

# **The Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast**

## **Revelation Series #10**

### **Revelation 13-14**

**Introduction:** The year was 175 B.C. A man came to power in the Greek Empire. He reigned for 11 years. He was famous for two things. Number one, he almost took over Egypt. And number two, he brutally attacked, persecuted, terrorized, and murdered the Jews. He tried to eradicate Judaism from the land of Israel.

History records that this man was Antiochus IV. He came into the temple, that sacred place where the holiness of God was. He raided the temple of all its silver, gold, and bronze. Then he erected an altar to Zeus and sacrificed a pig on the altar. When the Jews responded in horror and rebelled against him, he had many of them killed. He sold many more into slavery.

He called himself Antiochus Epiphanes. Epiphany means "***the shining one***" (God Manifest). The Jews called him Antiochus Epimanes, "***the crazy one, the mad man.***" He was eventually defeated. He died from a disease.

Antiochus Epiphanes serves as a foreshadowing of a ruler that is going to come that is going to wreak havoc on the Jews and on the people of God. He has many names in Scripture. He's called "***the lawless one,***" "***the son of perdition,***" "***the man of sin.***" He's called "***the beast***" in the Book of the Revelation. But we know him best as the ***Antichrist.***

Last week we looked at "The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon." Today's message is entitled, "***The Antichrist and the Mark of the Beast.***" Some of you are thinking, "Ooh-we're finally getting to the good stuff."

Remember that the book of Revelation is not primarily intended for us to set dates, or match up current events with biblical prophecy, or guess who the Antichrist might be. Revelation is a letter written by John the Apostle to a group of churches around 95AD. The emphasis of his message is: The world is getting darker. Opposition to Christ and His church is getting stronger. But God is in control, Jesus is coming soon, in the end God wins. So, stand firm in your faith.

**That was the message they needed to hear back then, and it's exactly the message we need to hear today.**

Now, I want to say that if you are new to the church or listening today for the first time, and you've never heard any of this stuff before, keep an open mind, because the book of Revelation sometimes uses imagery and symbols to convey spiritual reality. Jesus often spoke in stories or parables.

Darrel Johnson is a Bible scholar who explained it like this: "Imagery has the power to go deeper than mere words. Imagery has the power to hook us deep inside. Images can quickly and effectively convey that which we struggle to put into words. Imagery goes beyond the intellect and through the emotions, grabbing hold of us at the deepest recesses of our being." In other words, because of the vivid images you're about to hear, you will probably remember what you heard today much more than if it was just a list of facts. That's just how the human mind works.

So, no: we are not people who think there's a literal dragon...but we believe there's a very real enemy. And this book exposes that enemy for who he is. And we need to hear about that.

The apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation, warned earlier in his first epistle by saying, "***Little children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming...***" (1 John 2:18a).

Today we are introduced to the devil's messiah, Satan's superman, the counterfeit Christ from hell.

So, go with me to Revelation 13, starting in verse 1.

***1The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2The beast I saw resembled a leopard but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 3One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. 4People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?"***

***5The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. 6It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. 8All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.***

***9Whoever has ears, let them hear. 10“If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.***

Let's talk about three things today: Who the Enemy Is, How the Enemy Works, and How to Resist the Enemy. Who the enemy is, what the enemy does, and how to resist him.

## **I. Who the Enemy Is**

Chapter 13 starts out by saying, ***“the dragon stood on the shore of the sea.”*** Last week we Id'd the dragon as Satan... ***“And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2The beast I saw resembled a leopard but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.***

So, whoever this beast is, he gets all his power from Satan. Which is a chilling thought. But the obvious question is, who does the beast represent? The first readers of this letter would have immediately been reminded of a very similar vision back in the book of Daniel, chapter 7.

There have been four world-wide empires who have ruled in the past. The first was the Babylonian empire, this is represented by the lion.

The second world-wide kingdom was the Persian kingdom. The third world-wide empire was the Grecian empire, represented by the leopard, no military general conquered his foe more quickly and swiftly than did Alexander the Great. The fourth and the last empire was the Roman empire.

Now the reason why the beast is described as a leopard and bear and lion is because he will combine all the powers, abilities and attributes of these past kingdoms and rulers. He will be as swift as a leopard. He will take over the world practically overnight. He will be as strong as a bear. No one will be able to stand before him. He will be sovereign as the lion who is the king of the jungle.

What does John mean when he says that the beast will come out of the sea? Once again, we must compare scripture with scripture to understand the symbolism here. Daniel linked beasts and the sea when he wrote, ***"I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other"*** (Daniel 7:2-3).

The four beasts Daniel saw are four Gentile empires-Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Revelation 17 helps us to understand both these nations' origins and the beast's. An angel who was explaining a vision to John said, ***Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages."*** (Revelation 17:15, NIV).

The sea in Daniel 7 and the waters in Revelation 17 are the same thing. They are Gentile nations from which will come the Antichrist.

So, we see that the Antichrist will rise out of the Gentile nations and will be given power by Satan, the dragon. He is symbolized as a beast due both to the unrighteousness of his character and the violence of his actions. The Antichrist will be the final in a succession of secular rulers spoken of by both Daniel and John, and his kingdom will be the last before Christ returns.

The fourth beast in Daniel is the Roman Empire. It was different from the others, and it is out of this empire that the horns arise. In some form or fashion, the power and influence of this Empire is going to be revived during the tribulation.

Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, ***"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."*** [NIV]

During the final three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, the Antichrist will turn from peacemaker to a peace-taker. He will set himself on the throne and demand to be worshipped. We then see that the Antichrist will:

### **1. Deceive sinners**

He will command the world's respect and he will demand the world's reverence. Don't be deceived by the fact that he is called a "beast." That refers to his character and his cruelty, but he is going to be smooth, suave, and charming.

### **2. Defile the savior**

***"And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months." (v.5)***

He blasphemes the name of God.

He also blasphemes God's holy place.

He blasphemes God's heavenly people.

Verse 6 says, ***"It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven."***

***He deceives sinner, defiles the savior...***

### **3. Destroy the saints**

***It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. (v,7)***

Verse 8 goes on to say, ***"All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world."***

For all those who thought that one beast was more than enough, the world is about to get double the trouble. Beginning in verse 11, John says, ***"11Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 12It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people."***

**14**Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.  
**15**The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.”

It isn't until chapter 16 that we are given the identity of this new beast. But I will tell you now that he is the **false prophet**.

This one is the sidekick of the first beast. He tells everybody to worship the first beast. So, this is a religious figure who supports the political leadership of the Antichrist. The false prophet will make an image of the Antichrist and convince people it's their spiritual duty to worship him. Now we see the rule of the Antichrist move away from autocracy to theocracy. Beast worship will not be a choice. It will be demanded as a one-world religion. Freedoms will be gone.

The false prophet will be the minister of propaganda in this one world government. He will be "pr" man for the devil's messiah. He will cause the entire world to worship the Antichrist. There are four reasons why he will be able to accomplish something no one else in history has ever been able to accomplish.

1. The manifestations of the beast
2. The might of the beast
3. The miracles of the beast
4. The mark of the beast

***We've just seen Who the Enemy is, and now let's look at...***

## **II. How the Enemy Works.**

Revelation 13:16-18 says, ***“It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.***

***18This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.” [NIV]***

If I had to describe the strategy of Satan, I would say that he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He is a liar and the father of lies. He uses fear and intimidation to exert tremendous pressure on people to conform to his system.

And in this passage, you see that pressure taking several forms.

1. **Cultural pressure.** Verse 3 says the whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast.

So, there's this sense that everyone around you is falling in line and looking at things in the same way. And if you don't, there must be something wrong with you. You're on the wrong side of history.

Ever since 2005, the same song has been played every New Year's Eve, just after the ball drops in Times Square. Imagine there's no heaven, It's easy if you try, No hell below us, Above us, only sky. Imagine all the people, Livin' for today. Oo-oo.

Here's the second verse: Imagine there's no countries, It isn't hard to do, Nothing to kill or die for, And no religion, too. Imagine all the people, Livin' life in peace...

That's a tiny example of our culture's pressure to conform. Have you felt that pressure-at your job? At school? Revelation tells us that pressure will increase as we get close to the end.

2. **Legal pressure.**

Verse 14 says they'll set up an image of the beast, and all who refuse to worship the image will be killed. So this pressure to conform will be backed up with legal consequence. If you don't fall in line, you'll be breaking the law. Right now, in Russia, there are thousands of people sitting in jail cells. Why? Because they dared to protest Putin's war in Ukraine. And in Russia, that's not allowed.

Revelation is warning us that the days are coming when that's going to be the reality not just in Russia, North Korea, or China but all over the world. There's a day coming when choosing to stay faithful to Jesus Christ and sharing your faith about the sanctity of human life, or sexuality, or other issues, will mean exposing yourself to legal trouble, and possibly death.

3. **Economic pressure.**

Verse 16 says the second beast forced everyone to receive a mark on their right hand or their forehead, and they couldn't buy or sell unless they had the mark.

And then it says that mark is the name of the beast or the number of its name, which is 666. Oh man, here we go. This brings us to the most infamous trio of numbers in the history of the world.

The word mark is synonymous with the word seal. An emperor would take a signet ring, dip it in hot wax and put his seal on a letter to authenticate its contents. So, this is the mark or the seal of the beast. Now remember this false prophet is the counterfeit counterpart of the holy spirit. Just as God's children are sealed by the spirit, the devil's children will be branded by the beast.

What does it mean that the number of the beast's name is 666? For years, people have tried to decode that number. There are systems where you assign a certain number to every letter of the alphabet, and so people have tried to spell out the names of certain leaders and add the numbers up to 666, to identify the Antichrist.

The number 666 is used throughout popular entertainment's horror genre. Goths paint it on their clothing. Satanists tattoo it on their knuckles, online preachers drop it into their sermon titles to boost their views.

Many have tried to speculate the meaning of this number. Theologically, we know what it means. Six is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day. He was told to work six days, and rest on the seventh.

Seven is the perfect number. Three is the divine number, the number of God. There is God the father, God the son, and God the holy spirit. But here are three sixes. In short here is man trying to be God. But man is an imperfect six and will never be a perfect seven even though he tries and tries again.

**I believe the number 666 represents the mark of life without God.**

The devil is going to turn this world into one giant concentration camp. Everyone is going to have the mark of the beast. Everyone will have the name and the number of the beast. It will either be on the forehead or the right hand. It may not necessarily be visible. You can go to an amusement park and get your hand stamped that is invisible to the naked eye, but visible under a certain kind of light.



Through this mark this beast is going to control the commerce and the currency of this world. ***"and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*** (v.17)

This satanic society will be a cashless community. We are rapidly moving today toward a cashless society where currency and coins are becoming increasingly obsolete. Banks are pushing more and more for a new form of money management known as efts "electronic funds transfer system."

This system allows the transferring of money electronically, allowing business transactions to take place without any checks or currency changing hands. In America alone, the annual check processing cost is \$10 million, cash causes even greater problems as theft, bribery, and crime sweep the world.

In Europe the world banking association has formulated an international monetary transfer system called SHIFT, which stands for the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication. The purpose of this conglomeration is to allow international business transactions to take place without the need of any cash or currency.

Paul Henry Spake was the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1957 to 1961. He was the former Premier of Belgium. He said this in a General Session of the United Nations in 1957: He said, "We do not want another committee. We have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass in which we are sinking. Send us such a man. And be he God or the devil, we will receive him." Say what??

We just want someone who has answers." And the Antichrist is going to come. He's going to have answers. There is coming a day when you won't have to worry about losing your credit card, you will be your own walking...talking credit card.

Technology is now becoming available whereby an invisible mark can be put on you by a laser beam invisible to the human eye, but visible under infra-red light.

You may think that what I am saying is futuristic fantasy. But in a news magazine used in American high schools pictured a group of young people with numbers on their foreheads. The photo was captioned, "the future."

The day is coming when if you are not marked you won't make it. There will be no selling, no buying, therefore no living, only dying.

Every human being will have to display the brand of the beast, or otherwise he can neither buy nor sell anything. It doesn't matter whether you are trying to close a billion-dollar deal or buy an ice cream. No seal, no sell! No brand, no buy! No mark, no money!

### Why anyone would take this mark.

1. Some people will take the mark because they are **convinced** this world would be better off under one government and one religion. Things would run much smoother under one commercial center. So, in a perverted fashion, their motto is: "united we stand, divided we fall."
2. Others will take the mark because they are **careless**. There are many who don't care one way or the other what the mark means just so long as they can continue to buy and sell; just so long as they can continue to eat, drink and be merry; just so long as they can continue to do business to increase their bank account and to enjoy the goods of this world.
3. But others will receive the mark because they are **cowardly**. They are not willing to stand against the beast and the rest of the world. They would rather go to hell with the majority than to be saved with the minority.

Now there is a tremendous difference between the beast and the lamb. The beast gives you a **number**, but the lamb gives you a **name**. **The real question is: when the roll is called up yonder will your name or your number be called?**

Okay, so what about the forehead or the right hand? I mean, is this a literal mark that people will put on their bodies, or, like some people think, a microchip that people will have embedded under their skin? It might be. That's possible. But it's also possible that again, this is symbolic. Remember what God told his people back in the Old Testament? He said my laws **"are to be for you like a reminder on your hand and a sign on your forehead."**

Did he mean they should write Bible verses on their hand and their forehead with physical marks? Probably not. Having God's Word on your forehead and your hand meant you belonged completely to him.

And therefore, if you have the Beast's name on your forehead or your hand, it means you are completely loyal to him. In other words, you've totally bought into this anti-God world system. You've drunk the Kool Aid. You've conformed.

So...back to the economic pressure. A time is coming when only those who have sworn allegiance to the government and its anti-God system-only those people-will be able to buy groceries and shop at Walmart and do business. Whether it involves a physical mark or not, you will have to declare your allegiance to the government to take part in society.

I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, "This is the most depressing sermon I've ever heard." And I'll be honest with you: this sermon is a beast." No pun intended. This is rough stuff.

But you know what? It's tough when an oncologist tells their patients that their tumor is malignant. It's tough when a cardiologist tells people their arteries are clogged, and they better make some changes. Those aren't fun things. But man, I'm grateful for doctors who speak the truth, aren't you?

And I'm grateful that God speaks this truth to us in the Scriptures. We are warned that there's a real spiritual enemy named Satan. Here's the great thing, and why this is Good News: God doesn't just tell us to get ready for the battle; he tells us how to win it.

### III. **How to Resist the Enemy.**

As the pressure to conform gets stronger and stronger-and it will-here's the key to resisting. It's just a half a verse, and you probably didn't pay much attention to it. But this is the key to everything.

The second part of Revelation 13:10 says: ***"This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people."***

Some of you are disappointed with that. You're like, "That's it?" Patient endurance and faithfulness? I thought it would say, "This calls for an aggressive

counter-attack.” “This calls for violent opposition.” “This calls for casting out demons and hitting the Devil back harder than he hit us!” Nope.

After warning us of the blasphemous, arrogant, abusive ways that people will be pressured by Satan to conform to this world, God says, ***“Your job is to patiently endure and be faithful.”*** That’s it! Patient endurance and faithfulness.

There’s a calmness in those words. There’s a confidence in those words. There’s a lack of panic in those words. Patient endurance and faithfulness.

And here’s what I realized: all through the Bible, when God’s people are being persecuted and suffering, this is what God calls us to do.

In the book of Exodus, when the people of Israel are pinned up against the Red Sea, with the Egyptian army closing in, look what God tells Moses in Exodus 14:14...***“The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”*** **Sounds to me like patient endurance and faithfulness.**

***1 Peter 4:19... So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. Sounds like patient endurance and faithfulness to me!***

How about Ephesians 6:12 ***“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”***

That’s exactly what Revelation 13 has been telling us about the real enemy operating behind the scenes! So, what should we do? Verse 13: ***“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to...what? ...stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”***

**In other words, patient endurance and faithfulness.**

***“Patient endurance”*** means you expect things to get hard, but you hang in there. You don’t bail out; you don’t quit; you never give up; you hold your ground.

And ***“faithfulness”*** means you stay faithful to Christ, despite the pressure or cultural unpopularity: you keep on praying; you keep on serving; you keep on gathering with other believers to worship. You refuse to bow down to the idols everyone else bows down to.

The key to winning the battle is patient endurance and faithfulness. You know why that's true? Because Jesus already defeated death, hell, and the grave. He was dead, and he came back alive and the same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us. And that is the truth that changes everything!

It's all about Jesus. He fights for us; he protects us. And when we believe that, we will respond to the pressure of life with patient endurance and faithfulness.

Tomorrow when you wake up, and you start thinking about all the pressures of the day, say a quick prayer-before you even get out of bed. Say, ***“Lord, give me patient endurance and faithfulness.”***

When you see everyone at work or school conforming to the world's values and celebrating sin, don't get belligerent or panicky; just say, ***“Lord, give me patient endurance and faithfulness.”***

There is so much power in having patient endurance and faithfulness. We have real spiritual enemy named Satan, and sometimes it seems like he's winning. But God is in control. And in the end, God wins, and we share in that victory.