comment on 4:11) but sacrificing to the gods (Pliny Ep. 10.97.1; Acts Carpus [Greek Rec.] 4; Mart. Fruct. 2.2; Mart. Justin 5.8). Yet toward the end of the second century A.D. Tertullian observed that the twin charges against Christians were that they did not worship the gods and they did not sacrifice on behalf of the emperors (*pro imperatoribus*; Apol. 10.1). The problem is understanding what is involved in the term προσκυνεῖν, 'worship.' Did this involve compulsory sacrificing to the emperor along with the other gods? In Pliny Ep. 10.96.5 (LCL tr.), the sincerity of apostate Christians was tested only by requiring that they sacrifice to the gods:

> Among these [i.e., those denounced as Christians] I considered that I should dismiss any who denied that they were or ever had been Christians when they had repeated after me a formula of invocation to the gods and had made offerings of wine and incense to

your statue (which I had ordered to be brought into court for this purpose along with the images of the gods), and furthermore had reviled the name of Christ: none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian can be induced to do.

"The execution of Christians or Jews in connection with their rejection of the eschatological antagonist is reflected in Apoc. Pet. 2, where it is said that when the deceiver (who is not the Christ) is rejected, he will kill many with the sword."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 765.]

[44]*Pliny, Letters*, Vols. 1 & 2, ed. T. E. Page et al., trans. William Melmoth, vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (London; New York: William Heinemann; The Macmillan Co., 1931), 403–405. .

the heart of the Roman demand.

5) 16 καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχούς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν 17 καὶ ἵνα μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ. 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

Here the true nature of both beasts comes to the forefront: the exercising of absolute control over the people of the earth. In this they implement the fourth objective in their plan laid out in vv. 4-7.[45] The coercion toward worshiping the beast by every person comes out of economic pressure put on the people.

Once more the verb ποιεῖ is used to stress action by the second beast, and coercive action at that. People did not voluntarily choose to set up this ID mark.

The direct object which identifies those being forced to set up this mark is given in one of the most sociologically inclusive listings found in the NT:

πάντας,
  τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους,
  καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχούς,
  καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους,
everyone,
  the small and the great,
  and the rich and the poor,
  and the free and the slaves.[46]

[45]**4) To exercise authority over all humanity in order to compel worship of the beast:** 7b καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. 8 καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

[46]"The first term, πάντας, 'all,' is comprehensive; then the following terms describe in various ways the social polarities that make up the 'all.' These antithetical terms (the rhetorical term is *divisio* or *merismus*, i.e., dividing a whole into its parts) constitute a figure of speech used to express the notion of totality (see P. Boccaccio, '*I termini contrari come espressione della totalità in ebraico*,' Bib. 33 [1952] 173–90; A. M. Honeyman, "Merismus in Biblical Hebrew," JBL 71 [1952] 11–18). The use of the stereotyped expression 'insignificant and important,' literally 'small and great,' occurs four times elsewhere in Revelation (11:18; 19:5, 18; 20:12) and often appears to be a redactional element used to unify the composition; in 19:18 it is accompanied by an analogous antithetical pair, 'free and slave,' as here in 13:16. A similar, but much larger, inclusive list occurs in Rev 19:18 (see Comment there). The phrase 'the least and the greatest' as an idiom connoting social inclusivity occurs with some frequency in the OT and early Jewish literature (Gen 19:11; Deut 1:17; 1 Kgs 22:31; 2 Kgs 23:2; 25:26; 1 Chr 12:14; 25:8; 26:13; 2 Chr 18:30; 34:30; Job 3:19; Wis 6:7; Jdt 13:4, 13; Jer 6:13; 31:34[LXX 38:34]; 1 Macc 5:45) as well as in the NT (Acts 8:10; 26:22; Heb 8:11 [quoting Jer 38:34]). Used in this way the phrase "small and great" is an idiom meaning the

Rev. 19:18 is somewhat more inclusive with its listing: ἵνα φάγητε σάρκας βασιλέων καὶ σάρκας χιλιάρχων καὶ σάρκας ἰσχυρῶν καὶ σάρκας ἵππων καὶ τῶν καθημένων ἐπ' αὐτῶν καὶ σάρκας πάντων ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων καὶ μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders—flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great.

Thus included in this forced registration process is absolutely everyone in the world of John, which means the Mediterranean world of the Roman empire.

The intention behind this forced action is stated in twin ἵνα clauses: **ἵνα** δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν 17 **καὶ ἵνα** μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number

totality of people of all ages or all stations in life, found in both Semitic and Greek literature.

"A specifically Semitic idiom is לֹוׇדָג־דַעַו ןֹטׇקִּמ *miqqāṭōn wĕˑad gādôl*, "from small to great" (Gen 19:11), which occurs more than thirty times in the OT (TDOT 2:398–400), though there are also Greek parallels (e.g., Ign. [long rec.] Ad Philippenses 15.1, ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου; see also Ad Antiochenos 12.3; Ad Hieronem 8.2). The more typical Greek form of this idiom is μικρῷ τε καὶ μεγάλῳ, 'to both small and great' (Acts 26:22). The phrase 'small and great' is also applied to minor and major things (2 Chr 36:18; Amos 8:5; 2 Macc 5:20; 1 Esdr 1:54; Sir 5:15; 29:23; Plutarch Pericles 17.1; Pompey 57.1; Quaest. conv. 730A; Epictetus 2.19.29; 2.23.28; Ign. [long rec.] Phld. 6.9). It also occurs in the magical papyri in formulaic contexts in which the practitioner wishes to be inclusive: PGM 21.21, πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, μικροὺς καὶ μεγάλους, 'for all people, small and great,' an example of merismus. In PGM XXXV.17–19 the magician demands favor, influence, victory, and strength 'before everyone, small men and great [ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, ἀνδρῶν μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων], as well as gladiators, soldiers, civilians, women, girls, boys, and everybody [καὶ πάντων].' 'Small and great' as groups or classes at the opposite end of the social pyramid are also referred to in Rev 11:18; 20:12 (see Wis 6:7; Jonah 3:5; Jer 6:13). PGM XII.49 refers to those whom the magical practitioner desires power over: 'men or women, small or great.' Similarly, PGM XV.18 refers to spirits the magician wants under his control: 'whether male or female, small or great.' In a magical procedure from the Sepher ha-Razim 1.135–40 (tr. Morgan, 34) we find the same inclusive language: 'You angels who go around and circulate in the world, bring around (to me) all the citizens of this city, great and small, old and young, lowly and distinguished.' In a famous inscription describing the foundation and regulations of a mystery cult published most recently by Sokolowski (Lois, 53–58, no. 20), the phrase 'men and women, free persons and slaves' occurs three times (lines 5–6, 15–16, 53–54) of those who could have access to the cult (i.e., everyone). The term μικροί, literally 'small ones,' is a designation for people with little power or influence and is sometimes a term for disciples of Jesus (Matt 10:42; 18:6 = Mark 9:42 = Luke 17:2; Matt 18:10)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 765–766.]

of its name.

The branding of individuals is linked closely with worshiping the beast also in 14:11; 15:2; 19:20; 20:4. The buying and selling aspect is, however, only mentioned here.[47] The second beast literally δῶσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα, he might give them a mark. In v. 17, the χάραγμα is identified as τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, the name of the beast or the number of his name. This stands in contrast to τὴν σφραγῖδα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων, the seal of God upon their foreheads (9:4; cf. also 7:3), which marks on the people of God on the earth.[48] The appearance of both τὴν σφραγῖδα and τὸ χάραγμα would be virtually the same. They were a tattooed mark on the body of the individual.[49] Such was commonplace in the ancient world to identify the owner of slaves. The difference is in the hugely different meaning of each mark. The τὴν σφραγῖδα τοῦ θεοῦ, seal of God, protects believers from the divine punishments to be poured out upon evil people on the earth (7:3; 9:4). But τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, the mark of his name (14:11), identifies individuals committed to worshiping the beast.[50] Their ultimate fate in eternal damnation is spelled out in detail in 14:9-11. But in the moment they seem to be having things go their way.

The option of having the brand mark either on the forehead or the right hand is presented to those worshipers of the beast: χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν. This is mentioned three times in Revelation at 13:16; 14:9; 20:4.

What was this mark? John saws directly in v. 17 that it is τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, the name of the beast or the number of his name. Then in v. 18 he applies this to his initial readers to the effect that at the time of the writing of Revelation the number of the beast's name was ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, six hundred sixty six, which in the shortened form using the
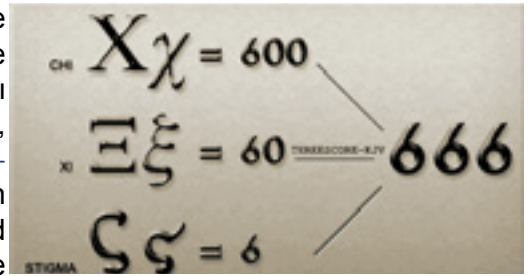
alphabet letters would be either ΧΞΣ or χξς. Most later minuscule manuscript copies of this text use the alphabetical signs χξς rather than write out the full number. Note that one small change -- χξς into χις -- changes the number from 666 to 616, which frequently shows up in the manuscript copies as an alternative reading. Both of which, either χξς through Greek or χις through Latin, were often seen by the church fathers to refer to the 'resurrected' Nero.[51] See below on how this was

[47]"The two motifs of the brand and the worship of the beast are connected not only here in vv 15–16 but also in 14:11; 15:2; 19:20; 20:4, though the prohibition of buying and selling occurs only here. The reception of the brand appears to be a *private* act of piety (or impiety), while the worship of the beast is a *public* action (J. Weiss, Offenbarung, 18). The only other place in Revelation where the possibility of having a brand on both the right hand and forehead occurs in 14:9. This same combination occurs in the Coptic Apoc. El. 2.7–8, which is probably dependent on Revelation (tr. Pietersma-Comstock, Apocalypse of Elijah): 'I will write my name upon their foreheads and set a seal on their right hands'." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 766–767.]

[48]"The term χάραγμα occurs seven times in Revelation, always of the brand indicating loyalty to the beast (13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). Three times this brand is referred to as located on either the forehead or the right hand (13:16; 14:9; 20:4). Christians, on the other hand, are spoken of as having the σφραγίς, 'seal,' of God on their foreheads (7:4; 9:4). This 'seal' is spoken of in 7:2 as in the possession of an angel, who then proceeds to 'seal' 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel (7:4[2x], 5, 8). There can be little doubt that this brand is a parody of the seal of God that is placed on the foreheads of his servants (7:3; 9:4)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 768.]

[49]"χάραγμα is an engraved, etched, branded, or inscribed 'mark' or 'sign.' Closest to the original sense of χαράσσω (→ line 17 f.; 418, 3ff.) is the earliest example in Soph. Phil., 267, where χάραγμα denotes the bite of a snake. Elsewhere the term means an "inscription," e.g., Anth. Graec., 7, 220, 2, or anything written διὰ χαραγμάτων εὖχο[μαι], P. Lond.,V, 1658, 8 (4th cent. A.D.), also the individual character τὰ χαράγματα χειρός, Anth. Graec., 9, 401, 3, and esp. the impressed, or imprinted "stamp," e.g., a brand to mark camels, Pap. Grenfell, II, 50a, 5 (142 B.C.),1 or often an official stamp on writings, e.g., attested copies of documents, Preisigke Sammelbuch, I, 5231, 11; 5275, 11 (both 11 A.D.); 5247, 34 (47 A.D.),2 esp. the imperial stamp to attest the validity of decrees etc.3 χάραγμα (→ 418, 17 f.) can also mean the impress on coins, e.g., in Plut. Ages., 15 (I, 604c); De Lysandro, 16 (I, 442b); Apophth. Lac. Agesilaus, 40 (II, 211b) etc.; P. Oxy., I, 144, 6 (580 A.D.). Then it can mean "money" in gen.: ἦν μὲν γὰρ τὸ χάραγμα φέρῃς, φίλος· οὔτε θυρωρὸς ἐν ποσὶν οὔτε κύων· ἐν προθύροις δέδεται, Anth. Graec., 5, 30, 3 f." [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of* *the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 416.]

[50]"There is a striking parallel to this verse in Lactantius Div. Inst. 7.17.7 (tr. McDonald, Lactantius, 518): 'Those who believe and come to him will be branded by him as though cattle [*signabuntur ab eo tamquam pecudes*]; those who reject his mark will either flee into the mountains, or they will be seized and killed by well-contrived tortures.' According to 3 Macc 2:28–29, Ptolemy IV Philopater (221–204 B.C.) inaugurated a program of persecution against Egyptian Jews in which he required them to enroll in a census and to be branded [χαράσσεσθαι] with the ivy leaf of Dionysus; those who did not cooperate were executed (it is likely that Ptolemy IV, who was particularly devoted to Dionysus, himself sported an ivy-leaf brand; see M. Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Book of Maccabees* [New York: Ktav, 1953] 45)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 767.]

[51]"This gematria riddle was probably formulated with the name of a specific individual in mind, and many commentators have thought that this person must be Nero. The Aramaic trans-

calculated in John's time. Modern efforts to 'identify' the name behind the number reflect the full range of speculation, most of which is useless.

The name of the beast, symbolized through his number, marks out the individual as belonging to the beast in his loyalty and worship.

The second intention stated as a ἵνα clause in v. 17 -- both of which express intentions of ποιεῖ, the core verb of the sentence -- defines a major method of enforcement of the demand to worship the beast: economics: καὶ ἵνα μή τις δύνηται ἀγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, so that no one would be able to buy or sell unless he was one having the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name. It is difficult to trace in ancient history hardly any economic sanctions against Christians in the centuries of the Roman empire.[52] One

literation of 'Nero Caesar' from Greek is קסרא נרו *qsrʾ nrwn*, the final aleph producing the numerical total 667, and therefore an invalid solution (unless the final quiescent aleph is not counted, in which case the total would be 666; see Driver, "The Number of the Beast," 79). However, the normal Hebrew transliteration of 'Nero Caesar' is קיסר נרו *qysr nrwn*, but the numerical value of these letters is 676 (since the yod following the qoph has a numerical value of ten). If the name of 'Nero Caesar' is transliterated into Hebrew from the Greek to form קסר נרו, the numerical value is 666: נרו nrwn = 306 plus קסר qsr = 360, making 666 (ן = 50; ר = 200; ו = 6; ן = 50; ק = 100; ס = 60; ר = 200). This possibility appears to have been confirmed by the discovery of an Aramaic document at Wadi Murabbaʿat that transliterates the name and title of Nero as קסר נרו qsr nrwn, 'Neron Caesar,' from the Greek form of the name, with the combined numerical value of 666 (Benoit et al., Les grottes, 100–104; Hillers, BASOR 170 [1963] 65), and most scholars agree that this is the most likely solution. One possible origin for 616 as a variant of 666 in the MS tradition is the fact that the Latin form 'Nero Caesar' transliterated in Hebrew characters is spelled נרו קסר nrw qsr, the numerical equivalent of which is 616: נרו nrw = 256 plus qsr = 360 (ן = 50; ר = 200; ו = 6; ק = 100; ס = 60; ר = 200). On the association of Nero with the beast of Revelation, it is important to take account of the evidence from ancient writers that designate Nero as a θηρίον, 'beast' (Philostratus Vit. Apoll. 4.38; Sib. Or. 5.343; 8.157)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 770–771.]

[52]"The inability 'to buy and sell' apparently refers to the interdiction of basic and essential economic activity. Whether this passage refers to a real or imagined situation has been the subject of debate. Ramsay understood this passage to refer to an otherwise unknown formal or informal economic boycott against Christians (Ramsay, Letters, 105–8). Hemer suggests that this passage refers to an existing problem and proposes that Thyatira was the most likely place where the imperial cult was connected to the "pagan system" so that Christians who did not participate could face commercial ruin (Letters, 126–27). Hemer is presumably referring to the presence of many trade guilds in Thyatira (Letters, 108–9; the epigraphical evidence for the presence of various guilds is listed on p. 246 n. 10). He rightly emphasizes the religious basis of such guilds, a feature that is analyzed in great detail by Kraybill (Imperial Cult, 113–41). Several prominent features of guilds emerge:

should note that in Palestine Jewish opposition to the Gospel did utilize economic persecution, in contrast to the usual Roman practice. But such actions did not extend to Diaspora Judaism outside Palestine, as far as the evidence indicates.

The nearest practice that could be identified with this statement historically would be participation in the various trade guilds which usually had a religious cultic aspect that would make Christian participation difficult if not impossible. These guilds controlled the great majority of commerce in the Roman empire. In Asia, the city of Thyatira was especially known for its trade guilds during this period of history. It is thus no coincidence that the message of Christ to the church there (2:18-29) centers on the negative influence of a Jezebel like business woman leader in the church teaching a compromised gospel that would allow believers to fully participate in trade guilds in order to preserve their incomes.

C. The application of the vision, v. 18

18 Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

18 This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.

At this point John does the same thing literary that he did at the end of the depiction of the first beast in 13:9-10. The content is different, except for the application signal Ὧδέ ἐστιν... in both texts. By this he signals in more direct language what he has been describing in apocalyptic language. What he does in effect is to step out of his apocalyptic vision and make a comment that

(1) they were voluntary, private associations; (2) people from various strata of society could belong to the same guild (e.g., Roman citizens, resident foreigners, freedmen, slaves); (3) they were primarily social organizations not directly concerned with the business activities of their members; and (4) they generally had a cultic character, and many guilds in the imperial period gave some expression to the imperial cult. The guilds did not generally function as trade unions in the modern sense of the term, and they rarely if ever engaged in strikes or boycotts. Membership in the guilds, however, inevitably entailed participation in cultic ritual, which included eating the meat of sacrificial victims, a practice to which John was unalterably opposed (Charles, 1:69; Giesen [1997] 314–15). For the author, then, membership in the guilds was antithetical to faith in Christ (Yarbro Collins, Crisis and Catharsis, 124). It is possible that this economic function of the brand in v 17a was added, along with v 17b, by the author as a final redactional gloss (Flusser, "Hystaspes," 58). In general, Roman antipathy to the religious practices of various mystery cults, Judaism, and Christianity did not take the form of economic sanctions (Caird, 173)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 768.]

signals application of the vision to his initial readers.⁵³ Once more he does the same essential thing in 17:9 with ὧδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν, This calls for a mind that has wisdom. This is followed by an interpretive explanation of the previous segment of his apocalyptic vision.

The principle of needing divine σοφία for understanding comes out of Dan. 12:10, πειρασθῶσι καὶ ἁγιασθῶσι πολλοί, καὶ ἁμάρτωσιν οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί· καὶ οὐ μὴ διανοηθῶσι πάντες οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί, καὶ οἱ διανοούμενοι προσέξουσιν.† Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. Jesus' words about the abomination of desolation in Mark 13:14-23 are interrupted by Mark's own insertion of ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω, Let the reader understand, at the beginning. This principle of superior spiritual understanding being granted to God's committed people is relatively common inside the Bible.⁵⁴

To the one possessing spiritual wisdom John admonishes him with ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, let the one having understanding calculate the number of the beast. Thus his first century readers are encourage to 'add up' the number of the beast in order to determine his identity in their world.

What John does here is to encourage a specific use of what we label as gematria. Several types of this calculating method to determine the their symbolical significance existed in John's world.⁵⁵ This seems to

⁵³"This verse is an explanatory redactional addition by the author-editor to the vision narrated in 13:11–17, much like 13:9–10 is an explanatory addition to 13:1–8. The introductory phrase *Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν, "Here is wisdom." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 769.]

⁵⁴"*Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, 'Here is wisdom. Let the one with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is also a number referring to a person.' This verse is an explanatory redactional addition by the author-editor to the vision narrated in 13:11–17, much like 13:9–10 is an explanatory addition to 13:1–8. The introductory phrase Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν, 'Here is wisdom. The one with understanding,' has an extremely close parallel in 17:9: ὧδε ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν, 'This requires deep insight.' The phrase ἔχειν νοῦς means 'to have understanding' and is perhaps an allusion to Dan 12:10, 'None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand [LXX οἱ διανοούμενοι προσέξουσιν; Theod οἱ νοήμονες συνήσουσιν]' (the same passage is also alluded to in Rev 22:11). Similar appeals to the understanding of the readers are found in other apocalyptic or prophetic contexts.

"In Mark 13:14, after the mention of 'the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be,' the author inserts a parenthetic remark that calls attention to a new interpretation of Dan 11:31; 12:11: 'let the reader understand [ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω]' (see H. A. Guy, "Mark 13:14: ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω," ExpTim 65 [1953–54] 30). Similarly, in Barn. 4:4–6, the author quotes from Dan 7:24 and 7:7–8 (the ten horns and the little horn of the fourth beast) and then says 'You ought to understand [συνιέναι οὖν ὀφείλετε].' However, neither in Rev 13:18 nor in Rev 17:9 nor in the other parallels cited is there any explicit mention of the necessity for divinely aided insight into the meaning or meanings of the visions in question, as there is, for example, in the Joseph stories (Gen 40:8; 41:15–16) and the court tales of Daniel (1:17; 2:19, 30; 5:11–12; 8:15).

"In nonapocalyptic contexts, the saying 'The one who is able to receive this, let him receive it' concludes a group of sayings on marriage in Matt 19:12, and a possible allusion to this saying is found in Ign. Smyrn. 6:1, 'The one who receives, let him receive'." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 769.]

⁵⁵ "(1) Most interpreters have assumed that the number 666 in Rev 13:18 is a clear biblical example of gematria (a Hebrew loanword from the Greek term γεωμετρία, meaning 'manipulation with numbers'), a form of coded wordplay in which the letters of the alphabet are assigned numerical values based on their position in the alphabet (Forstner, Symbole, 29–63). The appropriate Greek term is ἰσόψηφος, 'equal in numerical value.' Rule 29 of the 32 Middot (i.e., hermeneutical 'rules' of the Haggadah) is gematria (for a translation of these Middot, see H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* [New York: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1931] 95–98). Possible examples of gematria are found both in the OT (G. R. Driver, "The Number of the Beast," 75–77) and in the NT (Driver, "The Number of the Beast," 77–78).

"There are two types of gematria: (a) Gematria as an exegetical method was based on the mysterious significance accorded to numbers in sacred or traditional texts. All or parts of a given word in a traditional text are converted into a significant number, or a particular number found in a traditional text is converted into its significant alphabetical equivalent, which explains the hidden or encoded meaning of the number. Seneca reported that a grammarian named Apion claimed that by the first two letters of the Iliad, MH (M = 40; H = 8), Homer indicated the total number of books into which the Iliad and Odyssey were divided, i.e., twenty-four books each or forty-eight altogether (Seneca Ep. 88.40–41; unfortunately for this ancient theory, the book divisions in the Homeric epics were not made by the author-editors but were probably made during the Hellenistic period). In rabbinic tradition, the number 318 for the servants of Abraham mentioned in Gen 14:14 was understood as a gematria for Eliezer, a servant of Abraham, since the sum of the numerical value of the consonants in his name is 318 (b. Ned. 32a). A related (competing?) early Christian example of this type of gematria as an exegetical method occurs in Barn. 9:8; the number 318 for the men circumcised by Abraham (combining Gen 17:23 with 14:14) is understood as a reference to the first two letters of the name Ἰησοῦς, "Jesus" (I = 10; H = 8) and to the cross in the shape of the Greek letter tau (T = 300).

"(b) In a second type of gematria, words or names independent of traditional texts are coded and transformed into riddles by converting them into numbers. Examples of such numerical riddles are found in Lucian Alex. 11 (a prophecy of Alexander of Abunoteichos); the Palatine Anthology 14.20, 105 (containing riddles based on the numerical values of letters); Sib. Or. 1.137–46 (a riddle on a name for God, which has not been solved); 1.324–30 (a Christian interpolation in which the number 888 stands for the Greek form of the name Ἰησοῦς: I = 10; H = 8; Σ = 200; O = 70; Y = 400; Σ = 200). Sib. Or. 5.1–51 (the latest section of Sib. Or. 5, probably written before A.D. 132) is a prophecy of world leaders from Alexander to Hadrian, including eleven emperors referred to by gematria, i.e., numbers representing the first initials of their names. Deissmann cited two graffiti from Pompeii that fall

into this category, both in Greek: 'I love her whose number is 545 [ΦΜΕ],' and 'The number of her honorable name is 45 (or 1035)' (Light, 276). In the later Sibylline Oracles (books 11 and 12 can be dated to about A.D. 235, book 13 to ca. A.D. 265, and book 14 was given final form by the seventh century A.D.), rulers, primarily Roman emperors, are referred to by numerals symbolizing their names (11.91) but more usually their initials (11.29–30, 92, 114, 189–90, 208, 256, 266; 12.39, 49–50, 68, 78, 96, 101, 121, 125, 144, 148, 189, 207, 246, 250, 258; 13.83–84; 14.21, 28, 44, 59–60, 79, 95, 106, 126, 137, 150, 163, 227, 248).

"The major problem of decipherment lies in the fact that many different words or names can have the same numerical value. Yet it is important to observe that in all the riddles cited above, a proper name is the answer to the riddle.

"A variation of this second type of gematria (proposed by M. Oberweis, ZNW 77 [1986] 226–41) consists in a number that is expressly formulated to be turned into its alphabetical equivalent. Since 666 cannot be written as a sensible Greek word because the alphabetic numeral for 6 is the archaic digamma (ₚ47 and 051 write the number with the alphabetic numerals χ = 600, ξ = 60, digamma = 6), Oberweis prefers Hebrew, in which all letters stand for adjectival numerals. He proposes that the Greek verb ψηφισάτω in 13:18 be translated 'write a number in numerals/letters,' and therefore he suggests that the alphabetical Hebrew equivalent of 666 is תרסו (a second-person masculine plural qal imperfect meaning 'you [masculine plural] should destroy'), a supposed allusion to Amos 6:11 also reflected in Rev 13:16. However, this Hebrew verb makes little sense in context since it is a second-person masculine plural.

"(2) 666 as a triangular number. Triangular numbers (known to Aristotle Meteorologica 1092b) are those that are the sum of a consecutive series of integers beginning with 1. Thus (according to Lohmeyer, 118–19), 666 is a triangular number of 36 (i.e., the sum of the integers 1 through 36 is 666), while 36 is itself the triangular number of 8 (i.e., the sum of the integers 1 through 8); in 17:11 the beast is specifically designated as "the eighth." A triangular number is understood to have the same symbolic significance as the last integer used to calculate it. However, the weakness of this view is that it is tautological: the number of the beast (666) is converted into another number (36) that represents the beast. Why should such a simplistic procedure require the wisdom and insight of the reader as 13:18a suggests (see Oberweis, ZNW 77 [1986] 227)? Bergh van Eysinga (ZNW 13 [1912] 293–306) has argued that the mention of the eighth king in Rev 17:11 underscores the importance of the number 8. The sum of the numbers from 1 through 8 is 36 (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 = 36). The significance of the number 36 becomes apparent since the sum of all the numbers from 1 through 36 is 666. However, this only reveals that the person whose number is 666 is identical with the eighth king of Rev 17:11, but it does not indicate the identity of that king (Peerbolte, Antichrist, 151).

"(3) 666 as a symbolic or apocalyptic number. Revelation contains many numbers that clearly have symbolic significance (e.g., 7, 12, 1,000, 12,000, 144,000) yet do not represent encoded words or names. Since 666 represents the only probable example of gematria in Revelation, it is possible that it should be interpreted more generally. A similar cryptogram for a divine name occurs in PGM II.128, 'you have given me as a gift the knowledge of your great name, of which the number [ψῆφος] is 9999.' Though this papyrus is written in Greek, the number 9999 is written not in numeral adjectives (as 666 is in Rev 13:18) but in alphabetical numbers and signs (theta = 9; sampi = 900; koppa = 90; theta prime =

take on the form of the commonly found gematria riddle in a distinctive Johannine version. Although John's first readers at the end of the first century evidently understood how John was setting up the riddle, subsequent interpreters since then have not been so wise and thus the guesses of the solution to the riddle cover the interpretive map.

In his explanatory statement following as the basis for his admonition John makes two points: ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, for the number is of a man, and his number is 666. From this explanation John's readers are assumed to have enough spiritual insight to figure out who this person is given these two explanatory notes.

First, what does John mean by ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν? The translation can legitimately go either 1) the number is of a man, or 2) the number is human.[56] The difference is between alluding to a specific person or to a generalized reference. If the latter then the calculating method may simply to back to θηρίον 9,000). Therefore, 9999 cannot be converted into a sensible Greek word since it must be written using two signs that are not part of the Greek alphabet. This reflects the so-called Chabrax formula found on magical papyri and gems (χαβραχ φνεσχηρ φιχρο γνυρω φωχω βωχ), which means 'the greatest name, whose number is 9999'; i.e., the letters of the Chabrax formula have the numerical sum of 9999 (Bonner, JES 16 [1930] 6–9; id., Magical Amulets, 141–42; id., "A Miscellany of Engraved Stones," Hesperia 23 [1954] 145). The Pythagorean tradition associated numbers with the gods, though nine was associated with strength and constraint because it held back other numbers in the decad and was called Okeanos, the boundary of earth, and Prometheus, because of its strength (P. Gorman, Pythagoras [London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1979] 151)."

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 771–773.

[56]"The phrase ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν, 'for it is also a number referring to a person,' is problematic, for ἀνθρώπου, 'person,' can be understood in at least two different ways: (1) ἀνθρώπου can be used in a generic sense (Mussies, Morphology, 81–82) so that the phrase ἀριθμὸς ἀνθρώπου can mean a number calculable according to human reckoning, not an unknowable divine number (cf. Rev 21:17), or the number only of a beast (Swete, 174–75). (2) ἀνθρώπου can be non-generic (Mussies, Morphology, 81–82) and refer to a specific individual, i.e., 'for it is the number of a [certain] person' (Bousset [1906] 370–71; Charles, 2:365; Prigent, 214). The translation suggests that the second view is the correct one. This appeal to the reader (with parallels in 13:9–10; 14:12; 17:9) indicates that the beast is not a future but rather a present figure whose identity was probably well known to the readers of the book. ἀνθρώπου may lack an article because it is modeled after the Hebrew construct state, which is always anarthrous. An important parallel is Rev 21:17, where we find the phrase μέτρον ἀνθρώπου ὅ ἐστιν ἀγγέλου, 'by human measurement, the same as angelic measurement,' where ἀνθρώπου is clearly used generically. Rev 21:17, and possibly 13:18, reflects the ancient view that there are two languages or systems operative in the cosmos, the divine and the human (see)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 769.]

since by conversion into Hebrew numeral equivalents the number of 666 is reached.[57] Yet the context here seems to favor a specific individual over a generalized reference. At this point, the name of Nero is one of the more likely calculations assuming the Nero redivivus myth lies in the background of John's thinking.[58] An interesting but complex solution to this riddle results in the name of Domitian.[59] The widely diverse interpreta-

tion began with the church fathers who came up with numerous conclusions.[60] And the speculation has continued unabated into our day!

John's second explanatory note provides part of the solution with καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, and his number is six hundred sixty six. Although most likely written out in full Greek word expression originally, this number is almost universally written in the abbreviated form in the later manuscript copies, either ΧΞΣ in the earlier uncial mss or χξς in the later minuscule mss. This is not surprising since all of the manuscripts adopted some form of 'short hand' in order to speed up the copying process. The point of John's second note is to provide his readers with a number starting point by which they could calculate backwards in order to get to the person's name. His distinctive touch in this riddle was that one had to go through Hebrew in order to arrive at the name in Greek.

One sidenote of importance. The masculine gender of the numbers ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ is due to Greek grammar rule requiring predicate adjectives to agree in gender with the noun they modify, which in this case is the masculine gender word ὁ ἀριθμὸς. Some have wrongly taken the masculine gender of the number to signify a man. This is completely false.

2. What does the text mean to us today?

From one of the most puzzling passages in all of Revelation, what can we learn?

First of all, dogmatism about interpreting the meaning of this second beast is completely out of place! John defines him in close association with the first beast and with Satan. He clearly hints that he can be associated historically with individuals who manifest unusual powers of evil in promoting the causes of even more powerful individuals. Both of these monsters from

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[57]"The phrase τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου, 'the number of the beast,' which we learn is also the number of a person, may refer to the fact that when the Greek word θηρίον, 'beast,' is transliterated into Hebrew תריו *trywn*, the numerical value of these letters is 666: ת = 400; ר = 200; י = 10; ו = 6; ן = 50 (Hadorn, 146; TDNT 1:463; Bauckham, "Nero and the Beast," 389)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 769.]

[58]"This gematria riddle was probably formulated with the name of a specific individual in mind, and many commentators have thought that this person must be Nero. The Aramaic transliteration of 'Nero Caesar' from Greek is קסרא נרו *qsr> nrwn,* the final aleph producing the numerical total 667, and therefore an invalid solution (unless the final quiescent aleph is not counted, in which case the total would be 666; see Driver, "The Number of the Beast," 79). However, the normal Hebrew transliteration of "Nero Caesar" is קיסר נרו *qysr nrwn*, but the numerical value of these letters is 676 (since the yod following the qoph has a numerical value of ten). If the name of 'Nero Caesar' is transliterated into Hebrew from the Greek to form קסר נרו, the numerical value is 666: נרו nrwn = 306 plus קסר qsr = 360, making 666 (ן = 50; ר = 200; ו = 6; נ = 50; ק = 100; ס = 60; ר = 200). This possibility appears to have been confirmed by the discovery of an Aramaic document at Wadi Murabbaʿat that transliterates the name and title of Nero as קסר נרו *qsr nrwn*, 'Neron Caesar,' from the Greek form of the name, with the combined numerical value of 666 (Benoit et al., Les grottes, 100–104; Hillers, BASOR 170 [1963] 65), and most scholars agree that this is the most likely solution. One possible origin for 616 as a variant of 666 in the MS tradition is the fact that the Latin form 'Nero Caesar' transliterated in Hebrew characters is spelled קסר נרו *nrw qsr*, the numerical equivalent of which is 616: נרו nrw = 256 plus קסר qsr = 360 (ן = 50; ר = 200; ו = 6; ק = 100; ס = 60; ר = 200). On the association of Nero with the beast of Revelation, it is important to take account of the evidence from ancient writers that designate Nero as a θηρίον, 'beast' (Philostratus Vit. Apoll. 4.38; Sib. Or. 5.343; 8.157)'." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 770–771.]

[59]"A more complex solution has been proposed by Stauffer ("666," 237–41), who argues that the Greek name of Domitian, ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟΣ (= 755), complete with his official titles, was ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΔΟΜΕΤΙΑΝΟΣ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟΣ, occasionally found abbreviated on coins as Α ΚΑΙ ΔΟΜΕΤ ΣΕΒ ΓΕ (= 666):

Αυτοκρατωρ = 1	=	1
ΚΑΙσαρ = 20 + 1 + 10	=	31
ΔΟΜΕΤιανος = 4 + 70 + 40 + 5 + 300 =		419
ΣΕΒαστος = 200 + 5 + 2	=	207
ΓΕρμανικος = 3 + 5	=	8
		_____
Total		666

[David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 771.]

[60]"The ancient Christian commentators speculated on the name that might fit this numerical code. The earliest attempt to solve the riddle of 666 in Rev 13:18 was that of Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. 5.30.3, followed by Hippolytus De ant. 50), who assumed that the name must be Greek and suggested three names for which the numerical values of the constituent letters total 666, Evanthas, Lateinos, and Teitan: ΕΥΑΝΘΑΣ (Ε = 5; Υ = 400; Α = 1; Ν = 50; Θ = 9; Α = 1; Σ = 200; total = 666), ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ (Λ = 30; Α = 1; Τ = 300; Ε = 5; Ι = 10; Ν = 50; Ο = 70; Σ = 200; total = 666), and ΤΕΙΤΑΝ (Τ = 300; Ε = 5; Ι = 10; Τ = 300; Α = 1; Ν = 50; total = 666). In Ps.-Hippolytus De consummatione mundi 28 (ed. H. Achelis, Schriften, 301), the unknown author suggests the name ΑΡΝΟΥΜΕ (Α = 1; Ρ = 100; Ν = 50; Ο = 70; Υ = 40; Μ = 400; Ε = 5; total = 666), which means 'deny me.' Victorinus also used the name 'Teitan' as an example of a name whose numerical values totaled 666 (Comm. in Apoc.; Haussleiter, Victorinus, 124), and he also suggests the names ΓΕΝΣΗΡΙΚΟΣ and ΑΝΤΕΜΟΣ, which similarly add up to 666 (Haussleiter, Victorinus, 125, 127)." [David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16,* vol. 52B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 770.]

the underworld function to carry out Satan's basic plan to get at God by attacking His people on earth. Thus they represent evil rulers and religious figures who oppose God and do so with unusually great power and determination.

One clear point made by God in this chapter is that the people of the world will jump at the chance to worship someone or something other than God. Their depraved nature pushes them toward loyalty to Satan and his cohorts. But also, these cohorts will not blink an eye in coercing this loyalty to Satan ether. The religious figure represented in the second beast will require religious devotion from the people of the world under threat of execution for refusal.

But the true people of God will never ever bow in submission to such threats. This, even though they face the likelihood of execution for their refusal. Economic hardships imposed on them will not alter their stance of refusal to worship the beast. They care not for their lives on earth, for they know that their name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and thus their eternal destiny is secure and settled. Martyrdom only brings them home sooner rather than later!

The subtle implication in John's depiction is that such evil figures as these two beasts will continue to arise in human history to the very end of time. And that the intensity and viciousness of these attacks on God's people will steadily increase as time passes.

This therefore lays upon us as believers the mandates of John's two application statements in vv. 9-10 and v. 18. We must accept this reality of difficult times ahead as the people of God. Also we must be spiritual wise in recognizing these evil leaders and responding to their demands with a determined commitment to Christ no matter what the price we have to pay. This we can do successfully in the knowledge that our Christ will stand with us through all the suffering, and should martyrdom become our fate, then He will be the first one to greet us in welcoming us into the eternal home God is preparing for us.

Therefore:

Ὧδέ ἐστιν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων (v. 10)

Ὧδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν (v. 18)