

Revelation 13:11-18 – What is the Mark of the Beast

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 March 2023

Preacher: Simon Lawrenson

[0 : 00] You know, the faces that aren't here. So just make sure you pray for those.

Maybe check in with those people this week.! It'll be amazing. We're in Revelation 13. So if you have your Bibles, just flick there with me while I just say a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord, that you've given it to us. Lord, we believe that you speak to us and you've spoken to us through your word, Lord.

And Lord, we believe that you have something to say to us today. So we pray that you would help us and guide us through what is potentially a tricky portion of scripture, Lord.

But we believe that it's here for a reason. Like you're not here to trick us. You haven't given us it to fool us. So Lord, we pray for understanding.

[0 : 59] And Lord, help us to have our hearts and minds fixed on the really important things.

Following you. Lord, living lives of obedience.

So Lord, help us to do that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, so Revelation 13. I'm going to stop announcing next week's sermon just in case people start getting scared.

And so last week I said, we're going to do the mark of the beast this next week. And voila. Yeah. So this morning we're looking at probably one of the most debated and one of the most misunderstood sections of Revelation or possibly the entire New Testament.

And it's the last part of Revelation 13, what is known as the mark of the beast or the number 666.

And maybe we should have had some kind of intro music to go with that. But maybe when we get around to teaching Revelation in the next 20 years, 10 years or whatever, we'll do that.

[2 : 13] So last time we looked at the beginning of the chapter and we saw how Satan is shown as the red dragon. And he has brought chaos into the world.

That's kind of the summary of last week, right? And so we're told in chapter 12, verse 17, that he, the dragon, Satan, stood on the sand of the sea.

And you remember that in ancient times, the sea was thought of just a reservoir of evil. And what we see in chapter 13 is these two beasts that are sent by Satan to bring his chaos into the world.

Okay? So we see a beast on the land and a beast on the sea. There in verse 1, the first beast was rising out of the sea, which is actually rising out of the abyss that we read about in future chapters.

And then in verse 11, which is where we start our text this morning, he says, then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. So we see a beast from the sea, a beast from the earth. And what we said last time is that the language that John is using is rooted in two chaos beasts in Job.

[3 : 21] So remember the book of Job was the story of how about a man's life was thrown into chaos. Previously, before that, actually, Satan had said to God, have you seen Job?

Let me test him. And God had said, yeah, okay. And so Satan brings chaos into this man's life. And this life story intertwines with these descriptions of these two beasts that are associated with that life of chaos.

So we see the Leviathan, the sea creature, and the behemoth, the land creature. And this is the language that John is using in Revelation. He's hearkening us back.

He's throwing us back to this issue of chaos and Leviathan and behemoth and saying, look, there's a beast from the land and a beast from the sea, and they are Satan's agents in the world to bring chaos.

And so John doesn't see just one beast but two, and he sees the second beast coming out of the earth. Now, the identification of this individual is much easier to identify than the first one.

[4 : 34] You remember the first one? We were back and forth with Job. We were back and forth in Septuagint. We were back and forth in Daniel chapter 7, Daniel chapter 2, and we were kind of jumping all over the place. Well, this individual is much easier to identify.

There are some who have said that the fact that he rises out of the earth means that he is Jewish. Now, look, they get that from the fact that the other guy was rising out of the sea. He must be a Gentile. But that's sketchy at best. So some people say, you know, because he's coming from the earth or the land, the land is often the nation of Israel, and so this must be, he must be Jewish.

But look, I think there's a stronger connection to the symbolic language again that John is using from Job chapter 40 and 41 to describe the second chaos beast. There is an individual who is going to represent everything that is chaotic.

And again, this individual is much easier to identify than the first beast because three times we see this beast is accompanied by another individual. So the first beast is accompanied by another individual.

[5 : 47] And that individual is given a different name, different than just another beast or the second beast, right? So for example, in Revelation 16, verse 13, John says, I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the first prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.

Now, leave the frogs thing alone for a minute, right? We'll come back to that in a few weeks, right? I know everyone's like, what, frogs? Wait, hold on, frogs? No, just park that, right?

Because we see three individuals, dragon, beast, false prophet. Revelation 19, verse 20, and the beast was captured and with it, the false prophet, who, notice this, in its presence had done the signs by which it deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image, which is a reference back to Revelation 13.

The strongest indication is that the identification for this second beast is that this second beast is also the same one as the false prophet. They're one and the same. The false prophet is identified as the same individual who has signs and deceived those who received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image that we're going to read about in Revelation 13.

We're going to see that the false prophet has to be the same individual as the second beast in verse 11. Just one other verse in chapter 20, verse 10.

[7 : 19] The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were. So literally, like the second beast or the designation, the second beast disappears after this chapter and from then on, he's really known as the false prophet.

And so that's really, really easy to identify. We don't have to jump into Daniel 2, Daniel 7. We don't have to jump into Job or Isaiah. We stay within Revelation and Revelation himself or John himself identifies the second beast as the false prophet.

And notice that, what he looked like. He had two horns like a lamb and he spoke like a dragon. So there's a lack of crowns. There's a lack of heads. None of that stuff that was going on last week. Some have said that, you know, he looks humble and timid like a lamb, but he spoke with power. Like whatever. I don't know what that means. Right? But what we do, chapter verse 12, it exercises all of the authority of the first beast in his presence and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed.

And it performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people.

And by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

[8 : 41] So it seems that this individual's primary role is deception. And the way that the deception is taking place is through miraculous signs.

And his primary incentive, as we'll see in verse 15, seems to be the economy and then worshipping the beast. So verse 15, it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

Also, it causes verse 16, all, both small and great, both rich and poor, free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or forehead so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark.

We'll come back to that in a minute. So it's worth pointing out again that this first beast known as Antichrist is a fake Christ. So he's called the Antichrist not only because he is against Christ but he is mimicking or imitating Christ.

Just like Jesus is given power and authority, just like Jesus he healed, he was healed from a mortal wound, just like Jesus he is worshipped, just like Jesus he is given a kingdom and that's important because as we go into some of the next few verses which are the most debated verses, we need to

keep in mind that a lot of what is going on and I'm just going to put it out there now is a parody or it's an imitation and we'll get to that but just as the Antichrist is imitating Jesus and setting himself up as an Antichrist what we're going to see about this mark is wrapped up in that whole idea.

[10:32] So, it causes all, verse 16, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave to be marked on the right hand or on the forehead so that no one could buy or sell and unless he has a mark that is the name of the beast or the number of its name, this calls for wisdom.

I love that. It's like, it's almost like John is understanding this is going to cause some people in 2020, what are we, 2023, they're going to be like, they're going to be scratching their heads about this. Okay, so this calls for wisdom. So, that is almost like a, okay, let's just stop. This calls for wisdom. Let the one who has understanding and if you go on YouTube, there are millions of people that have their understanding of this verse.

let them calculate the number of the beast for it is the number of a man and his number is 666. Okay, so, how many people have read anything about number 666? Let me just see a show of hands, see how much, see how much work we have to undo. Okay, great.

[11:45] So, so, let me just, let me just say we're going to camp out here for a while because I just know that on Wednesday night at Life Group, this is all we're going to talk about if I don't address it now.

Right? So, I want to answer the question, what is the mark of the beast? And it is an easy answer. And it's an easy answer because we've just read it.

Let me, let me give you some people's opinions. Let me just do a show of hands again. How many people have heard that the mark of the beast is a tattoo? Yeah? One, two, okay, three, yeah, four, all right.

How about a microchip? Yeah, that's like the, oh wow, that's, even some of you have never heard of 666, you're like, oh yeah, I've heard of microchip 666. Okay, market a beast, good.

How about the visa? Yeah, yeah, so like at one point there was this whole thing about, you know, assigning numbers to words and like you get five and one in Roman numerals that make six and I'm not too sure how they got 666 out of the rest but it was visa and visa was like the enemy, right?

[12:52] And in the 90s it was like, yeah, you have visa? That's carnal, man. You know, you're gonna, you know, that's the mark. A chip and pin, do you remember? Like, and now it's contactless, you know, security code, like, you know, yeah, barcode.

So there was a group of six numbers that was that. More recently is like the COVID vaccine, you know, that's that one or cryptocurrency. Like, I don't even understand that stuff.

I'm like, crypto. So, let's see if we can answer this question and for me, the most important verse is verse 17 because it tells us what the mark is.

You're looking at it like, oh yeah. So, no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark. That is the name of the beast. I'm done. Right, let's pray, let's go home, right?

So, the number, the mark of the beast, that is the name of the beast. Okay, so number one, what is the mark of the beast? The mark of the beast is the name of the beast.

[14:00] Good. Now, I know that that doesn't solve all the answers because now you're like, okay, what's the name of the beast? So, we're pretty easy to identify.

So, what is the name of the beast? Well, to answer that, we have to know our Bibles and I know this is something I've been saying over and over again in Revelation that if we just know our Bibles, we'll be better set up for Revelation.

If we know our Bibles, we won't get fooled into believing incredible claims from popular Bible teachers about the end times. So, what do we know about the idea of names?

Well, we know that names are more than labels we call people. We know that, right? So, names represent the character of a person and this idea of character, kind of character association, like starts way back in Genesis.

You remember Abram. Abraham. Now, I haven't pronounced that wrong. Abraham, his real name was Abram, right? And Abram is promised by God that God was going to make him into the father of many nations.

[15:06] And so, he has this son called Isaac and God says, let's change the name to Abraham, the father of many. It's just not a name. His name means something, right?

Jacob, has his name changed to Israel which means God fights after he wrestles with an angel, right? A name that is aptly applied to the nation of Jacob's descendants, right?

They go into the promised land, what do they do? They fight. Are they called Jacobites? No, no, no, they're not called Jacobites, they're called Israelites. Why? Because God's fighting. In fact, Joshua is told by the commander of the Lord's army, I'm going to fight for you.

The book of Exodus, if you remember when we studied the book of Exodus, it's all about bearing the name of God. That's what the book is about. It's about bearing the name of God.

In fact, the Hebrew name for the book of Exodus is simply these are the names. Right? these are the names that came out of Egypt.

[16:18] These are the names. All the way through the book of Exodus, you either have the absence of God's name telling you something or whole sections devoted to his name telling you something.

And what we see is that the idea of God's name is used as a motif, an idea to tell us about God. Even Moses' name, one drawn out of water.

If you know the story of Moses, his name means one drawn out of water. Where did he come from? Come from the Nile, got picked up, right? How did he escape Egypt?

Through water. This is one drawn out of water, literally. His name isn't just Moses. His name reflects something about him and his future.

And so the story you remember out in the desert, Moses is there, he's doing sheep, he's been there like for 40 years, right? And he sees this bush is on fire, but it's not being burnt up. And he turns aside to see, and he sees that God is in the bush, right?

[17:27] And that God speaks to him. And God says to Moses, I want you to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let my people go. right? Here's how it goes down in Exodus chapter 3 verse 13.

So Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me, and they say to me, what is his name? Like, for you and me, that's not like a thing that we would ask, right?

But in Hebrew kind of culture, names are huge. So he says, okay, if I go back and tell these people that the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they say, okay, what is his name?

Prove it. What shall I say to them? And God says to Moses, my name? Okay, I'll tell you my name. My name is I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am sent me to you.

And God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

[18:42] So I am who I am. I am who sent you. Yahweh has sent me to you. This is my name forever. And so Moses goes back to Egypt, goes back to the palace, the prince of Egypt, and the prince of Egypt.

Charlton walks up to Pharaoh, and he goes, let my people go. That was good, thank you. I'm going to have to tweak that audio a little bit. And Pharaoh responds in Exodus 5, and he says, who is the Lord?

What is his name? Like it matters. Like we wouldn't go, what is his name? Who is this guy?

What is his name? But in Hebrew, who is this? That I should obey his voice and let Israel go, I do not know the Lord. And what follows, you remember, is an exchange that kind of goes, thus saith the Lord, thus saith Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, thus saith Pharaoh, right?

And again, you've seen the film, God takes the Israelites out of Egypt by miracles. And so by the time we get to Exodus chapter 32, after this incredible demonstration of God's power, God's provision, that he alone should be worshipped, that he has ultimate authority over everything, we read something just incredibly shocking.

[20:05] And that is that the people turn and betray God and they make this golden calf and they start worshipping it. God's response then becomes the pivot for the entire book.

And I'm raising this for a reason for Revelation 13, so hold fire. We get to Exodus 32 and the people rebel and they get this calf and they make this golden calf and they start worshipping it and God responds to his people this way.

Moses says to God, show me your glory and God's response is no way. it will kill you.

But, Exodus 33 verse 19, I will let my goodness pass before you as I hide you in a cave and I will pronounce my name to you.

Skip forward to the Psalms and how often do we read, and here's an example in Psalm 124, how often do you read this? Our help is in the name of the Lord.

[21 : 20] Our help isn't in the Lord. That's not what he says. He says, our help is in the name of the Lord. The name Jesus literally means rescuer.

Why? Because he will rescue his people and bring deliverance and salvation for them. The Gospel of John helps us to bring this into focus as as you remember the Gospel of John was written by the same John that wrote Revelation.

All right? John argues in his Gospel that believing in the name of Jesus is the same as believing in Jesus. There were many Jesuses around.

I mean, like, if you go to South America, there's loads of Jesuses. Right? There's even a famous football player called Jesus. Jesus, but he's Jesus. Right?

So, but John says, if you believe in his name, his character, the very fact that he's a rescuer, that he will save you from your sins, that's what he's come to do. That's as good as believing in him.

[22 : 25] So, John 1, verse 12, but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. It's not good enough to receive a label.

You've got to believe that Jesus is a rescuer. Any other Jesus, if he isn't a rescuer, is not Jesus. John 3, 18, whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already.

Why? Because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And so to know the name of the Lord implies knowing the Lord. And the reason I bring all that up is because there's something significant about the name.

By the time we get to the last book of the Bible, Revelation, if we know our Bibles, we should be pretty familiar with the concept of names and how important names are.

But we're not. So here's what happens. We get to Revelation 13 and we go, oh, the mark of the beast must be a marker chip. And we throw out the entire Old Testament and New Testament canon.

[23 : 40] Everything that we know about names and how the Hebrews would read this and how John himself interpreted this in his gospel and we go, oh, it must be that.

It must be cryptocurrency. Right? Now, all that to say it is hermeneutical ignorance to ignore the entire body of Scripture in favor for popular and fantastical theories.

It's a good word, isn't it? So the first thing is that the mark of the beast is the name of the beast. The second, the mark of the beast is the character of the beast.

That's what that means. What is the mark of the beast? The mark of the beast is the character of the beast. But thirdly, notice that the mark is the imitation of salvation.

This is where we come back to this idea of imitation again. Look at verse 16. Also, it causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, so that no one's left after that, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead.

[24 : 51] So what would that mark look like? Because it seems to be pretty clear that there's going to be a mark on the forehead or on the right hand. Again, if we knew our Bibles, we'd know that this is probably not a literal mark.

Right, now I've said it. Okay, watch my email inbox get flooded this week, right? So if we know how the idea of a mark is used throughout the Bible, we would not conclude that this is a literal tattoo, microchip, whatever it is in our bodies.

And the reason for that is we would probably recognize this whole scenario as a parody or imitation or spoof of the real thing. Let me show you.

Numbers chapter 6, at the end of this great high priestly blessing, Lord bless you, Lord keep you, Lord make his face shine upon you, that. That's the context, right? So Numbers chapter 6, this is the bit we don't often read in the high priestly prayer, it wasn't in the recent song that came out.

6.27, so shall they, the priesthood, put my name upon the people of Israel and I will bless them.

Now none of us, I'm just assuming, and I think I'm pretty safe in my assumption, none of us would turn to Numbers chapter 6 and argue that the Jewish people had tattoos on their foreheads.

[26 : 25] But the text says, I want the priesthood to mark the Jewish people. We understand that what God is saying is that they will be image bearers of God.

They will bear the image, the character of God on earth. Wasn't that like what he said to Abraham? Like you will be my representative on earth, your people, your descendants?

See, the terminology actually matters here. The people of Israel bore the name, not in a literalistic way, but they were bearing the name, the character of God on earth.

They were to be God's showpieces. If people wanted to know what God was like, what he was going to do, how he treated people, they were to look at Israel.

That's number 627. Now, one might argue that this is or that something called the tefillin is an actual mark.

[27 : 33] So, Exodus 13, it shall be a mark on your hand, your front is between your eyes, this is the word of God, for a strong hand, the Lord brought us out of Egypt. So, the tefillin are little leather boxes containing writings of the Torah, they're still worn by many Jews today, around the head, around the forearm, but even here, even if that was true, that would find its literal fulfillment probably in Revelation 7.

And Revelation 7 is all about 144,000 sealed, marked Jews in the end times. So, the mark is a way of describing ownership and allegiance, in the same way we talked about previously, faith is allegiance to the name, isn't it?

It is carrying the banner of God. It is talking about saying, I'm with God and I'm planting my flag, and what is on my flag? The name of God.

And so, in everyday life, you represent him. John said in the last chapter, that he has made us, or sorry, in the first chapter, in Revelation 1, that he has made us a kingdom priest to his God and Father.

Now, that's a quote from Exodus, Exodus 19. Shouldn't surprise you. This is a whole parody thing going on. It's a whole imitation. It's a spoof of Exodus. Exodus 19, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[29 : 10] You corporately is Israel and they were supposed to represent God. They were supposed to be his image and bear his name or if you like, you are supposed to be marked with the mark of God, with the name of God.

So, that's really the third thing, is that the mark represents ownership and allegiance to the beast. Just as being marked or sealed by God represents ownership and allegiance to Christ.

Now, we see that in the New Testament, don't we? If we flip this positively, Ephesians 1, verse 13, we could spend a whole sermon just on this verse.

In him you also. When you heard the word of truth, when you became saved, when you decided, yes, I'm with God, here's my flag, I'm putting it down, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, what happened?

You were sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit. You are marked with his name. That's the positive side. Now, I didn't get that.

[30 : 23] When I say I didn't get that, literally, neither did you. But spiritually, absolutely. Now, if you need more information to chew on about this scene being imitation or parody, just check out verse 13, where we see that the second beast, it, the second beast, performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people.

Now, I'm not saying that none of this happens. I'm saying it probably does happen. But the issue of the mark is probably not literal. So, just to remind you what is happening in verse 13 and previously, the Antichrist is using the false prophet to perform miracles to testify towards the authority of the Antichrist.

Okay? Question. In the Bible, do you ever see that? Or do we ever see that happening before? We do.

Exodus. Right? So, do we ever see, and here's to bring the Exodus passage home a little bit closer, do we ever see a ruler or a leader battle another ruler or leader, but using the miracles of religious priests or prophets to do it?

Exodus. So, we see this as an imitation of Pharaoh in Exodus who was battling not Moses, but God. God. Pharaoh himself and he brought miracles through his religious counterparts in the form of magicians, Janus and Jambres.

[32 : 07] Pharaoh himself didn't perform the miracles, but his priest Janus and Jambres performed the miracles. So, you've got this Antichrist is trying to pull off what Pharaoh could not.

And he's using the false prophet, the second beast, as a Janus and Jambres to perform all of these miracles, to testify to the authority of the Antichrist. If we knew our Bibles, we'd see that.

We wouldn't be so readily quick to run to YouTube to find out and calculate the number of 666 and find out, oh, it's Nero or it's Dominican or it's Trump or it's whoever.

However, if we knew our Bibles, we'd see that Jesus is the new Moses and the Antichrist is a sort of trying to pass himself off as the new Moses.

And the false prophet is Janus and Jambres reliving it all over again in one final attempt to overthrow the authority of Christ.

[33 : 21] God's love. And so just as you have in the positive, we are marked or sealed by God, representing ownership and allegiance to Christ, you also have the negative, the mark, that represents ownership and allegiance to the beast.

The fourth thing is about the mark of the beast, the outcome of belonging to the world. The mark of the beast is the outcome of belonging to the world.

We discussed this a few weeks back in life group and Joe was very quick and very right to state this. I just kept quiet.

But Joe was very quick and very right to state this, that the mark of the beast is the outcome of following Satan. It's what people do if they're not following the Lord.

In terms of answering the questions, what happens if Christians take the mark of the beast? And the answer is, well, Christians won't take the mark of the beast because they're following Christ. And that's Joe, that's not me.

[34 : 29] So I just want to credit that in the footnotes. So look, the idea is that if the mark isn't a literal mark, how do we make sense of verse 16 and 17 where John says that he caused all, and then he defines those all, to be marked on the right hand and on the forehead so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.

I think one of the general weak points of this idea that I'm talking about is this section, and this section about buying and selling.

So it's a weak point. So in my own bias here, I look at Revelation 13 with the two beasts, and I see that they are metaphors for chaos.

I don't think that they're metaphors in terms of spiritually, they don't happen. I think that literally it will happen. Like literally I think that there will be two leaders, two world leaders, bringing up two world forums who bring chaos to the world.

I think that will literally happen. But he's using descriptive language from Job to describe that. And so again, look, in my bias, I'm looking at Revelation 13 with these two beasts, they're metaphors for chaos.

[35 : 54] So basically the whole world is in turmoil and tribulation. I get that. Like I see where the world is going, right? We can even understand the whole world is in turmoil now, right?

And those who have found Christ during that time, they are persecuted by the chaos system. And part of that persecution is that you're not going to be able to buy or sell.

And so I take it as a point of oppression. Those who are marked or sealed by God, representing ownership and allegiance to Christ, will suffer persecution for it.

I haven't made that up. Jesus promises it. Paul promises it. And so I don't think it's based on a physical mark that anybody's taken, but I do think it's based on the fact that you're Christian.

And that's enough. Like, and it should be enough. It should be enough to target you. Like if you have to have a physical mark to show that you're a Christian, I think you've got props and some issues that need resolving.

[36 : 58] And I like, you know, if that's the only way that people know that you're saved is because you've got a tattoo on your forehead or a microchip under your right hand, then you probably need to get right with the Lord.

Do you know what I'm saying? So the point is, in other words, as we have people who align themselves with Jesus, you're going to have a lot of people who are aligning themselves with Antichrist.

And as Christians, obviously don't literally bear the name or the mark or a brand or anything like that, it's highly unlikely from a biblical view that the opposite is true of non-Christians.

And so this is the outcome, and this is the point. This is the outcome. The mark of the beast is the outcome of a decision already made. A decision to follow Christ and not bow to the pressures and powers and systems of the world during the chaos that is known as the tribulation period.

There are some things today that should mark us different from the world. Mark us different. Mark us different.

[38 : 13] And there are some things that mark us. We're united in certain things. And that's really the point, is that the decision has been made.

we have already decided to follow Jesus. And so that we have been marked. But there is a lesson there for us. And the lesson is for us to remain separate and hold fast and sanctified for Christ. Now look, I know you're going to say, yeah, but what about the number? Okay, verse 18. Verse 18 says, this calls for wisdom. Wisdom. Amen.

This calls for wisdom. Let the one, and it's almost like John is just anticipating that we're going to go, yeah, but John, you can't leave us hanging.

So, okay, okay, so look, let's apply some wisdom if we can. Let the one who has understanding, so that's a prerequisite that counts me out. So let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast.

[39 : 26] for it is the number of a man. It's not the number of man. It is the number of a man. So lots of people go, wow, the number of man is six.

That's 666. Number of man, it doesn't say that. It's the number of a man. And his number is 666. So, who is the man?

I have no idea. And in hundreds of pages that I've read about the number, none seem legit apart from one.

Now you're like, oh. And that one is still like, oh, got to do some homework on that. So, you know that in the Bible there are numbers that represent different things.

So, seven is the number of completion, seven days in a week. Three is the number of God. Six is the number of man. Six plus one.

[40 : 40] Seven minus one is the number of man. One is being Christ. So, seven is the number of completion or perfection. Minus one, Jesus, you have the number of man, which is imperfection. And so on and so forth.

We could do this all day. Forty is the number of government. Ten is the number of whatever, human government. So, there are people going, well, let's look at the numbers. Calculate the number. And they do calculate the number.

And they come up with all kinds of weird and wonderful ideas. And then there's also this other idea in Hebrew actually of taking a number and associating it with a letter in Hebrew.

And they come up with a number of weird and wonderful ideas. Let me just give you one. I'm not going to even address any of those because I just think they're all barmy.

I'm just going to tell you that now. Just don't waste your time on YouTube figuring it out. Unless you have understanding, then go for it. Because the text says if you have understanding, then you can. So let me just say this.

[41 : 40] There was a guy called Arrhenius. Anybody heard of Arrhenius before? Great. One person. So he was a second century church leader. And he wrote a book. Two people have heard of him.

He wrote a book called *Against Heresies*. And in that book he deals with the number 666 at length. 60 pages dedicated to the number 666.

So this dude had understanding. Now again, remember, this is a guy who knows guys who knows John. So he was the bishop of Smyrna.

Before him was the bishop of Smyrna, was Polycarp. And Polycarp and John were like best friends. So Arrhenius knew guys who knew John.

So lots of people say that 666 refers to Emperor Nero. Arrhenius doesn't even bring it up. That should tell you a lot.

[42 : 44] Right? Doesn't even bring Nero up. Doesn't even bring domination up. He's well acquainted with Nero. He doesn't find that argument persuasive at all.

Not even interested. He says, and I'm going to leave you with this thought, then I'm going to run. He says that the number 666 refers to the numerical value of the Greek word for titan.

Now I don't have time to go into it today, but if you know anything about the titans, the titans is the Greek retelling of the story of Genesis 6.

Genesis 6 has to do eventually with Babel and Babylon. And we'll see later in chapter 17 again connecting Babylon to these two beasts.

Now look, probably the best answer to 666 is this, and this comes from Arrhenius. So Arrhenius kind of suggests the idea of the number is titan, number of man, a man, titan, however that plays

out.

[44 : 05] We talked about the watchers before in previous sessions. Here's what Arrhenius says, it's already on the screen, you're already frantically taking notes. He says this, it is more certain and less hazardous to await the fulfillment of the prophecy than to make summaries and castings about for any names that may be present themselves in as much many names can be found possessing the number mentioned.

What does that mean? Don't lose time. Don't lose time, don't waste time trying to figure out 666 unless you have understanding.

Then go for it. So he says it's probably more certain and less hazardous, more certain and less hazardous to wait for the fulfillment of the prophecy than to make ridiculous fantastical speculations about who this person is.

And so the issue of this section of the Bible is spiritually speaking whose side are you on? Whose side are you on? Whose name do you bear?

And how do we bear the name, the character, the image of God in the world today? And there will be persecution for it. People will be opposed to it.

[45 : 29] But our continual calling, as Peter actually talks about, where he says that we are a royal priesthood, a kingdom of God to him.

That is our goal. Our goal, yes, it's lovely to read this section and kind of pull some stuff apart, but actually are we ourselves bearing the name of Christ, bearing the name of Jesus the rescuer to a world that needs rescuing?

Let's ask the Lord to help us to do that. Father, thank you for your word. Lord, we want to humbly confess, Lord, that there is lots here that we still don't understand. There are lots here that we struggle to put into action.

We don't often, always, represent you in the way that you should be represented. We don't often bear your name. So, Lord, help us this morning, this week, as we leave this place, Lord, to truly stand up for what you stand up for, to really be, as Paul talks about, displaying the fruits of the Spirit, the fruit of God at work in us.

Lord, we want to ask, Lord, that you would protect our minds from just wasting time, frankly, on trying to figure out the minutiae details of this text.

[47 : 11] And, Lord, would you give us the power, strength, and courage to spend the time that we would normally spend looking for those answers, spend that time representing you in this world.

Lord, would you draw us close to yourself, that we may know the person that we are representing. Lord, may we, Lord, be just as Moses was.

Lord, would we turn aside to see you aflame, still in this world. And, Lord, would it be that name that we carry.

Lord, help us to do that, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.