



ONE PLUS GOD

**Get going: We don't have forever to get into forever**  
**A study on Revelation**

**Dr. Wynand de Wet (aka Pastor Wayne)**

**Week 8**  
**Evil attempting to imitate God**

**One Plus God Ministries**

**Missions Minded, Every Day, Everywhere.**

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## **Revelation: Lesson plan**

Lesson 1 — September 3 — Who is Jesus? (Rev 1)

Lesson 2 — September 10 — What Jesus expects from His Church, part 1 (Rev 2 & 3)

Lesson 3 — September 17 — What Jesus expects from His Church, part 2 (Rev 2 & 3)

Lesson 4 — September 24 — In the throne room with God: Father, Lamb, and Spirit (Rev 4 & 5)

Lesson 5 — October 1 — Judgement and Grace (Rev 6 & 7)

Lesson 6 — October 8 — The Church has a mission (Rev 8 to 11)

Lesson 7 — October 15 — The Christmas-story through the eyes of Revelation (Rev 12)

Lesson 8 — October 22 — Evil attempting to imitate God (Rev 13)

Lesson 9 — October 29 — Time for grace will run out... (Rev 14 to 16)

Lesson 10 — November 5 — The efforts of Darkness will intensify, yet come to an end (Rev 17-18)

Lesson 11 — November 12 — God's triumph over a one-sided war (Rev 19 to 20)

Lesson 12 — November 19 — God's complete reign is coming soon! (Rev 21 to 22)

The devil is not the Creator God, right? He's at most a self-made, self-proclaimed god, with no creating abilities. Therefore he has no other options than to imitate. He is watching God carefully and then plays a game of "copycat". Don't make the mistake though to think that he's not good at it, because he surely is, and Revelation 13 (and especially also chapter 17) is there to warn us about this. It is for this reason then that we find the dragon that we have encountered in chapter 12, and now also in chapter 13:1a acting as if he would be God. Soon we will see how the beast out of the sea reminds one of Jesus (13:3), and the beast from the earth might very well try to imitate the Holy Spirit (13:11-12).

### **Revelation 13:1-4, The dragon and the beast working together, like the Father and Son!**

The dragon and the beast are clearly working together (13:1a-b), and the beast-like monster from the sea is just as powerful as the dragon with his 10 horns and 7 heads (see again Psalm 104:26, Job 41:1, Is. 27:1, Dan. 7:3). The blasphemous names remind one of the godly titles that the Caesars had claimed for themselves, for instance Domitian even called himself around 95/96AD "dominus et noster" (our lord and god)!

This beast looks simply terrifying (3:2a), and just like God the dragon is imitating God by giving authority to the beast (3:2b). The lion and the bear also remind us of the evil kingdoms that Daniel 7:4-7 refers to—all 4 kingdoms melt together here with the image of the beast from the sea, simply referring to all kingdoms taking a stand against God and His Kingdom. However, the beast is not only scary, but he also has a fatal wound—in the Greek text we find the same word as with "slain" in Rev. 5:6! This misleads many people (the "whole" world) to believe that he can also give life like Jesus, although it is clear that he was not resurrected from the dead, but merely "healed". The 7 heads most probably relate to the 7 Roman Caesars of the time (see also Rev. 17:9-11), with Nero who committed suicide in 68AD, and supposedly came back to life again according to the legends of *Nero rediivivus*.

Now some people started worshiping the dragon and the beast: Astonishment grew to loyalty (v. 3b), which in turn led to worship...(v. 4)! Let this be a warning to us all—don't be filled with wonder for what is not right, bad, or evil, because it will pull you in, bit by bit, till you're solidly hooked... There is a reason why the sign says: "Danger, stay away", "Important notice: Do not enter!". Someone had figured out that you can get hurt if you continue, yet so often we still try...mostly out of curiosity, and sometimes even out of plain disobedience or stubbornness. Remember, God knows the dragon, and He knows both beasts, and He's shouting through Revelation: "Danger, stay away!". Will we listen...?

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**Revelation 13:5-8, The beast, chained and on the clock**

Under control of God (vv. 5a and 7) the beast is continuing his crusade against God and His people (vv. 5-7), knowing that he is on the clock—his time is surely running out (v. 5b; see also Daniel 7)! He is viciously at work (v. 7a), amongst everyone (v. 7b), and sadly so drawing a lot of attention (v. 8). The fierce activity of the beast surely has to challenge believers about their own type of commitment and actions...? The dragon and the beasts are moving ahead forcefully...are we advancing with the same passion?

Rev. 13:8b is a great reminder that God is, was, and always will be in control. Nothing, since the creation of the world (and I guess we could add even since before then!) can ever surprise our God, or respectfully said, “catch the Creator of the universe off guard”!

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**Revelation 13:9-10, Endure and have faith!**

Once again we find a structural break in the text, and by now we know: It is a precious way to take the time to encourage the children of God, while they are in this heated battle with the devil! This time it is a hard, yet comforting word, because the hard reality calls for that. Believers need to listen (v. 9), and know that some will go into captivity for their faith (Rev. 2:10), or they might even die, but God knows about all of this upfront and our Father is completely in control (v. 10a-b; see also Phil. 3:10).

Saints, endure patiently and don't lose your faith (v. 10c)!

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**Revelation 13:11-12, The third party of the evil trio, an imitation of the Holy Spirit**

While the beast from the sea focused more on political and military action, the beast from the earth focuses more on religion and propaganda (vv. 11-12). While the Holy Spirit enables us to have a living faith, a true relationship with God, and empowers us to share our faith, the beast from the earth is working fiercely at a false imitation of the Spirit’s powerful work! As the Spirit is pointing us towards Jesus, this beast is pointing people towards the beast from the sea, whose fatal wound was healed (v. 12). Just as the Holy Spirit and Jesus have a close relationship, these beasts imitate the same (v. 11; see also Daniel 8:3).

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**Revelation 13:13-15, A beast with a lot of tricks up his sleeve**

The beast is working hard at letting his propaganda (vv. 11-12) seem as real and true as possible. He publicly performs the same signs as Elijah (v. 13), and unfortunately so many are being deceived by this (v. 14; also 2 Thess. 2:9-12). They had forgotten to test these miracles and see if they are actually God-glorifying, or self-focused and religious propaganda.

The beast even exercises power over images, which reminds of heathen priests that would often, under demonic influence, make statements on behalf of idols (v. 15; see also 1 Cor. 10:19-20).

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## **Revelation 13:16-18, 666...?!**

A lot of ink had been used on this metaphor through the years! So, let's take a shot at it too...

We have already seen that a mark like this in chapter 7:1-8 is probably not referring to a physical mark, and it would therefore be very strange for the counterpart of it to suddenly refer to a physical mark. Having it on the right hand and forehead is significant (v. 16a). Why there? We will remember that the mark in chapter 7 was to show that the believers belonged to God. Given the fact that this entire chapter 13 has spoken to an effort of evil to imitate God it would just make sense that the mark here is showing that the followers of evil had placed their working abilities (right hand) and thought processes (forehead) in possession of the antichrist (v. 16a). The followers of the beast belongs therefore to the devil, as the followers of Jesus belongs to God. It is clear that just as we have followers of God all across the spectrum of humanity, evil can say the same (v. 16a).

As a group the followers of the beast can now even exercise economical pressure over believers by not allowing them to make certain purchases, or have certain jobs, and so forth (v. 17). First they would have to denounce Jesus, and become the "property" of the beast, bow before certain idols, before they can buy or sell in some areas (v. 17). Can you think of examples where this has actually already happened in history between believers and non-believers (as already did in the time frame of Revelation of course)? Can you think of examples of this in our day and time...?

If you can, this of course immediately poses the question if people carrying this mark have not already been around for a very, very long time...could one say most certainly since the time of Jesus' first coming?

Verse 18 goes a long way in helping us to understand that even people in John's time would be able to have the called for wisdom to figure out the meaning of the number 666. It helps tremendously to remember this, as it will prevent us from all kinds of weird interpretations. This also helps us to dig a bit into what happened in the society at that time with numbers. It is then that we stumble upon a game called "gematria" that worked on the principle that letters of the alphabet had numerical value. The first 9 letters counted 1 to 9, and the next 9 would represent 10 to 90, and so forth. Every name of a person could in other words have a numerical value, and one interesting example is from a love-graffiti where a loved one wrote on a wall in Pompeii, "I love her whose name is 545". So, what about 666 then. In Revelation's time this probably added up to Caesar Nero, or more specifically the way that the Greek words would be written in the Hebrew alphabet. Interesting enough, sometimes Nero was referred to as a "monster" or "animal", and the Hebrew transcripts of these Greek words would also add up to 666, and...in manuscripts where the Latin format of Caesar Nero would be written

in Hebrew the manuscripts would not read 666, but rather 616 to accommodate the adjusted amount of letters used, causing the calculation to change!

It therefore becomes clear that we have more than enough proof to be pretty comfortable with this possibility to interpret 666, and that many other names over the centuries would obviously also be able to add up to 666 simply because several combinations of letters can come to the same amount. Therefore it makes perfect sense that Rev. 13:18a would call for wisdom before we point someone out as the 666, but it also calls for wisdom that we don't miss it when we actually should!!

The bottom line is probably this:

- Since Jesus' first coming people carrying this mark, people being the 666, had been around.
- The 666 could refer to one person, but also many, all belonging to the devil, acting and thinking as he wishes.
- It is just as important (if not more) to figure out *what* the 666 is doing, rather than only concentrating on *who* it might be. (It is probably because so much of the focus is often on figuring out the name, that we might have missed it for years that he (they) has already been at work for ages!)

May God wake us up, and grant us all wisdom not to miss what is already happening all around us!

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## Resources

The attack of the devil is fierce indeed. Some believers will end up in jail, some even killed, and this probably more so as we journey closer to the end of all things. “The pastor’s wife”, by Sabina Wurmbrand is Sabina’s true story of how she had struggled to get her husband (pastor Richard Wurmbrand) out of jail, her own imprisonment, and her relentless efforts to build Christian Underground Churches in restricted areas all across the world.

This is available in a Kindle version on Amazon.

## Want to dig deeper, or just stay connected?

- Email pastor Wayne/Wynand with your questions/remarks at [wynand@OnePlusGod.org](mailto:wynand@OnePlusGod.org).
- Call pastor Wayne/Wynand at 567-356 2007.
- Connect with us on Facebook:
  - Pastor Wayne/Wynand: <https://www.facebook.com/wynand.dewet.7>
  - One Plus God Ministries: <https://www.facebook.com/OneplusgodMinistries>

## References

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