

APOSTASY AND THE MAN OF SIN

Who is this man?



*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”
(2 Thessalonians 2:3)*

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

APOSTASY AND THE MAN OF SIN

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
Apostasy and the Man of Sin	5
Introduction	5
Response to a False Report	5
The Apostasy	7
The Man of Sin	10
Interpretive Possibilities	10
Exegetical Considerations	11
Conclusion	13
Characteristics of the Man of Sin	13
The Temple of God	14
He That Withholdeth	16
The Mystery of Iniquity	16
Signs and Wonders	21
Addendum	29
Evidence of Apostasy in our Day	30
Daniel 7:7-9 - Daniel's Little Horn	37
Notes on the Little Horn	45
The Beast and His Followers	49
The First Beast	49
The Second Beast	60
The Mark of the Beast	64
The Lamb and His Followers	69

References 74
Publications 75

Apostasy and the Man of Sin

Introduction



In his first letter to the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul addressed the Return of Christ and the wonders associated with His Parousia.

In the Apostle's second letter, he refers to the "Lord Jesus Christ" and his gospel 11 times.

Because some of these saints misunderstood the instruction of that initial epistle, or had been influenced by false teachers, the apostle was constrained to write a second letter to correct the erroneous views entertained by the Thessalonians.

Apparently, there were some powerful personalities in the region of Thessalonica who advocated an alien dogma that the Lord had already returned.

Here is how Paul managed that error--the same error, by the way, offered by radical preterists that 70 AD was the Second Coming of Christ.

Response to a False Report

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled,

neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

The Coming of our Lord: The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and “our gathering together unto him” are not two different occurrences but two different aspects of the same event. *The Granville Sharp Rule* for Greek grammar states that when the definite article precedes two nouns of the same case which are connected by the conjunction “and,” *the two nouns are virtually identical.*

In our text, “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,” refer to the grand event we call the “Second Coming of Christ;” i.e., *the Parousia* and *the Rapture* are one phenomenon.

We beseech: Paul admonished the Thessalonians to reject alien reports that the great and terrible “Day of Christ” had passed or was even eminent.

The infinitive “shaken” (*saleuo*) describes motion produced by winds, storms, and waves. Here the theological winds produced an unsettled mind crashing on the shores of doubt.

The infinitive “troubled” (*throeo*) means “to cry aloud, moan, and make a noise.” The sting of the serpent has a way of poisoning the mind. Concerned that these Christians soldiers might retreat or even abandon the faith, the apostle urged them to stand their ground. Christ is coming, but not before the great apostasy occurs.

By spirit or letter: “Either by spirit or by letter” is a reference to the troubling message of misguided prophecy allegedly spoken or written by Paul or Timothy.

At hand: The final clause, “the day of the Lord is at hand,” should be translated “the day of Christ.” The verb “at hand” (*enistemi*) is a perfect tense form in the original language which means “to be present.” The term

suggests that false teachers of that day were alleging that the Parousia had come and gone.

The Apostasy

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Let no man deceive: The subjunctive aorist verb "deceive" is negated by two negatives.

The subjunctive expresses the possibility of being led astray. It is a strong, powerful subjunctive of prohibition forbidding the initiation of an action. The wretchedness of deception is that the deceived does not know he is being led into a trap.

That day: this is a reference to the Second Coming in verse one.

Apostasy: The expression "falling away" is translated from the Greek term *apostasia*. Our English word "apostasy" is an anglicized form of this original term.

In the Bible, the word *apostasy* is used of a defection from the Christian faith. As a noun, it is employed of a departure from the Mosaic system (Acts 21:21). In Joshua 22:22, the term refers to a rebellion against the Lord. Plutarch uses it of political revolt and it occurs in 1 Maccabees 2:15 about Antiochus Epiphanes who was enforcing the apostasy from Judaism to Hellenism. In 1 Timothy 4:1, the verbal form refers to some who will "depart from the faith" (cf. Hebrews 3:12).

The noun is qualified by a definite article (*the apostasia*). The definite article points to *a particular movement* in the apostle's prophetic vision —

not merely a “principle” of defection! In this present passage it speaks of a grave, radical defection from Christianity -- THE Rebellion against God's gospel and law-order.

Robertson says the reference to *the apostasy* infers the coming of Christ is not imminent because it must be preceded by a specific period of apostasy. This menacing movement, from a first-century vantage point, had yet to be revealed (v. 3). This suggests that the migration from Biblical truth to the lies of man had not yet progressed to the point where it could be identified as a definite, acceptable mainstream movement by the first century saints. It awaited future development toward the end of the Christian age.

The challenge, however, is identifying a *terminus a quo* for the period of apostasy. Who is qualified to say when that age of apostasy has arrived in history? The righteous in every era of Christian history have been grieved over departures from the faith.

Look at the context: We have this prayer in *2 Thessalonians 1:12*

“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The title "Lord Jesus Christ" is mentioned two times in this verse, two times in verse one, five times in chapter one, 11 times in 2 Thessalonians; and 9 times in 1 Thessalonians for a total of 20 times in Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians.

When is the last time you heard the name "The Lord Jesus Christ" in the media? In church? From a Christian?

His name is not "the man upstairs" or the "big guy in the sky" or a "prophet" or "the spirit-brother of Lucifer" (Mormons) or "a god" (JW's) or "My Friend" (casual evangelicalism), *but the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is not a

way to God, but The Way to the Father. He is not a savior, but the only Savior. He is not a "good example." He is Lord, Master, Commander, and King!

Likewise, apostasy appears to be connected with a skewed view of the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

In like manner, the word "gospel" is mentioned 8 times in these epistles. Therefore, we conclude the apostasy mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is a departure from the Word of God, the glory of His name, and His glorious gospel.

2 Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[Note: In our time we are seeing the religion of omnism swamp Britain -- the belief that all truth is God's truth; that every religion has truth; and, that every religion is a path to God. King Charles would not take the oath of the Kings of England. He changed the oath from a "protector of the faith" to "protector of faith." Even Pope Francis stated: "All religions are paths to God. They are like different languages that express the divine" (Google- 2024). Certainly the lies of main stream media, LGBTQ marriage, gender-bender beliefs, the apotheosis of psychology in the church, Charismatic Confusion, female preachers, unconditional support of genocidal Israel, and abortion et al. qualifies as apostasy. It is so bad you would be hard pressed to find a Christian that refers to the Savior as "the Lord Jesus Christ."]

The Man of Sin

The Man of Sin is the sinister-figure behind “the falling away” from *the* faith a.k.a. the gospel (v. 3). He is called a "son of perdition," or *child of the devil*. James Moffatt says the phrase "son of perdition" essentially means *the doomed one*.

Q: But, who is this person? How will we recognize him when he appears?

Interpretive Possibilities

Adam Clarke and others understand the Man of Sin to be the alleged super-Antichrist of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. There is much support for this view!

Archibald Robertson says the use of the subjunctive aorist *apohaluphtheia* reveals the supernatural character of the Man of Sin who will suddenly appear in history. One cannot but be reminded of that infamous “little horn” in Daniel’s vision who "shall think to change the times and the law ..." (7:25) or of antichrists in the book of John or the beast in Revelation.

But, is this figure what Paul had in mind?

The title "The Antichrist" is never used in the NT, but the rise of *a class of antichrists* (plural in 1 John 2:18) is developed by the Apostle John.

Identifying the Man of Sin as "The Antichrist" may be too narrow and too specific. The most traditional way of understanding this Man of Sin is to say that he is not an individual, but *a system or an office or a class of mankind*.

Historically, Protestant interpreters have identified *the Man of Sin* to be the succession of popes.

John Calvin proposed the following: "Paul, however, is not speaking of one individual, but of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple. This we see accomplished in popery." Calvin is justified in calling the pope antichrist.

Limiting the Man of Sin to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church applies, but again may be too narrow an application because it leaves out apostates who lead liberal, apostate Protestant churches.

Thus, *a third proposal is offered*. The Man of Sin may have a broader application that includes *a class of rebels* that seem to crop up in Christian societies in increasing numbers.

Exegetical Considerations

The man: The term "man" (*anthropos*) is singular, not plural (*anthropoi*). It is preceded by the definite article. Kenneth Wuest is careful to inform us that the expression *anthropos* can refer to a single man or mankind as a whole. The view that this is *a class of humanity known as lawless mankind* makes sense here. The noun "anthropos" includes males and females. This is the autonomous, antinomian man / woman, a prominent opponent of God's law-order.

The opposite of a lawless man is a Christian man or lawful man – a man that believes the gospel and obeys the law of the LORD God.

Further, this strange figure is called "the son of destruction" --a possible reference to his/ her / their destination which is hell (2 Thessalonians 1:8-12).

Of sin: The word "sin" (*anomia*) means "lawless" or "lawlessness." The expression *anomia* is translated *iniquity*, *wickedness*, or *lawless* in the NT. Jesus addressed those producing iniquity ("lawlessness" - Matthew 7:23), and it is used in conjunction with a plural participle. In Matthew 13:41,

Jesus spoke of a time when the workers of iniquity (plural participle) would be expelled from His kingdom. John labeled the *sinning ones* as *lawless men* doing lawlessness (*anomia*) (1 John 3:4).

Lawlessness: *Anomia* is not a reference to doctrinal differences or variations of doctrinal positions within the Christian ministry of the church. Further, lawlessness is not defined by a single act of sin or transgression of law. Rather, *anomia* involves *malicious, reckless abandonment of God's law-order to plunge into debauchery and dissipation*. *Anomia* involves a serious breach of the Ten Commandments or common law wherein innocent people are injured and property damaged.

[Note America's statutory legal system that creates crimes out of code violations and decriminalizes immorality is a departure (apostate) from God's law -- a commercial scheme that damages the family and enriches the state.]

Lawlessness involves all forms of idolatry, oath-breaking, Sabbath desecration, dishonor to parents, murder, adultery, womanizing, fornication, perjury, homosexuality, theft and fraud. Several lists of lawlessness are mentioned in Scripture: Romans 1:24-31; 3:10-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:1-6; Jude; 2 Peter 2:1ff).

Revealed: The verb "revealed" indicates the antinomian man was hidden in Paul's day and that the antinomian man had not yet been unveiled. Thus, the *Man of Sin* is surrounded with mystery.

Possibly, Paul is not narrowly referring to an individual Super Cleric or class of apostate popes, but simply *a day when lawless clerics will seize power in numerous denominations*. This is the position offered here. There are only two types of men in the Bible: sheep and goats, wheat and tares, law-abiding saints and law breaking sinners.

The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness. The essence of sin is rebellion against God's law-order.

When men forsake God, they forsake His law and replace it with their own law-order. Certainly, *religious movements in our day to ordain female bishops and homosexual priests* fit the category of a *lawless, unbiblical movement in Christendom*. Wild charismatic preachers laughing on stage and passing around prayer handkerchiefs; and, Hebraist wearing tallits and quoting the Talmud fits the meaning of apostasy.

The merchandizing of the church must also be considered. Certainly, the modern denial of the headship of Christ and petitions by the church to be under the authority of the IRS as a 501 c 3 religious organization alongside Mormons and the cults "fits the bill."

Conclusion

Thus, the Man of Sin appears *to be a class of men, lawless mankind hostile to God's law-order*. The Christian man is the lawful man--the one in-lawed to Christ. The *lawless man* rejects God's law-order replacing it with his own religious law preferences. The man of lawlessness is a churchman or churchwoman who is deceived by Satan, forsakes God's laws, and emerges in a church organization to rule God's Temple as if his / her ideas are the canon of truth. Lawless popes, Jesuits, lusty televangelists, female pastors, and religious con-artists would fit this category of mankind.

Characteristics of the Man of Sin

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Opposeth and exalteth himself: These two participles are in the middle voice indicating the personal autonomy and self-aggrandizing traits of this sinister figure -- a contrast to the lawful man or Bible-based Christian.

The participle "opposeth" (*anti-kemenos*) tells us this "class of mankind" is an enemy of Christ and Biblical Christianity. It can be translated as "the one opposing" or "the opposer." The participle "exalteth himself" (*huperairo*) literally means "to lift oneself above others." He exalts himself not only above all false pagan gods and objects of worship, but also against the true God (cf. Acts 17:3).

As God: This expression is not in the original text and should be omitted; that is, the emphasis here is on the audacity and pomposity of the lawless one -- not a claim to deity.

The Temple of God

Sitteth in the temple of God: The lawless man will "sit in the temple of God" (v. 4). This is not a reference to the "temple" in Jerusalem or to a 4th temple to be allegedly constructed by Zionist Israel on the temple mount in modern-day Jerusalem. That structure had lost its significance to the mature apostle Paul. The temple here is a reference to the church (1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:21) -- the newly-established institution, "living-stones", or "new nation" of Paul's time (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

The Greek word for temple is *naos*. It is used eleven times by Paul (Romans thru Philemon); not once does he employ the term for a Jewish temple. He is burdened for the church of Jesus Christ -- the true temple of God and not a carnal Jewish temple. In fact, after the death of Christ, the Jewish temple is never again called the temple of God (Thomas Newton. 1831. Dissertations on the Prophecies. London: Blake).

There is no indication here that the Man of Sin is an international, political-leader of a ten nation confederation.

Rather, *the Man of Sin* is an *ecclesiastical figure* occupying the highest rank in the church (a) making claims and rulings that belong only to deity; (b) receiving adoration reserved exclusively for God; and, (c) usurping prerogatives which only God has a right to claim. Clearly, *the Man of Sin* is a churchman and ***not*** a civil ruler, politician, or monarch. At the time of the Reformation, the Reformers saw this figure as a pope: "The pope doeth whatsoever he listeth [wills], even things unlawful, and is more than God" (quoted by Newton, p. 456).

The Roman Catholic Church, however, saw Martin Luther, the "wild bore" of Germany, as the lawless man.

In this analysis, the Man of Sin is not some future supernatural Antichrist or Satan's incarnate figure. The "man of sin" is ***a class of unregenerate men*** emerging within a church organization to rule the congregation. We can call him a goat, or tare, or rebel. He represents a class people; i.e., lawless mankind rising to power within the institutional church (Catholic, Protestant, or Eastern Orthodox).

Before us is a deeply self-centered, egotistic, narcissistic cleric rising to power in the institution of the church. MacKnight labeled them the "corrupt clergy . . . exalting themselves above all that is called God, or an object of worship civil and religious" (Quoted by Benson).

Multiply these clerics by a thousand and you have a mass movement called *the Apostasy*. The popes, homosexual priests, Jesuit assassins, female pastors, Bible critics, Charismatic miracle workers, Zionists, and teachers of psychology are classes of lawless mankind that have emerged in church systems that fit the description of the antinomian man. This, however, does ***not*** include Christian leaders with differing doctrinal positions. Such differences do not rise to the level of apostasy or because

of lawlessness, but because of differences in hermeneutics and skills attached thereto.

He That Withholdeth

5-6 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

That he might be revealed: The Man of Sin as a class of apostate men that had roots in the world of ancient Christianity (v. 6), would nevertheless endure, in some form or another, until the end of the age before the Second Coming of Christ. In view of this, the *anomian* man cannot be an individual Antichrist or some persecuting enemy that faded into oblivion centuries ago. *This class of mankind was being restrained at the time of Paul, but appears to be unshackled toward the end of the Christian age.*

Now ye know what withholdeth: This expression (*to katecho*) is an articular, present, active, neuter accusative participle that should be translated, "the One restraining." It is the neuter gender that challenges the interpreter. Who or what is the Restrainer? A reasonable assumption is that this is reference to Spirit of God and his power at work preventing the early church from being dominated by antinomian men¹. But, there are other noteworthy considerations.

The Mystery of Iniquity

¹ *The Restrainer:* In modern times the restrainer has been identified as God, Christ, the Spirit, even Satan and the alleged Antichrist.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (katecho; ptc.) will let, until he be taken out of the way.

The mystery of iniquity: The Greek word "iniquity" is our word *anomia* which means "without law" or "lawlessness."

The "mystery of lawlessness" appears to be a rebellion against law and righteousness which was already at work in Paul's time. Paul announces that the *anomia* will one day gather steam to become a major movement of rebellion against the gospel and Christ's law-order.

The present pressure on churchmen to modernize the faith in order to conform to humanistic woke values fits "the work of lawlessness" mentioned in this verse. As an example, the "Christian" Psychologist Karl Menninger noted a transition in the sixties in his own book entitled, *"Whatever Became of Sin?"* (1973). Culturally, ugly old sins got a face lift, put on new clothes and proudly came to church. Fornication and adultery are sins that would have gotten a person stoned to death in ancient Israel, appear in the modern church as "meaningful relationships " Only a small minority of churches today excommunicate outlaws from their fellowship (1 Corinthians 5).

The term "*work*" (*energeita*) is a present tense, middle voice form suggesting that the forces of this lawless movement were currently working itself towards a greater goal. Again, lawlessness involves a serious breach of the Ten Commandments. Lawlessness includes transgressions of the law, tolerance of evil, immorality, amorality, permissiveness, and sensual indulgence. The mystery is that evil is often disguised. Tares look like wheat; goats look like sheep; Gnostics look spiritual; Christian psychologists sound priestly. The epigram, "You're O.K.; I'm O.K." comes to mind.

Three problems are addressed in this letter attach themselves to the mystery of iniquity:

- lawlessness (*anomos*: 2:3),
- unrighteousness (*adikia*: 2:12); and
- unruliness (*ataktos*: 3:6).

The early stages of this ecclesiastical apostasy were “already at work” in the early church (v. 7). The child of antinomianism, later to become a Man, was growing in Paul’s day. The error was “already operative” (R.C. H. Lenski, p. 417), but not yet “revealed” (v. 6). This is a crucial point. One cannot help but think of the apostate popes with all their pomp and the Jesuits with all their poisonous cups that appeared in history. Pope Francis said,

“All religions are paths to God. They are like different languages that express the divine” (Google- 2024).

"Jesus was a beast and a dangerous liar" - Pope Francis
(<https://rumble.com/v5ii7lp-pope-francis-declares-jesus-is-a-liar-and-lucifer-is-son-of-god.html>)

Anyone whom Satan uses to attack the Church's foundation of law from within Christianity fits the description of the Man of Lawlessness. In Paul’s day, the Judaizers who Paul called “enemies of the cross”^[2] slipped into individual churches seeking to turn Jewish Christians back to Judaism. But, it could refer to any man that abandons God’s law seeking to replace it with man-made rules and precepts. Modern Zionism fits this description.

“only he who now letteth will letteth” (*to katecho / katechon*) is the same word for “withholdeth” (*to katecho*) - a participle, singular construction means “the one restraining.”

"until he be taken out of the way" raises the question, "Who is the 'he,' and what does it mean to be 'taken out of the way?'" Again, there are no shortages of answers.

The great question is who is the one that "letteth" and "withholdeth"? James MacKnight (1721-1800) advances the theory that the "restrainer" referred to Emperors and magistrates in the Roman Empire.

Another possibility is that "the one restraining" is the Holy Spirit which departs from corrupt clerics.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, influenced by the Russian Orthodox church, claimed the Russian Orthodox Empire (Putin) was the one restraining the antinomian, antichrist West (01-12-2023). Russian philosopher Alexandr Dugin sees Russian President Valdimir Putin (Russia) as an Eastern Orthodox Czar as the one remaining civil power in the world warring against the forces of the antichrist in the West (Ukraine, NATO, Britain, France, Germany, and the U.S.). In Dugin's world view the "mystery of iniquity" is a secularizing world force (an antinomian system) at work in Western countries, and Putin is the *katechon* leader (force) preventing the coming of the antichrist. American presidents like Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden are not restrainers of evil but promoters of lawlessness.

The words "mystery" and "iniquity" both have the article indicating the Thessalonians were already familiar with this knowledge. The word "mystery" does not refer to something confusing but a to a matter known only to those being instructed; that is, the Thessalonians already knew about a time when the lawlessness would arise to pollute society in general and the church specifically.

The verb *"be taken"* is an aorist, middle, subjunctive -- a common construction for a future action.

[Note: the Christian should consider how the mystery of lawlessness is at work in modern times: Papism, Jesuits and Loyola Spirituality and the Counter-Reformation Movement, the Black Pope, League of Spiritual Discovery (LSD), Thomas Harris, "I'm OK-You're OK, Pop Psychology, Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movement, Antinomian Theology, Zionism and the Palestinian Holocaust, the shift from local churches to Government approved 501-c-3 Organizations, Installation of the IRS as the Legal Head of the Organized Church, Tongues, Holy Laughter, Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Same-sex Marriage, Ordination of Sodomites, Ordination of Women as Bishops, Child Trafficking among Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church, the Ninth Circle Satanic Child Sacrifice Rituals of the Catholic Church, Easy Divorce Proponents, "Christian" Pornography, Rise of Statutory Law and Rule by Mala Prohibita, Miracle-working Charlatans, Statism, the Queen of England as Head of the Anglican Church, Rise of Talmudic-Judaism in the Church, the Neo-Nazi Movement, Neo-Gnosticism, Choose Your Own Values Movement, Black Liberation Movement, Political Liberalism and Situation Ethics.]

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Wicked: The translation "wicked one" (*'o anomos*) is a singular, articular noun denoting the "Lawless One."

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

This could be one individual many identify as the antichrist, or it could be the rise of a class of lawless clerics appearing in the apparatus of church structures -- the position taken here.

Be revealed: The Greek word *apocalupto* means "to uncover or to unveil or to disclose." It is a future tense implying that there will be an unveiling of lawless men and their character (or, a single antichrist). The Man of Sin (Lawless Mankind), though having roots in the world of ancient Christianity (v. 6), would nevertheless endure, in some form or another, until the end of time; i.e., until the Second Coming of Christ.

In view of this, the Man of Sin cannot be some persecuting enemy that faded into oblivion centuries ago, nor can it be a single political leader appearing at the end of history. This provides us with a clue. *The Man of Sin is not an eschatological figure but a class of mankind that rules churches—lawless men using the church as a tool to accomplish their own ambitions.* When the Lord comes, lawless men will be perched in many pews. At that time, the antinomian man will be divested of power by the Lord's appearance at the end of the Christian age (v. 8; cf. Revelation 19:15).

Signs and Wonders

9-10 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders . . .

After the working of Satan: The Man of Sin opposes God and exalts himself against all that is genuinely sacred (v. 4). He feigns religiosity, but his true character reveals that he is diabolic. His activity actually is "according to the working of Satan." Whether, this is a single individual or a class of men is the question raised in this commentary. That

charlatans abound augurs well for the position that the antinomian man is a class of charlatans leeching themselves to the church.

Signs, wonders, and deception: He (or this class of men) deceives those who do not love the truth by character of the “lying wonders” he effects (vv. 9-10). Jamie Bloomfield calls these “pretended miracles” (p. 345).

These “wonders” are not in the category of Christ’s miracles. R. C. H. Lenski has well commented:

“So many are ready to attribute real miracles to Satan and to his agents; the Scriptures never do” (p. 1961, 426).

In identifying the Lawless Man, one must thus look for a post-apostolic movement that claims to prove its authenticity by miracles . . . by predictions allegedly coming true. The Roman Catholic Church with its miracle of the Sun in Portugal (1917), the Man of Lenciano (700 AD), Padre Pio (St Pio of Pietrelcina) (1887-1867), and the stigmata of various nuns and friars come to mind. Consider the following from this Catholic Website:

“This website is devoted to the many Miracles of the Church that have occurred throughout the ages including the incorruptible bodies of the Saints, extraordinary miracles of the Eucharist, the miraculous blood of St Januarius, the Miraculous Medal- The Virgin Mary's appearances to St Catherine Laboure, and also Jesus comes alive -the miraculous crucifix of Limpis, and also marvels surrounding the relics of the Saints, the Miraculous Mystical Voice from the next world and many others.” - See more at:

<http://www.miraclesofthechurch.com/#sthash.QZf8D5LQ.dpuf>

But, the Catholic Church does not have an exclusive claim on miracles. Consider all the Pentecostal, Charismatic faith-healers that preach a *miracle-a-day*.

Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) and his pursuit of self-authenticating experiences fits well here. Loyola created the Jesuit order, a society of radical religious zealots that has been called the assassination squad of the Roman Catholic Church. This lair of roaring lions committed to "the poisonous cup," led by the Black Pope, have murdered thousands of Protestants, world leaders, and even white popes. These secret, sinister figures certainly fit the classification of "the lawless man" that will perish.

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2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved

Deceivableness: This does not mean potential to be deceived, but in the process of being deceived. Deception comes on those who do not love the truth but love fictions, fables, and falsehoods – those that “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.”

In them that Perish – a present middle participle indicating the subject participates in the action – a reference not to the deceivers, but to the objects of deception – a contrast to them that are being saved (2:13). The followers of the lawless man perish because they do not accept the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, their faith is in their experiences

Consider that in our time those that are deceived: druggies, porn victims, evolutionists, humanists, Zionists, Sodomites, Lesbians, women preachers, alcoholics, transvestites, gender-bender followers and the like.

Because – a reference to God’s judicial visitation upon those being deceived.

Ellicott notes “they that perish” has no reference to the doctrine of predestination.

2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Strong delusion: The God who sends a strong delusion –the One is also the One Who restrains in verse six and seven. A delusion is a fiction. Men are in love with fiction from political promises to Hollywood movies -- fictions of evolution, the Big Bang, a round earth, alien invasions, going to the Moon, bi-sexual identity, global warming, the AI bionic man, and the like.

The “strong delusion” is a reference to Judicial action promised in chapter one. Delusion and entrapment in falsehoods is a sign that God is judging men now!

2 Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

Consider the whole legal profession that serves dead fictional corporations that exist only on paper; and, fake science – beliefs in evolution, global warming, man-made hurricanes, vaxxines, communism, gender-bender choices, etc.

Likewise, history is a study of what winners want you to think about victories and defeats. Wheat is surrounded by husks. The delusion comes

on those “who love not the truth” in verse ten. The problem with those who follow the Lawless Man is that they are not in search of truth. Rather, they are in search of a religion that licenses their iniquity. And, the lawless churchman (men of sin) offers it to them.

The homosexual community that barter for the legality of same-sex “marriages” and for ordination of Sodomites to the Christian ministry belong to this class of *anomians*. The followers of Ignatius Loyola and false spirituality are of this class and will be damned. Why? Because they love fiction rather than truth, they are eternally condemned. The emphasis here is upon unbelief, their pleasure in law-breaking, and damnation.

2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The purpose of the delusion in verse 11 is that one and all of the deceived might be judged; that God’s judgment might be seen as fair and just.

Note that this judgment was not initiated until after the love of Christ was offered to them in the gospel; that rejection of the gospel and plunging into the deception of Satan through the “man (men) of sin” is incurable.

The unforgiveable sin is “who believed not the truth and had pleasure in **the** unrighteousness;” that is, those loving the deception imposed upon them by lying religious men (the man of sin).

13-14 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In contrast to the lawless man is the Christian man who has heard the truth through gospel proclamation and believed it. In juxtaposition to those who love fiction and are condemned is the Christian man who loves truth, and who is destined to share in the glories offered in the gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Despite the apostasy in 2:3; 2:10, the gospel was and is gloriously advancing around the globe. In contrast to lawless men that are doomed to hell are the elect of God destined to experience the fullness of Christ's salvic powers.

15-17 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Stand fast: The verb "stand" (*steko*) is a present imperative. This is Paul's practical application. Because of the rumors circulating that the Day of Christ had passed, Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to continuously and vigorously stand in the truth they received from him. His concern that the gullible might drift away from the gospel and into the error of the apostates has now been addressed. Consequently, the apostle holds out a hope that the Thessalonians will experience relief from their stress and strength to continue doing good from his exhortation.

Comfort and Establish: This is the same exhortation Paul gave the Thessalonians in his first letter in chapter 5:9-11.

The word "encourage" (*parakaleo*) means "to cajole, urge, beg, request and summon."

Because Christians tend to become discouraged by the avalanche of apostasy crumbling on them, Paul calls this assembly of Christians to employ the gifts of exhortation.

Deception is evidence that God is performing his righteous judicial work among mankind.

Secondly, the term "build up" (*oikodomeo*) reminds us of the need to build up the body of Christ so that it is strong enough to resist the apostates.

In conclusion, the Man of Sin is the antinomian man, an opponent of God's law-order. This could be a super Antichrist or even apostate popes, but it is more likely referring to lawless men leading individual congregations into the deceptions of Satan. Before the Second Coming there will be "the Apostasy" spawned by a class of clerics that individually fit the description *o'anthropos tas anomias*.

Liberal pastors, female preachers, and Charismatic fraudsters fit this category of men.

Source: adated from Stockton, "[Towards Exegetical Eschatology](https://sedm.org/Forms/17-Theology/TowardsExegeticalEschatology.pdf)" (https://sedm.org/Forms/17-Theology/TowardsExegeticalEschatology.pdf)

Additional Note: the term "anomian man" is used in the singular and not the plural. The use of the singular does not necessarily support the idea of one, super-antichrist at the end of history.

Rather, *the use of the singular is a literary device* used to clarify the subject presented. Discussing a subject in the plural (mass nouns) such as "lawless men" could be confusing even though there is more than one lawless man operating at the end of the church age. Each denomination must identify the lawless man rising to power within the system and have "them" / he / she removed from power.

For example:

A: Using the pronoun "I" believe, can be very personal and offensive. For this reason, authors will use the terms "We" believe to express an opinion or "I" to express the opinion of a group.

B. A football coach might say, "I need some water" when he really means "My team needs some water."

C. A soccer coach might say in an interview, "my players" were confused when he was really thinking of singular player that was confused. Coaches do this all the time in order to remove the pressure from a single player.

D. The psalmist will use the term "wicked" to refer to a class of men when in fact the cause of the psalmist's troubles is caused by a single man or a class of men in society. See Psalm 58 and notice how the psalmist switches from addressing a class of evil men in the nation to addressing the presence of wicked men.

That is, there may be a good reason to use the term "I" or "we," or to substitute a singular noun for a plural noun for easy or clarity.

Addendum



Evidence of Apostasy in our Day

Orthodox Christianity with its correct beliefs about God, Christ, the Scripture, and the gospel is the foundation of a healthy church and the bedrock of civil government. Truth is power. Twisted beliefs are the tools of Satan to hinder, handicap, and enslave men to sin and weakness. Consider the following as evidence of apostasy in our day:

1. **Abandonment of the Ordinance of Head Coverings:** The doctrine of head coverings is an ordinance of the church as much as communion and baptism (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). Veiless woman are evidence of apostasy from the Scripture – evidence of a departure from God’s law-order regarding headship in the family and church. Shouldn’t men take off their baseball caps (cowboy hats) when coming to church and isn’t it proper for women to wear a veil, hat, or some type of scarf to cover her hair as a token of their submission to God’s law-order? Veiless women show the apotheosis of feminism in the church and feckless men who deny God’s law-order.
2. **A False Gospel:** preaching Christ in the heart instead of Christ rose from the dead; preaching the need for self-esteem instead of Christ-esteem; preaching the need for man’s goodness instead of the blood of Christ.
3. **Antinomianism:** This view believes that Christians are not bound by God’s law and that they are free to develop their own law-order – an act of idolatry. This includes hostility toward the Law of the LORD God; denial that sanctification involves obedience to God’s law; denial the Ten Commandments are relevant for Christian living; preaching grace is the opposite of law; permissiveness; preaching that grace means a man can do whatever is right in his own eyes.

4. **Apotheosis of Government:** promoting that government is the solution for all things; that government can do anything it wants; that no one should disagree with public policy.
5. **Casualness:** How is dressing down to come to church in shorts, tank tops, sleeveless dresses honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of kings? While there are dangers to formal religion, few things compare with spiritual disaster of casual dress, careless living, and mediocrity.
6. **Charismatic Pseudo Spirituality:** ushering in a false spirituality that creates reckless and careless behavior: jibber-jabber, fake healings, emotionalism, dancing in the isle, irresponsible living, slaying in the spirit, holy laughter, et al.
7. **Communism:** Isn't the drive to create a classless, sexless, anti-material society contrary to the facts of human existence – an idolatrous agenda for mankind? – A system that rewards evil and punishes virtue? Any system that ignores the rights of man or the limitations of government end up supporting total control by total government over the total man.
8. **Communion based salvation:** Any religious system that teaches the bread and the wine are the body of Christ and that one must partake of the bread and wine to have salvation.
9. **Fornication:** Isn't fornication a disqualifying sin to enter the kingdom of God? Why do churches tolerate pre-marital unions and even encourage them?
10. **Democracy:** A form of church government that encourages churches to vote their way to success . . . or ruin – a force causing pastors to be the servant of a congregation and not a servant of God.

11. **Denial of Creation:** Any adoption of fake science that believes the earth is millions of years old and that men are a product of time plus chance.
12. **Denial of the Deity of Christ:** Any teaching that denies the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man – any teaching that “Jesus was a great teacher, but not God.”
13. **Denial of the Humanity of Christ:** Any teaching that denies the Lord Jesus Christ is truly a man . . . like us . . . with flesh and blood.
14. **Denial that the Holy Spirit is Divine:** This includes any teaching that the Holy Spirit is a force, a power, or phenomenon, but not God.
15. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI):** Not unlike affirmative action, DEI is a communist agenda that punishes competent men in order to force an organization to advance minorities and women to positions of responsibility that leads to inferior leadership and mediocre corollaries.
16. **Dual Covenant Theology:** The belief that Jews can still be saved without believing in Jesus; that God still has a plan for Jews apart from salvation in Christ; that modern Ashkenazi “Israel” are the chosen of God; that Israel will replace the church in God’s economy.
17. **Fake Revival:** Substituting human emotion for being controlled by the Spirit. There is no short cut for responsible living. No one is able to bypass the need to die to self and to love others. A fake revival leads to fake Christians, with a fake spirituality, and a fake gospel.
18. **Feminism:** We love our sisters in the Lord and can’t do without them, but to encourage women to rule over their husbands, church, and state is an abandonment of God’s law-order. Attached to this is the unscriptural belief that murder is a right and that a married woman has exclusive rights over her own body (1 Corinthians 7:2ff).

19. **Gay Theology:** The belief that homosexuality is not a sin. Consequently, the full gospel of rescue from sin's tyranny is withheld from those who self-identify as "gay." It includes any acceptance of the LGBTQ lifestyle is an abomination. Apostasy exists where churches accept "gay-marriage" as respectable instead of a great sin that needs deep repentance.
20. **Higher Criticism:** Adopting the Wellhausen School of Higher Criticism – a belief the Scriptures are not reliable, accurate, or authentic.
21. **Humanism:** adopting the belief that man is the measure of all things and that success is a matter of human choices including Arminianism that believes salvation is a matter of human choice; that man can choose whether or not He can go to heaven.
22. **Inclusivism:** The belief that faith is not necessary for salvation and that God's mercy is so wide that it embraces all non-Christian peoples on the earth.
23. **Incorporation:** God's churches turning over their assets and administrations to the IRS by becoming 502 c 3 religious organizations alongside the church of Satan and the cults.
24. **Messianic Judaism:** The trend to subjugate the church to Jewish traditions and Talmudic teachings.
25. **Legalism:** Any message or variation of the concept that man must save himself and do his part to be saved; trusting in one's own righteousness aside from Jesus' work on the cross to gain acceptance with God.
26. **Liberalism:** Any religious thought that interprets the Scripture through the lens of modern knowledge, modern ethics, modern science, and anarchy; or, denies the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture.

- 27.**Modalism:** The belief that the members of the Trinity are not three distinct persons but three different aspects of the same person.
- 28.**Montanism:** The belief that the Bible is either insufficient or incomplete, and that new revelation from God is being regularly given through modern day self-proclaimed prophets and prophetesses.
- 29.**Omnism:** the belief that all religions contain truth; that there is no absolute truth; and, that all religions are roads to the same God; that there are no roads to hell except being a “bad person.” Omnism is a synthesis of all heresies – a belief that Jesus is not the only way to God; that Jesus risen from the dead was created by the church. Closely associated with omnism is Universalism – the belief that everyone will go to heaven.
- 30.**Papal Primacy:** the belief that the Pope is head of the church (Catholic and Protestant) and the Vicar of Christ.
- 31.**Pelagianism:** The belief that human nature is untainted by the Fall of Man and that man’s mind and will is not corrupted with Original Sin.
- 32.**Pluralism:** The belief that two or more religions can be true at one time; that contradiction is of no concern; and, the belief that multiculturalism is a strength and not a weakness to overcome.
- 33.**Positive Thinking:** the belief that positive thoughts can create God-like abilities and Christ-like character in the man.
- 34.**Prayers to Mary:** Mary should be honored and held up as a model for all men in her devotion, purity, and obedience; but, she is not God nor is she the 4th Person of the Trinity.
- 35.**Prosperity Gospel:** The belief that the promises of the Gospel include physical health, earthly pleasures, and earthly wealth.

36. **Protestantism:** The belief that every man can do what's right in his own eyes and the view that there are no good church traditions worthy saving; that, every local church must start from scratch to create its own version of a church; that the local church has no duty to follow the good traditions of historical Christianity.
37. **Psychology:** Wearing any set of glasses that interprets the gospel in terms of Eastern mysticism – a journey into self. This would include any church counseling programs that deny man's sinful nature, the need for responsible living, or the tendency to blame others for one's sins.
38. **Roman Catholicism:** the belief in apostolic succession, its priesthood, and its claim to be the sole interpreter of Scripture; that unity of the faith demands organizational alignment and subjugation to Rome
39. **Semi-Pelagianism:** The belief that man and God must cooperate to achieve man's salvation; that man must do his part to be saved; that man can only be saved after he has done his best to obey God's law.
40. **Social Gospel:** The movement that believes that believes the gospel is all about changing one's social, economic, and political status – that the purpose of the gospel is to cure social injustice with an over emphasis on political involvement.
41. **State Licensed Marriages:** This contains the belief that Christians cannot marry without permission from the state. Aren't state licensed marriages evidence a couple has forsaken the jurisdiction of Scripture?
42. **Transvestism and Drag Queens:** A belief cross-dressing is normal and that transvestites are not insane. Isn't it an abomination to have girly-boys dress in women's clothes to read Bible stories to children? Likewise, gender-bender confusion and sex alterations is also an abomination.

43. **Woman pastors:** Permitting and ordaining women to teach men and congregations in direct contradiction to the Scripture's prohibition against Eve's daughters leading men (1 Timothy 2:11-12, 14).
44. **Word of Faith:** The belief that positive human words have the God-like power to create and to destroy; that one can create a new reality by speaking the hope of that reality.
45. **Zionism:** The belief that Jews are superior to all men; that Jewish suffering is more terrible than the suffering of ordinary men; that Jews are always the victim and never the predator; that Jews are God's chosen people; that global governance is the only way to peace; that global governance will not destroy the rights of man completely. Isn't an unconditional devotion to fake Jews and fake Israel committing genocide in the Middle East an abandonment of the gospel? Unconditional devotion to any nation, regardless of its wicked character, is apostasy.

Daniel 7:7-9 - Daniel's Little Horn

Dr. Stockton Old Testament Theology: Unedited Lecture Notes

There is a change in revelation in this chapter.

In Daniel two, Nebuchadnezzar was the dreamer and Daniel the interpreter. In Daniel 7, Daniel is the dreamer and a standing angel is the interpreter. Because Daniel was able to recall Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpret it for him in the company of his staff, Daniel's competence as a diviner is not in question. Trust has already been established.

The dream in Daniel seven is like a kaleidoscope in that it launches us further into the revelation of the four kingdoms that will arise in history before the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Daniel seven takes us deeper into nature and character of the four world empires that will rule the world prior to the coming of the "Stone" mentioned in Daniel chapter two. The difference being that in Daniel seven the kingdoms are not introduced to us as precious metals, but as ferocious beasts. The imagery of four beasts represents four empires that will arise in history prior to the establishment of the kingdom. Our interest is in the fourth beast.

The lion with a human mind and wings plucked represents the ferocity and power and attributes of Babylon as well as its demise (7:4). Possibly, the reference *to plucked wings, and made to stand like a man* is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar's power, his depravation of mind, and his restoration to power after he returned to his senses (Daniel 3).

The bear on two sides with three ribs in its mouth represents the highly organized, kingdom-crushing power of Media-Persia. Possibly, the three

ribs refer to the conquest of the Babylonians, the Lydians, and the Egyptians.

The leopard with four wings represents Greece and the division of Alexander's empire under his four generals.

There is no lack of theories about Daniel's "little horn." Interpretations include Antiochus Epiphanes, a future antichrist, the papacy, Islam's expansion in Europe, and even America. Who is Daniel's "little horn?"

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

The fourth beast is so unique, it is not compared with any creature in the animal kingdom. Further, it has no name. Daniel leaves the image to our imagination. We are told, however, that this beast is "terrifying," "dreadful," and "exceedingly strong." The description of the destructive might of this monster is heightened by the mention of "iron teeth," "brazen claws" that "devoured" and "brake in pieces" (7:19), "stamped the residue" under its feet and *made war* "against the saints" (7:21).

The "ten horns" represent some kind of federation. This is a bone-breaking, nation-crushing, Christian-smashing empire. It is the same kingdom described by Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as having legs of iron and toes of iron and clay. It is the Roman Empire. (Think of Rome, Spain, England-United Kingdom, Europe, and the Americas)

Some suggest that the beast's ten horns are but a figurative representation of the political descendants of the old Roman Empire and thus the numeral is not to be pressed (Young 1980, 149)². Others assert that when Rome fell in 476 AD, the empire split into ten literal states. Thomas Newton³, citing Whitson, says that "the number of the kingdoms into which the Roman empire in Europe . . . was originally divided . . . was exactly ten" (1831, 234).

8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Particularly challenging, however, is how to interpret the ten horns, the three horns, and the little horn that plucked up three by its roots? There is no want of interpretations for this imagery. Ellicott says it is a person; Cambridge Bible says it is an empire. The fact this little horn has a "eyes like a man" and a "mouth speaking great things" augurs well that this is some kind of super-leader controlling a super-nation. The Roman mind dominated the world through military might and rule by law. That imperialistic instinct is with us today.

The historical candidates for the "little horn" is Rome that conquered Egypt, Asia, and Greece. The beasts and "little horn," which waged war on the saints, could not help but remind the men of the Old Testament of Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar and, later of course, Antiochus Epiphanes. But their hope was in judgment which means doom for the foes of the covenant and deliverance for its friends. So Daniel said that in

² Young, Edward. 1980. *The Prophecy of Daniel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

³ Newton, Thomas. 1831. *Dissertations on the Prophecies*. London, England: Blake

this final act "the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire" (Daniel 7:11, NIV). Then the saints were delivered and the kingdom given to them. The Punic, Macedonian, and Mithridtic Wars provide support for this view.

Some see the "little horn" as Antiochus Epiphanies (167 BC), but he was connected with the Greeks and not the Romans. Modern candidates for the "little horn" include such possibilities as the papacy and the Jesuits and their war against Protestants; an Islamic Caliphate; America; a future maniacal Antichrist, or some new world order super-federation germane to Europe. Zionists come to mind.

Some other facts about the fourth beast and its mutations need to be noted.

1. ***Different***: It was "different" (7:7) from the other beasts. The word "was different" (mashan'ah) is a Piel verb meaning "changed, altered, or perverted."
2. ***Iron teeth***: The fourth beast had iron teeth and claws of bronze (7:19). This could be a reference to military might (iron teeth) and legislative domination (bronze claws).
3. ***Eyes***: Having the "eyes of a man" suggest cunning, deceit, craft and political prowess. This could refer to Western corporations (Like NATO?) energized by man and their insentient existence.
4. ***Mouth***: Having a "mouth that spoke great things" (7:8, 20) suggests propaganda, blasphemy, political marketing, subversion, censorship, psychological warfare, mind control, brainwashing, and coercive persuasion.
5. ***Devours the whole earth***: This is a political figure in control of a state, not an ecclesiastical super cleric. The fact the beast was "larger" (7:20) than his fellows suggest enormous political power, endurance, and longevity as well as massive geographical dominion. Since the 4th beast

"devours the whole earth" (7:23), we must conclude the final government is intent on global expansion – a new world order – global governance. Benevolent imperialism, global reach, immigration, colonization, extermination, exploitation, assimilation, and conquered territories come to mind. This empire believes in its exceptionalism and has international imperial aspirations. (Is this the United Nations hell bent on international control or some future international body? We don't know.)

6. *I saw*: The verb "I saw" is a Piel participle meaning "as I was captivated." The fact that Daniel kept staring intently at the beast (7:7) may indicate the prolonged life and expansion of this kingdom. Rome and its legions not only subjugated the Mediterranean world, its military might and democratic form are the foundation of Western Civilization.

Since this is the final kingdom in history before the kingdom is given to the saints, the 4th beast must endure in some form till Christ returns. The ten horns, three horns, and little horn may model how Roman dominion has morphed its way through history even into the present world order. The United States, Europe, Britain, North America, South America, South Africa, and Australia bear the marks of the Roman Empire in the soul of these nations. Western governments have iron teeth, and use contracts as a weapon to crush dissidents.

7. *Until the ancient of days came* (7:22): There are two good reasons to look for fulfillment and identify the "little horn" in the future: (1) Since Daniel's dream morphed while meditating on the fourth beast into an image of a little horn growing from obscurity to a place of crushing dominance of three Roman states, we must consider the whole of the Roman history which includes its mutations through Western Civilization. (2) Since the kingdom is given to the saints after the "Stone" in chapter two crushes the metal image and the Ancient of Days sets up his judgment in chapter seven, the fourth beast is the last empire. In whatever form it mutates, the 4th beast must continue to exist until the

end of history. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that toward the end of this age there will arise a super-power "waging war on the saints" to overpower them (7:21). The UN comes to mind. At a time locked in the mind of God, the Ancient of Days will set up His kingdom, destroy the "little horn" and the fourth beast. This will end history as we know it.

8. *War against the Saints* (7:21): The little horn wages war against the saints (7:21). Who are the "saints" (qade'shin)? This is **not** "the Jews!" The term "Jew" is mentioned only twice and that in Daniel three. The term "saints" is used six times in Daniel Seven and comprise the followers of Christ the Messiah in the Christian era at the end of history.

9. The "**little horn**" is a lawless man that will persecute lawful ones. Since Christians acknowledge "no king, but King Jesus" (Pastor Jonas Clark), it is reasonable to see how a maniacal, glory-seeking "little horn" would be flustered by Christians who do not acknowledge the authority of tyrants nor comply with their man-made, godless statutes including but not limited to IDs, social security numbers, birth-certificates, driver's licenses, credit scores, vaccine passports, masks, covid-19 "gene-therapy" death jabs, and other madness by imperialists.

Since this head of state persecutes Christians, then he is antichrist. Since no specific persecution is described, we can assume that it includes all the tactics of a tyrant.

10. *Prevail over them* (7:21): The "little horn" prevails against the saints until the Lord gave a judgment on behalf of his people (7:21). The verb "prevail" or "overpowering" is a Piel verb implying a powerful capacity to dominate and subdue relevant, outspoken Christians. While the gospel will succeed in this age, believers should expect increasing hostility toward the Christian faith. The modern day secular state that silences Christian and regards them as obstacles to globalism is a product of the spirit that empowers the "little horn."

11. *Wearing down the saints* (7:25): This "wearing down" is expressed by another Piel verb (bela) which means "to harass." It speaks of public policy hostile to the Christian law-order as well as legal and judicial tyranny against non-conformists. But, his persecutions and successes are limited. He will not conquer Christianity.

Before us are persecuted saints of a quality different than the effeminate, compliant "Christians" of our time. True Christians will not escape the legal monopoly and judicial tyranny operating in this regime, but the gospel as a whole will succeed. John calls this the "patience" of the saints (Revelation 13:10).

12. *Change the times and laws* (7:25): This speaks of a legal revolution, the effort to overthrow the Christian law-order and to set up an alien law-order.

The expression "he shall subdue" (7:24) is masculine singular referring to the beast as a whole or an individual who will tumultuously and radically transform the entire system of government to mold it into a tool for world conquest. Law will be used as a weapon to abuse Christians. Tyrants preach the "rule of law" while practicing "*rule by law!*"

13. *Times*: The expression "times, time, and half a time" (7:25) refer to a specific period in history, limited in duration.

Who is the "little horn?" We know the nature of the 4th beast and the uniqueness of the "little horn" captured the attention of Daniel. We can safely conclude the "little horn" is a head of state with imperial aspirations who morphs out of the Roman Empire that is hostile to Christianity. But, since we do not know where we are in history, it is difficult to identify the "little horn" as an historical figure or future entity with absolute certainty. Neither Antiochus Epiphanes, or the early Roman Empire, or the papacy, or an Islamic Caliphate as the "little horn" satisfies the particulars here.

His identify appears to be hidden until the final hour of Christian history; that is, it is O.K. to say "I don't know." In fact, it is not our duty to know the future. But, we are permitted to see the end of history through a glass dimly.

9. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

The verb "beheld" (hava) is a Piel participle meaning to "stare constantly and intensely." Four kingdoms will arise in history.

The rest of Daniel seven provides insights into the final government that will rule the world. It informs us that history will end after the global expansion of the 4th beast and the final holocaust against the saints (Christians) (7:25). During the reign of the "little horn," God will disrupt society, terminate history, and destroy the final empire. Afterward, the Ancient of Days will set up his glorious kingdom.

The Ancient of Days is described as having garments "white as snow." This speaks of authority, purity, righteousness, and holiness;

hair as "pure wool" speaks of judicial wisdom and knowledge;

"throne like the fiery flame" reminds us of judicial light, power, and eternal judgment; and,

"wheels as burning fire" takes us to Ezekiel's vision and the operations of Divine Providence.

The title "Ancient of Days" is translated plural, but in the Hebrew the term "Days" is singular (yom). Since the term "days" is singular and the

vision so similar to the image John saw in his vision, we must conclude that Daniel saw the King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes on the Little Horn

1. The fact that Antiochus lived during the Hellenistic Period and was dead for a hundred years before the fourth beast comes to power eliminates him as a viable candidate for Daniel's "little horn."
2. That Christ came in the middle of history while Rome was controlling Jerusalem must be a consideration in interpreting this passage. The kingdom entered history in the person of Christ without disrupting the political structures to create "sons of the kingdom." That Christ will return to demolish man's institutions and to rescue his Christian "saints" must be conceded.
3. That the "little horn" is the papacy has some compelling arguments. The papacy is in Rome; has ruled over kings; has a militant Jesuit order dedicated to controlling states; possesses a papal bank in London that controls more wealth than any corporation; and, it has instigated persecutions against Protestants (e.g. French Huguenots).

But, these are 16th century arguments. Further, the "little horn" appears to be a head of state and not a religious leader. Because the "little horn" does morph out of the Roman Empire, and is in existence at the end of the age. Identifying the "little horn" with Medieval popes has difficulties.

4. That the "little horn" is an Islamic Caliphate is of interest since Islam did conquer North Africa and much of the Levant. Further, since we are bombarded by news reports about Islamic terrorists operating in Europe, the idea that the final persecutors will be Moslems is also compelling. But, it is difficult to conceive how an Islamic Caliphate is

germane to the "little horn" which arises out of the Roman Empire as a head of State.

5. That the fourth beast is a confederation of nations with political mutations is true to the text; and, that the "little horn" is a specific human personality has merit. Thus, the text suggests the fourth beast is an entity, a political structure ruled by a single man.
6. The fact that the fourth empire is a beast reveals its cruel, callous, unconscionable character not unlike government corporations operating in commerce today.

Beasts kill, devour, and mutilate their victims. Modern states are powerful, dead, fictional corporations energized by men capable of crushing opponents to achieve global dominion. Living souls have little chance of survival in the arena where judges and BAR attorneys act in favor of the Roman legal system. They have no conscience. Agencies like NSA, DOJ, IRS, U.S. District Courts, the FBI come to mind.

7. That the "little horn" is associated with America or the United Nations is compelling because we are aware of present day politics, the new world order, the domination of the American military, indoctrination into statism, and the hostility of the "system" against Christianity, and America's bullying tactics around the globe.

When we see changing laws like promotion of abortion, gay marriage, and political correct speech, hasn't America taken on the character of the "little horn" that makes "alterations" in "law" (7:25)?

But, peshar interpretation⁴, while extremely interesting, is a poor tool for accurate interpretation of a Biblical passage.

8. That the "little horn" is a future head of state is compelling. Since the fourth beast is in existence when the kingdom of God arrives, a mutation of the fourth beast must be morphing its way through the political machinery in our time.

While we may not be able to identify the "little horn" with specificity, we have no difficulty conceiving of how a maniac can get elected to office through the democratic process. While our country was founded as a republic, it is the Roman doctrine of democracy that is preached as gospel among the nations.

Modern politicians and media personalities are obsessed with democracy and hold it up as the hope of mankind. But, with law in the people, and not the Lord God, democracy is merely a tool for antichrist imperialism. After all, it is not those that vote that count, but those who count the votes that count.

9. That the "little horn" is an unidentified future antichrist is compelling because the context supports the rise of a superpower out of the fourth beast that is in existence till the appearance of God's kingdom. While there is a unity to the prophetic word, grabbing a "little horn" from Daniel, an "abomination" from Matthew, a "man of sin" from Paul, an "antichrist" from John and a "beast" from revelation and forming an absolute end-time scheme appears bold and ambivalent to this student of Scripture.

⁴ Peshar interpretation starts with current events as the basis of interpreting a Bible passage rather than considering the historical context of a passage.

10. The judgment in Daniel 7 is deferred to the Messianic Figure, and this Figure who judges their adversary is true Israel's hope.

This presentation is typical of all apocalyptic literature which dwells on the final judgment that will vanquish Israel's foes and bring deliverance to God's people. The picture is always painted in black and white. There are no gray areas between the enemies of God and the people of God. God destroys the wicked and saves the righteous. The true People of God win!

11. The imagery in 7:13-14 is that of the Son of Man ascending into the presence of the Ancient of Days, not descending from His Presence. We have here a coronation; that is, the arrival of the Son of Man before the throne is the commencement of His reign.

In conclusion, it appears Daniel's vision represents the end of history as we know it. Out of Western Civilization a super-leader will arise to rule over the world. He will succeed in part, but his demise is as certain as the coming of our Lord.

The Beast and His Followers

Revelation 13

Excerpt from Stockton's Commentary on Revelation #11 -

<https://nikeinsights.famguardian.org/publications/>

The First Beast

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The sea: John was in heaven. Now, John is on the earth standing by the sea. Like a dream, his location suddenly shifts. The cosmic battle between the red dragon and the seed of the woman (chapter 12) has moved from heaven to earth (13:1). The dragon calls the Beast out of the sea.

A Beast: John saw (aorist) a Beast coming out of the sea. The sea is a symbol of the restless current of politics. Out of this surf and foam arises a grotesque monster. This political entity is presented in ancient mythological imagery. The monster has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns. On his heads are blasphemous names. Birthed by the hideous dragon in chapter twelve, this behemoth stomps through history stalking the sons of God. The gigantic monster is Satan's instrument to enslave men and crush the gospel message. Taking the form of a serpent to tempt the first man and woman, Satan's baby snake grew into huge, hideous red dragon who takes the form of a colossal Beast to control the rest of humanity. The difference between the dragon and the Beast is the

difference between spirit and form. The dragon is Christ's archenemy, Satan. The Beast is the corpus of Satan; i.e., human institutions, particularly human government controlled by maniacs and psychopaths. To the original readers, the Beast was Rome. To us, the Beast has morphed into present forms of international government that command our attention.

Seven heads: John interprets the symbols for us. The seven heads are seven kingdoms. The ten horns are 10 kings (Chapter 17). Possibly, John's creature is related to the great kingdoms that dominated God's people in ancient Israel. Some see the seven heads as the adversarial kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Caird (1966) understands the seven heads as seven Caesars. Julius Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, and Titus were officially declared divine. Futurists see this creature as a Super-Antichrist. Certainly the Caesars took on blasphemous names such as *augustus*, *theo* (god), *kyrious* (Lord), and *soter* (Savior). There is little doubt that the manifestation of the Beast in John's day referred to Rome with its legionnaires and cohorts stationed around the Mediterranean.

My understanding is that the seven heads represent multiple manifestations of political opposition to the gospel. The Beast was before John's time, was present in John's time, and will be present until the end of this age (17:8). This monster represents political institutions that unleash the force and effect of law to squash the gospel. In Hezekiah's day, the Beast was Assyria. In John's day, it was Roman rulers opposed to Christians in Asia Minor.

In our day, the Beast represents those government institutions that oppose the gospel: Bolsheviks, communists, democracies in the West, Ashkenazi Israel in the Middle East are obvious instruments of the Devil which could be easily labeled as "the Beast." Even today, lusty politicians sit in positions of power in Congress, in the courts, and on the boards of

education ready to squash any representation of Christianity. When an entire nation culls Scripture reading in the class room, and replaces it with the doctrines of feminists, atheists, psychologists, evolutionists, and transvestites is not Satan working through the system?

Revelation 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Four Beasts: The imagery is similar to that of Daniel's vision (Daniel 2 & 7) where he saw four Beasts representing the political powers of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. As Daniel's friends experienced persecution from the Babylonian State, the Christians in Asia Minor faced persecution from the Roman State.

Daniel's big message was that God's people will be subjected to the cruel powers of the anti-God forces until the kingdom of God arrives in history.

John wants his readers to know that the difficulties they were experiencing from civil rulers in the Roman Empire were due to Satan's grip on human institutions. Behind the punishing political policies of Rome perched a demonic spirit, the red dragon, Satan himself.

Dragon: Satan empowered the monster which John describes as the hideous the dragon. He appears to have absolute authority on earth. The Beast is an entity or an institution, a political system with tyrannical powers, and not a single political figure. To John there were many antichrists. Rome was just another form of the Beast. Whatever or whoever the Beast is, the imagery is set in direct contrast to the Holy Trinity. The inhabitants of heaven worship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The inhabitants of Earth worship the unholy trinity: Satan, the first Beast, and the second Beast. The spirit is Satan; the form and substance of opposition comes from government institutions.

Because this image expresses a general principle of satanic opposition, we may expect multiple manifestations of satanically inspired political systems throughout history. The Beast, therefore, represents despot rulers that demand absolute allegiance by its citizenry. Before us grows a State that seeks the total subjugation of the total man to total government.

Revelation 13:3-4 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

Wounded: One of the strange aspects about this monster is the wound in his head that was healed. Is the death representative of physical death or political death? Interpreters disagree on what John means by this death-wound. The wound that was healed refers to some kind of power restored.

Preterists understand this phenomenon to be the Nero-revivus myth. Nero committed suicide in 68 AD. A rumor arose that this infamous emperor survived, was alive, and hiding in the empire seeking the time and place to take revenge. Resilient Rome seemed to survive all threats.

Futurists take this wound literally and see a future Antichrist who will appear to rise from the dead. When President John Kennedy was assassinated, many futurists thought Kennedy was the Antichrist and that he was the one who was going to recover from a literal head wound. These kinds of contemporary speculations would have no application and provide no comfort to John's audience.

The Reformed camp tends to see the Beast as papal power that revitalized the Roman Empire for a thousand years.

Another view interprets “one of the heads” and its death-wound as a political death with a political recovery. Beastly nations seem to live and die, they appear and reappear in history. John may have a particular nation or Caesar in mind. Possibly, we do not have enough information to be dogmatic. Whatever is meant by the wound that was healed (evqerapeu,qh), this healing appears to be in juxtaposition to the resurrection of our Lord.

The dragon refers to Satan, the power behind the throne.

Who is like unto the Beast: This is not divine adoration, but civil subjection which required the people to obey Roman emperors.

Wonder: The world responded with wonderment (evqauuma,sqh). How could anyone worship such an ugly hideous monster? He not only terrorizes people into submission, his counterfeit healing attracts worshippers — possibly a political miracle.

By worship (proseku,nhsan), John means allegiance, loyalty, servitude. Every municipality wanted to contract with Rome. The political monster exercises political power and captures the loyalty of men and diverts them from devotion to Christ. The Beast rules with convincing authority. Few feel they can successfully resist his military muscle. Rome appeared invincible. When evil becomes institutionalized, what single individual has the power to correct the abuse and overreach of government? This support of absolute government and use of force to create a utopian society is called “statism.”

John may be referring to oriental emperor worship prevalent in the empire. Rome always struggled with factions. The emperor cult united the provinces. Early gladiators would say, “Hail Caesar, we who are about to die for thee . . .” But, to the early Christians, this was a clear warning: *to worship the emperor was to worship the dragon*. Loyalty to Caesar was

treason to Christ. Likewise, those who put their trust in government will be crushed under a mudslide of disappointment (Psalm 118: 8, 9).

Have you noticed what a big part government plays in American life? The American media makes a god out of government? Politicians view the State as the solution for ALL man's problems. Big problems call for big government. Many have an idolatrous view of government talking about it day and night: listen, get involved, vote, and obey! When all hope is in Washington D.C., idolatry reigns! Statism reigns! Satan reigns!

[Note: Statism exists where people believe in the necessity of a centralized government that creates its own laws to control society and commerce. Terms like "our government," "my president," "our leader," "our military," "leader of the free world," "new world order," "we are the government," "it's the law," "everyone has to pay taxes," "we need to make the world safe for democracy," "our commander and chief," "the good of society," "for the children," "paying taxes is a civic duty," "diversity is a strength," "let us say the Pledge of Allegiance," "everyone needs to pay their fair share," and "we owe it to ourselves" are propaganda phrases used by statist to recruit tithing worshippers (taxpayers) for the State.]

Revelation 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Speaking great things: One of the unique features of this Beast is its oratory skills and its ability to attract a following. Its policies are not anti-religious, but they are opposed to the gospel. "Blasphemes" refer to his hostility against the true God. Possibly, the apostle wants his readers to beware of State propaganda. John wanted his audience to know that Satan was now empowering his progeny — Rome. The masses in the empire appear to offer blind allegiance to the Beast, but not so with Christians.

Forty-two months equals 1260 days. Futurists see this as the 3 1/2 year reign of a future antichrist. Hendriksen sees this as the gospel age (p. 147). Another view understands the 42 months as representing a limited time. Every evil political system has an end. It is not the will of God that humanistic governments succeed. The State's authority is limited. Satan's ability to persecute the church is limited. Historically, Rome's persecution of Christians was not universal. During Domitian reign (81-96), his persecutions lasted only a short time.

There can be no doubt that the Beast is Rome! But, the Beast morphs its way through history and governments of every age adopt certain characteristics of Rome; that is, when Christians find themselves under secular, humanistic regimes which promote evil and oppress the gospel, the lessons of this chapter must be applied to their particular political quagmire.

Revelation 13:6-7 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Blasphemy: The word "blaspheme" (blasfhmi,aj) refers to contemptible speech—lies, propaganda, disputation, and slander. St. John wanted his readers to know that Rome opposed God's law order. The object of this hostility is God's heavenly dwelling and God's true people on earth (Christians). Government has to compete for the affections of the people, and religion is often viewed as a fierce competitor with the State. State propaganda covert operations are an effective tool to destroy the people's trust in Deity. Slander Christ, His gospel, and Christians . . . and the simple minded gobble up the lies like sugar ants on honey.

In reference to the early Christians, Francis Schaffer said they were put to death not because they were Christians, but because they were deemed *atheists*. Because they would not worship Caesar, Christians were labeled infidels. Furthermore, because Christian churches would not incorporate and surrender to the jurisdiction of Caesar, Rome watched over Christians with an evil eye. The Beast demanded absolute allegiance. When Christians confessed another king, King Jesus, they were labeled as traitors and charged with treason (Acts 17:6-7). Imperialistic Rome had little tolerance for dissent.

This hostility can be seen in our day in countries where Moslems demand a pure Islamic State and a pure application of sharia law. Governments are run by clerics and mosques are funded by the State. Dissension is not allowed. Conformity is required. Preaching of the gospel is forbidden. Conversion is a crime. Churches are burned, and Christians are beheaded. Saudi Arabia is as hostile to Christians as Rome ever was. Even in America, there are humanistic, Zionistic elements in our society attempting to eradicate every reference to Christ in public life. All the government has to do is announce to the media that they are investigating a “radical, right wing, Christian anti-government” church and every household immediately sympathizes with the State.

One pastor was ordered to take cultural sensitivity classes after he visited a nursing home and asked an atheist woman if she would mind if he prayed for her. In March 2009, the Missouri Independent Analysis Centered labeled Christians, homeschoolers, constitutionalists, and people who flew the American flag as “domestic terrorists.” The State will not attack Christianity directly. If it wants to silence political opponents, slander is the government’s weapon of choice. And, it works!

To the early Christians, Rome’s war against “the atheists” meant that Christians had to choose between allegiance to Rome or allegiance to Christ. They could not be neutral. To submit was to fail. The choice was

between loyalty to Christ and risk offending the State, or pledging allegiance to the State and risk offending the Lord.

Even today in some parts of the world, believers have to make this same choice as beastly governments wage war against kingdom proclamation.

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

To “**dwell upon the earth**” refers to worldly men who see the earth as their home or legal domicile. They are earthly minded, not heavenly minded. Possessing ambitions that are here and now, they lack the life that the Son gives to those who trust Him.

“**Worship**” means “to kiss.” Here it refers to the “earth dweller’s” homage and devotion to the State. The Beast is popular. He has a following. People trust the Beast. They adore the power, policy, and cruelty of the state. Democracy triumphs! The inhabitants of the earth, those who do not know God, pledge allegiance to this anti-Christian, authoritarian system.

More specifically, worship refers to allegiance and contracts with Rome wherein municipalities exchanged rights for benefits. Their total focus involved the affairs of the State. If people do not know God, their only hope resides in kings and princes of this world. To many, a “better” representative government is the hope of humanity.

We would do well to remember that the majority of men saw nothing wrong with the Beast. He had the support of the majority. But, the majority are seldom correct.

^{NAS}Exodus 23:2 "You shall not follow a multitude in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice;

Wrong does not cease to be wrong because the majority supports it. Democracy, after all, is *the collective wisdom of individual ignorance*.

When the majority act insanelly, the sane appear insane.

The Book of Life is a metaphor for salvation. The main message of Christ was the kingdom of God wherein he encouraged men to strive to enter into it. John wants his readers to know there is only one citizenship that counts — to be a citizen of heaven and to have one's name registered in the Lamb's book of life (Luke 13:24; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 3:5, 17:8, 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19).

There are two trees, the poisonous tree and the tree of life. Likewise, there are only two cities, the city man and the City of God. One cannot be a citizen of both. There are only two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Light or the Kingdom of Darkness. One cannot be a member of both. There are only two kings, Kurios Jesus or kurious Caesar. No man can serve two masters.

The phrase "from the foundation of the world" could modify either "written" or "slain." Both are true. The names of God's people are penned in God's book from the foundation of the world. Christ suffered for our sins at the cross before time began.

Here, John draws his first application. When one knows that his name is written in heaven, he can endure opposition on earth. True Christians are loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do we know for sure our name is written in heaven? If not, how can we confront civil rulers and risk offending authorities? If our name is not on some government hate list, our Christian life isn't sprinkled with salt (Matthew 5:13)?

Revelation 13:9-10 If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth

with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Hear: The phrase, “If any man have an ear” is John’s way of saying, “Beloved, I want you to stand up and make an application to your life.” You have one mouth and two ears. Use them.

Many will be harassed. Some will suffer banishment. Others will be charged, tried, and martyred. John himself was exiled to the Isle of Patmos. This was a time for Christians to stand firm; to dig in their heels and to be faithful.

But, there is no such thing as an army of one. To resist the State can be suicide. One Christian with a sword is no match for a Roman legion. Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge and the survivors of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas can testify to man’s vulnerability against the thundering power of the State’s military forces.

Killed: If there is any encouragement here, it is in the phrase, “must be killed.” This is either a reference to the breakup of the Roman Empire (Clarke’s Commentary) or John’s way of telling the saints there was nothing they could do but endure the trauma; that political forces were beyond their control; that there was nothing they could do to stop the madness of their adversaries (Ellicott).

The word “patient” (h` u`pomoh) means to “to remain under.” When we go through difficult trials, we look for a quick exit. But, there is no exit from tyrannical regimes. This is John’s way of informing his people they must remain under the pressures from the State as they follow Christ.

The word “faith” (h` pi,sti) could refer to one’s personal faith or the need to be faithful. I understand this to refer to the need for each saint to fortify his personal beliefs. Severe persecution tests one’s fundamental convictions. There is very little one can do to stop an elephant

stampede. Likewise, there is little one Christian can do to halt the progress of evil metastasized to a political system. To openly resist the tyrannical State is a death warrant. If government is a god in the minds of people, and you are not a fawning member of the ruling party, you can expect to be treated like Typhoid Mary X. Nevertheless, we are called to stand our ground. This is the patience of the saints. Believe! Be faithful! Stand where you can.

The Second Beast

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

A **second Beast** appears from the earth. He is sometimes referred to as “the prophet.” This monster is camouflaged in wool. He has horns like a lamb and looks harmless, but the fact he speaks like a dragon exposes his true character. He is an agent of Satan.

Preterists see this Beast as the smaller confederate powers within Rome that exchanged allegiance to the Empire for political favors. Futurists see this as a future prophet who will attract followers to the alleged Antichrist. The Reformed camp sees this as the papacy.

Possibly, the second Beast refers to the dual role that Augustus filled as civil ruler and as Pontifex Maximus (high priest).

Maybe the second Beast refers to the government’s propaganda machine which appears to be harmless but is joined at the hip with the first Beast. States have a huge interest in controlling the media and spinning the news. No doubt Rome had its promoters that discharged information, disinformation, and misinformation through its reporters. A free press is a God-given right, but even these mechanisms are controlled by cloaked

powers with a political agenda. And, the democratic masses are easily manipulated by the tyrannical powers behind the media.

Revelation 13:12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed

The second Beast acts like a false prophet directing humanity to follow the first Beast. He is a propagandist skilled in the art of social conditioning. We might call this “brainwashing,” “indoctrination,” or “ballyhoo.” In one sense, he is a false Holy Spirit, a representative of the government that gives political speeches to expand the party base and promote public policy.

Seeing the papacy united with kings in the Middle Ages makes sense here. But, this would have little relevance to the original readers of the Apocalypse.

In the first century, the propagandists were priests for the imperial cult, a council of distinguished city representatives who promoted loyalty to Rome in exchange for political favors. In Asia Minor, citizens were required to place a pinch of incense on an altar before they entered the market place to do business. Refusing to honor Caesar in this manner could result in something as simple as rejection from the market place or something as serious as capital punishment.

Circa 30 AD., promoters of Rome circulated this publication: “Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved.”⁵ When Peter preached that

⁵ CA Farmer 241:5 (Oct. 5, 1974), p. 28.

Jesus is Lord, he declared war on Rome (Acts 4:12). Rome executed all the apostles who taught there was “another king, Jesus” (Acts 17:6-7). And, modern States will not tolerate Christians who do not pledge allegiance to the regime. Shortly after Vicky Weaver addressed the U.S. Attorney General for Idaho as “Servant of the Queen of Babylon,” she was executed by a government assassin along with her son and her dog (Ruby Ridge, August 1992).

Revelation 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

The word “wonders” (shmei/a) refers to “signs” or “miracles.” Making fire come down from heaven reminds us of Elijah the prophet. Whether this is literal or figurative has been a matter of dispute. Since this section of literature is a mythological allegory, the presumption should favor the figurative.

Fire from heaven: Apparently, this propagandist was a powerful political agent who wielded thumaturgical power to produce solidarity in the empire. It is not clear whether John is referring to counterfeit miracles that he regarded as fraudulent, or that he is referring to the tricks of a magicians and sorcerers in the service of a false religion, or that he is referring to a genuine manifestation of demonic power, or that he is referring to boasts of government about their accomplishments. Like our politicians, the Caesars took credit for all the good in the Empire and accepted little responsibility for the blunders of their administration. The weakness of democracy is that the weak can hide behind the majority, where no one has to accept responsibility for the failure of a political program.

One must ask, “What is the attraction of false systems like Mormonism, Islam, secularism and communism?” All have powerful leaders with a state propaganda machine that rewards solidarity and punishes dissent. Modern Iran is an illustration where civil-religious leaders may execute

anyone who does not adhere to Islamic Fundamentalism. Zionists are famous for their solidarity. Indoctrination and mind control are functions of the State. Monarchs play on public fears to advance their political agenda. Every politician employs the art of sophistry to win adherents and defeat enemies.

Revelation 13:14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

The word “deceiveth” (plana/) is a present active indicative verb which means “to lead astray” by the practice of deception. And, the wretched fact about deception is the deceived do not know they are being deceived.

The phrase “them that dwell on the earth” are the objects of dupery. They are set in direct contrast to God’s heavenly people who are not deceived. The propagandist is effective. His pragmatic methods work. Possibly, John is referring to methods used by the imperial cult to trick and deceive superstitious people. Sorcery and ventriloquism is attested in Acts (13:6; 16:16; 19:13). Perhaps, this applies to the propaganda machines that are associated with governmental powers; that is, sophistry, “spin,” and “fake news” used in the media outlets of a nation.

Futurists, however, foresee an apocalyptic ambassador who will be empowered by Satan to counterfeit the miracles of Christ. But, this would be of little interest to the original readers. They were facing Roman propaganda, imprisonment, and execution in their time. Likewise, there are historicists that read into this text the events of the 16th century, but this would have little relevance to the original readers.

Wounded by a sword: We learn that the Beast was wounded by a sword. Possibly, this refers to some type of military defeat . . . or assassination familiar to Romans. Julius Caesar was the first to gather all power unto himself. Though assassinated, the Caesars following him adopted his imperialistic ambitions.

Revelation 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

This is a difficult passage. Some futurists understand this to be a future Antichrist that will be placed into a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. But, such a phenomenal event would have little relevance to the churches of Asia Minor.

The historical background to the phrase he had “power to give life unto the image” is ventriloquism and the use of a Roman statue by a ventriloquist to create an illusion of a talking statuary. The language John employs made sense to the original readers. In Asia Minor, citizens were required to wear amulets and jewelry that signified loyalty to Rome or be subject to the charge of “treason.” Emperor worship was not only common in Egypt and China, but in Rome. Failure to offer a pinch of incense to Caesar was a capital offence. Regardless of the details here, John paints a picture of a system that is resolute in demanding consummate devotion to the system. Failure to comply meant prosecution, even death.

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 13:16-17 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell,

save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count⁶ the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The mark: What is this mark (a,ragma)? Dozens of interpretations abound. Prophecy teachers advance all kinds of interesting theories. Futurists relate the mark to a super Antichrist. Modern students identify the mark (a,ragma) with anything from a social security numbers and computer chips to literal tattoos on the forehead like MS-13 gang members and bar codes on commercial packages. Mainstream Bible teachers relate this number to one of the Caesars in the Roman Empire.

The practice of assigning numerical values to letters is called Gematria. By assigning Hebrew, Greek, and English letters a number, various calculations have been submitted to identify the Antichrist.

In the Roman world, a mark or “charagma” was a technical term for the imperial stamp used on commercial documents and coins. Either of these usages would explain the mark on the hand or forehead. This mark may or may not be literal. The LORD sent an angel to place a mark (tav)⁷ on

⁶ The verb “count” (yhfisa,tw) is an aorist active imperative. If the original readers were to obey this instruction, the name Nero Caesar would be 666. What relevance would calculating this number have if it applied to someone 2000 years future to the original readers? This is powerful evidence the book was written before 70 AD. and that it had immediate relevance. The fact that the Syrian version reads, “John the Evangelist in the Isle of Patmos, where he was thrown by Nero Caesar” must be considered when interpreting this passage.

⁷ A tav is a Hebrew letter that looks like a T or X which many believe is the OT. sign of the cross.

the foreheads of the faithful in apostate Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian siege in order to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. Imperceptible to the human eye, only angels could see the T on the forehead of the faithful. God has marked his saints, but not with a literal physical symbol. Without a pledge of allegiance to Rome, doing business in Caesar's market place was tenuous at best.

The number 666: I understand that there are at least sixty interpretations to the number 666. Many have tried to identify this with a particular person in modern times. Nero, the pope, Napoleon, Hitler, Henry Kissinger, Mikhail Gorbachev, Barack Obama, and President Donald Trump have been candidates for this infamous label. Endless possibilities abound. Such speculation is a waste of time. In a highly symbolic passage that primarily relates to the Christians of Asia Minor, any consideration of modern interpretations is speculative and presumptive.

We must ask, "What did the number 666 mean to the original readers?"

In Hebrew⁸, the name or number for Nero Caesar tallies to 666. In some manuscripts the number reads 616, the Latin equivalent to Nero Caesar⁹. Nero Caesar (54-68 AD.) is the strongest candidate for the symbol 666.

Like many numbers in Revelation are symbolic, the number 666 is symbolic. The number seven is the number of perfection and often

⁸ Each letter has a numerical value: Aleph is 1, Beth is 2, and so on until 10, then count by tens till 100, then by hundreds till we run out of letters. Nero Caesar in Hebrew is NeRON QeiSaR; adding up the letters we get "the number of the man", 666.

⁹ Some MSS known to Tischendorf read the number of the beast as 616 (Latin number for Nero Caesar: wrn rsq) instead of the Hebrew 666 (Nero Caesar in Hebrew characters: rsq !wrn).

symbolizes God's perfection.¹⁰ The number 666 is the number of man that symbolizes man's imperfection.

The point of the passage is that this economic system is controlled by autocrats in a pagan institution that demands absolute allegiance to the Roman State. It punished non-conformists.

All systems fail to achieve perfection (777). The Roman Empire, Romanism, Communism, Islam, and Democracy fail to produce a just political system (Isaiah 59: 14-15). For this reason, Christians pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done;" i.e., that men may recognize God's rule now and surrender to it.

Hand and head: Why the hand? Why the forehead? Again, there are over 60 interpretations to the question. Assigning numbers to men like you would to inanimate objects signifies the dehumanization of man. Governments tend to automate and robotize man. When the state regards people as "numbers" on a spread sheet they devalue individual human beings. Like numbers, tyrants can also decide to erase people.

The forehead is chosen because that is the origin of man's thought life. This system seeks to control the thinking of mankind through deception, intimidation, and coercion.

The hand is chosen because the hand represents human labor. This system seeks to control labor and to extract wealth from the common citizen in the form of taxation to perpetuate the system. Every modern government monopolized by the IMF has a system in place to control the minds of people through legalize and propaganda as well as an unconstitutional

¹⁰ When Isaiah saw the Lord in Isaiah 6, he heard the seraphim say, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God Almighty!" If the seraphim had spoken symbolically, they could have said, "Seven, seven, seven is the LORD God Almighty" referring, of course, to the perfection of God.

graduated system of taxation to fleece the sheeple. Identifying marks imply control, ownership, and servitude.

This passage has an application for our time! An interpretation that consigns this passage to a future dispensation *hinders Christians from discerning how their own government behaves like the Beast of Rome.*

The Beast morphs its way through history. At various times, governments take on the characteristics of Rome by demanding absolute allegiance to state policy and by controlling commerce. Every government that controls its citizens by indexing and assigning them numbers takes on the characteristics of a tyrant. When tracking, surveillance, and registration happens by a government in any age, Christians are called to resist. "Resistance to tyranny is service to God" - Thomas Jefferson.

As we consider our own technological age with birth certificates, social security numbers, credit cards, microchips, and driver's license numbers, it is not difficult to imagine a legislative ID system that assigns a number for the purpose of tracking people and controlling the economy. During pandemics governments express tremendous interest in tracking people – infected people as well as healthy people. The Real ID Act comes to mind. Since the fall of the World Trade Center in (September 11, 2001), Americans have demanded greater security. All kinds of governmental tracking systems have been embraced. RFIDs (Radio Frequency Identification Devices) can read driver's licenses, credit cards, and passports. Telephone calls are recorded. Emails are collected in some government cyber data base. Cell phones are used to identify one's location and pass on government announcements. In the name of health and safety, government gobbles up personal rights. The right of privacy appears to be a relic of the past hopes.

And, considering our own economy, how can anyone doubt that the Federal Reserve with its toxic currency owns everything and everyone? Since, the gold confiscation of April 5, 1933 we have been forced by color

of law to use Federal Reserve Notes. The Social Security Number already acts like the Mark of the Beast. Ever try getting a job or bank account without one? The latest push is to have every one implanted with an RFID chip. The Beast of Babylon reigns unchallenged. In the midst of things we cannot control, God still calls us to be loyal to Christ during all seasons of history.

The Lamb and His Followers

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

This passage contrasts the followers of Christ with the followers of the Beast. Like the statist in chapter 13 are marked by the Beast, God knows His own.

In chapter 12, John portrays the ancient battle between Satan and God's people in mythological imagery. Those who follow Satan working through the Beast are marked with a number. The beauty of the 144,000 is directly contrasted with those who prostitute themselves to the Beast. The 144,000 are God's people, men and women, devoted to Christ. All true believers are among the 144,000. They are sealed; known by God; and belong to Him.

The Lamb is the symbol of the Son. The last time we saw the Son, He was standing before the throne. Now He is standing on Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion is the hill on which the temple was erected in Jerusalem. Here, it is a symbol of the city of God where the Lamb reigns. It is not literal carnal Jerusalem, but heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem.

The “Father’s name” is their private mark. It is not a literal mark. This mark is in contrast to the mark of the Beast. John is telling us that just as the followers of the Beast can be identified by their character and devotion to the State, the followers of the Lamb can be identified by their character and devotion to the Lamb. The “Father’s name” on the forehead of God’s people are their “confession made unto salvation.” Their confession is true, sincere, public, and consistent.

The vision was designed to encourage the believers. The monster in Chapter 13 had many followers and appears to be invincible. But, God’s people can take heart because they are known in heaven and their names are recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Consequently, they are eternally secure in Christ—not because of what they have done, but because of what He has accomplished for them at Calvary.

Revelation 14:2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

Like the sounds of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, the voice from heaven was clear, powerful, and unmistakable! Harps, a common musical instrument in Biblical times, speak of harmony, rest, and happiness. The ones singing are the 144,000 or the church militant. Like a dream, the 144,000 appear to be present on Mt. Zion in heaven next to the Lamb. The followers of the Beast do not sing, but the 144,000 not only sing, they are the only ones who bring glory to God on earth. The Beast brought death and tyranny to mankind; the 144,000 bring joy, life, and freedom.

Revelation 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

The new song is a song of redemption. It implies relationship. Only those who know God can sing something so intimate and endearing. Followers of the beast remain perplexed by the joy Christians have in the Savior.

The fact that “no man could learn the song” implies that redemption is a prerequisite for learning the song. The 144,000 is a symbol of all God’s people who have tasted salvation and demonstrated loyalty to the Lamb. They are completely devoted to Christ in contrast to those who are loyal to the Beast / State / government.

They are redeemed “from the earth.” This suggests other-worldliness, the pursuit of God, the separation from pagan lusts and pleasures.

Revelation 14:4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

“**They are not defiled with women**” should not be taken literally. Half of these people are women themselves. The act of defiling is reference to the Greco-Roman practice where men and women visited pagan temples to engage in religious sexual rites. The negative implies this class of people are virgins; i.e., the church militant is wholly devoted to Christ and free from earthly affections and defilements. It is God’s ideal for His people and is highly symbolic of the character of the righteous. It’s as if God is blind to the defects of His people on earth. He appears here to see His people in Christ totally devoted to Him. “Amazing grace that saved a wretch like me.”

The 144,000 (parthenos) are spiritual virgins who do not engage in pagan fertility practices. Virginity is an attribute communicating to us these believers have not compromised the faith for sake of political or financial gain. The reason for this interpretation is the context. The context is one of allegiance. Nowhere are marital sexual relations a negative thing in

Scripture. Celibacy is not a virtue. Human sexuality as it exist in marriage is holy and undefiled (Hebrews 13:5). What is in view here is the believer's pure and holy devotion to His Lord and Master—a spiritual relationship is in view here. Contracts are a form of intercourse between two parties. The 144,000 do not fornicate with the Beast; that is, they do contract with the Beast nor do they receive benefits and privileges from the State. This is God's ideal for every Christian – to be purely, totally, continually, humbly, intensely, single-mindedly, deeply, genuinely, wholeheartedly, profoundly, and dutifully devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

First fruits is barley season. Christ is called the *first fruits* (1 Corinthians 15:20). These 144,000 are the first fruits of the Age to Come. Having surrendered to the authority of the Kingdom of God, they have tasted eschatological salvation and the blessing of the Eschaton. They are regenerated beings destined to share the benefits of resurrection on a renewed earth. The 144,000 are God's ideal and model for all God's people. John wants his readers to strive to be loyal to Christ and to achieve a level of pure devotion to Him as they live out their faith in a messy, corrupted, hostile environment.

Revelation 14:5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

No guile is a metaphor for authenticity and lack of duplicity. Having “No lie” is the ideal picture of the redeemed (Zephaniah 3:13). The only One who has never lied is Jesus. John is challenging his readers to strive by faith to avoid the chicanery of the period and to be true to their Lord and Savior. The 144,000 are not public followers of the Beast and private followers of Christ. They do not pledge allegiance to both the Beast and the Lamb. They do not pledge allegiance to God and government. No man can serve two masters. They profess Christ privately and publicly. They

seek to match their walk with their talk. They live in the world, but they are not of the world. They are loved by Christ, but hated by the Beast.

“They are blameless.” This is John’s way of describing how God views His people. God’s people are justified, that is, they are declared righteous and treated as such. They are a forgiven people; that is, their debt to God has been discharged and settled at the cross because of the death of the Lamb. Because they are blameless standing before the throne, they should seek to live a blameless life in their standing before men on earth.

John’s presentation of the 144,000 is that of an idealic relationship between Christ and His church. In reality, Christians on earth are far from “blameless.” This passage motivated the original readers to see themselves in Christ and to be like the 144,000; to serve Him without fear of Rome. Likewise, this section of Scripture should motivate us to claim our holy standing and to love the Lord Jesus so much that we take on the virtues of the 144,000. Duplicity and divided affections have no place in the church of Jesus Christ.

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Bloomfield	22
Calvin	11
Catholic Website	22
Clarke	10, 59
Dugin	19
Ellicott	24, 39, 59
Harris	20
Lenski	18, 22
Loyola	20, 23, 25
MacKnight	15, 19
Medvedev	19
Menninger	17
Moffatt	10
Newton	14, 15, 39
Pope Francis	9, 18
Robertson	8, 10
Stockton	2, 27
Thomas Jefferson	68
Wuest	11

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2. [Should Christians Always Obey the State?, Form #13.014](#)
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