

Chapter 13

The Beast from the Sea

13 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

John connects Chapter 13 to Chapter 12 by saying "(t)hen". These events are closely connected with the previous chapter with its woman and Dragon. They can't not be. We saw and identified the beast with seven Heads, Ten Horns and Ten crowns in the last chapter with that of Daniel; the Roman Church acting under the direction of Satan. John adds an extra element this time, however, as "[a blasphemous name](#)" was written on each of the heads. This makes them, clearly, a power opposed to God and his people.

John takes the opportunity here to explain a bit further about the beast, as if to give some extra detail compared to the last chapter and make clear how the beast functioned. He is using the language of the images to both better explain the 'dragon' he sees, and to give us more information about the beast that is being so powerful. If we recall, he is using the same language that Daniel used to describe his beasts in Chapter 7. "[\(T\)he beast which I saw was like a leopard](#)", a reflection from the Greece beast of Daniel 7. John is saying this power has swiftness and cunning, able to reach far off places smoothly and quickly respond to problems. "[\(H\)is feet were like the feet of a bear](#)", an interesting connection to Babylon. He had based himself on Babylon – stands on a Babylonian foundation, if you will. We have discussed this ad nauseum – the connection between the Babylonian Mysteries which were passed through the Pergamum to the Roman Empire and later to the Roman Church. This massive beast stands upon the foundations found in Babylon. Finally, "[his mouth like the mouth of a lion](#)", fierce and loud. Commanding and Dominant. Able to be heard everywhere and strike fear into all hearts. With the supposed keys to Hell and purgatory on his side, the Popes struck fear into the hearts of generations of people world wide, a fear they had no claim to but, using their overwhelming voice of either claimed doctrinal authority or the force of arms, they simply shouted down all who opposed them.

John saves the best for last. "[The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.](#)" Here, the dragon he is referring to can only be the Devil, as he introduced him in the last chapter, so let's interrogate this further.

Where did the might of the Roman Catholic Church come from? We have studied that its original bequest was from Justinian when he made the Papacy an independent body, but it also came from his religious domination over the nations of the Earth. Why did these nations side so readily with the Roman Church? Simple answer; fear. Again, as we discussed during the 4 Horsemen, the Roman Church claimed to wield the keys to Heaven and Hell so all nations bowed down and did their bidding regardless of what their own interests were. On some occasions, like the Crusades to reclaim Jerusalem, there was advantage to their supporting the Pope. In that case, the overpopulation of much of Europe was relieved by the people being encouraged to Crusade. At other times, Nations could use the power of Rome to their own ends, as Spain did when it encouraged Pope Pius v to issue the bull 'Regnans in Excelsis', Excommunicating Elizabeth I and encouraging their Armada. (The bull was renewed in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V in direct support of the Spanish Armada).

This power directly contrasts the Old Testament system where the Jewish Nation supported itself. The Popes rarely commanded troops made up specifically of 'Roman' forces, rather they would generally command the troops of other nations to do their bidding. The famous Swiss Guard, French and Spanish troops most often found themselves under Papal Command. That's not to say that the Papal States did not fight themselves, but it was rare.

"[The dragon gave him his power](#)". The Roman church was firstly given its strength through the Roman Empire; from Milvian Bridge when Constantine warred to defend them through to Justinian when the Byzantine Empire was put at their back. It then held onto power through lies and deception; claiming that it alone had the right to admit or deny people access to Heaven and exploiting its position and the ignorance of the people to control their minds and armies.

"[The dragon gave him ... his throne](#)". Justinian gave the Roman Church the title 'Pontifex Maximus' and the right to manage and order all other Christian authorities around the Empire to do what they willed; and oppose whomever they willed.

"[The dragon gave him ... great authority](#)." Any authority the Dragon gives is either counterfeit or is a delegation from his own. In this case, the Roman Church had both. The Devil rules this world – for now – and he delegated management of a large portion of that to the Roman Church. The Church managed much of Europe's affairs, had a spiritual hold over the largest part of the world's population and attempted to influence the remainder in its own way.

Furthermore, through the influences of the Babylonian poison, the Roman Church claimed to speak for Christ and speak as Christ on Earth. They twisted the language of the Old Testament to their own ends and manipulated Christ's words to their own agenda; a counterfeit authority if anyone can say it. Many examples have already

been given, but none can truly come close to the announcement of the Crusades itself. The fact that the Popes would announce that it was God's will for Christians to travel to the Middle East and slaughter Muslims for no other sin than their birth defies logic when one considers the Mosaic Law's "¹³thou shalt not Kill" and Jesus words saying "³⁸You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well." (Exodus 20:13 and Matthew 5:38-40 respectively). Their claim to speak the words of God is a counterfeit authority that that, out of fear, the Christian world had little choice but to follow.

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

In a previous study we looked at the 7 heads equating to the hills Rome sits on but here we have a 'deadly wound' being healed. An item with 7 heads either needs to be wounded in all 7 heads or, more likely, the 7 heads arise one after the other. Heads are replaced one after the other, each having a crown while some having more horns than others. This makes sense when we remember Daniel Chapter 8 that relates to the spiritual history of this power and not the literal arms and authority that it uses to accomplish its mission.

Daniel 8 talks, from the time of the Jews being taken to Babylon in captivity, of the Temple being polluted. The question is asked about how long that will last, and they are told, in vs 14 "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." As we discussed when evaluating that chapter, the pollution of the Sanctuary was a spiritual attack on the Jewish nation and church, and it was not simply done by any 1 power. We discussed at length the various spiritual influences that led to firstly the Jewish Kabbalistic apostacy and later the Roman apostacy.

John, here, is eluding to the 7 powers that influenced and then embodied that apostacy, namely the Egyptian, Assyria, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and then both Pagan and Papal Rome. Each of the first 5 powers influenced the paganism that would become the mythology of both Pagan and Papal Rome, and they also represent the order of people that tried to influence, or had a strong impact, on the Jewish nations. These powers were, at different times, allies and enemies of God's people, and demonstrate a progression in their thinking.

These heads also represent the time between the polluting of the Temple and the end of the 2,300 days that we identified overlap with the 1,260 days. While Baal worship had been around in Israel prior to the Babylonian Captivity, it was only during that time that the Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian influences started to come into the Jewish religion. Those practises invaded the minds of the Jewish Rabbis, and it was easy for the Persian and Greek priests to lead them similarly away from the pure worship of the Living God. Roman times saw an opportunity to hit the reset button, but the transition from Pagan to Papal Rome saw the adoption of pagan practises we have heavily discussed.

Papal Rome was, therefore, the cumulation of 1,200 years of pagan influences that finally lead to the dictatorial pagan religion that exists today.

This last head is struck and takes a wound that, by all rights, should kill him – but some how it does not. Everyone on earth things this is an amazing thing and they worship the power that gave the beast its authority, and then they worship the beast itself, saying that nobody is anything like and nobody could try to make war with it.

A mortal wound is one that, in normal circumstances, would kill an individual but does not kill them outright. If, for example, the artery on the neck is cut, blood spills at a tremendous rate and the wound, left unattended or in normal circumstances, would kill the individual; but if appropriate pressure is applied, the wound is quickly sutured and the lost blood is returned to the body, the wound does not *need* to be fatal. This is a mortal or deadly wound that should kill the injured – and would in most cases – but not always.

In this scene, John presents us with the depiction of the monstrous beast receiving such a wound, but not being killed by it. Instead, he is able to heal, a wonderous sight for all the world to behold.

When we take this verse in the context of the last 2 chapters, we can see where this 'deadly wound' fits into John's story. In Chapter 11, we have the first part of the story:

"³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. ...

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them."

And in Chapter 12, John continues:

"¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars....

⁴ ...And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ...

⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. ...

¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ...

¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ...

¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

If you remember, from Chapter 10 through we have concluded that, while John is taking this part of the story in different directions or is expounding on different matters, from a literary perspective he is connecting all these elements together. He is not splitting all this up like he did the 7 Churches from the Throne room of Heaven, but rather is connecting them like the 144,000 is to the 7 Seals. It is, therefore, appropriate for us to bring the themes of these chapters together here.

John has built up to this point using Daniel's language, but has never actually stated what stopped the Beast from persecuting either the Witnesses or the Woman. John has left out the thing that prevents the Beast from persecuting beyond that time. If we now return to Daniel chapter 7, we find his explanation;

"²³ "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

²⁶ 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.' "

Insofar as Daniel is concerned, the courts of Heaven are opened and the dominion of the power is taken away. The court he is referring to here is a judgement court; a court where Michael is able to stand and make a challenge to his power and authority as he has taken away the rights of his people to exist and to have the times and laws given to them by God in the first place. In Daniels definition, Judgement begins and the Judgement strips the beast of his power.

But more than this, Daniel says that the power of the Beas is given "to the people, the saints of the Most High", a very strangely democratic phrase close to 75 years before the concept of Democracy rose in Greece.

A side note here: If we remember, Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605BC and the Athenian leader Cleisthenes introduced a system of political reforms that he called 'demokratia', or "rule by the people" in 507BC. This means that Daniel wrote at least 50, and probably closer to 75 years before this concept was actually put into place. We should also not discount that the phrase may have been added later by a 1st or 2nd Century scholar when copying or translating the verse, but the concept would have been Daniel's.

So who were the 'people' who took over this kingdom? They were the persecuted Sabbatarians we have heavily discussed and the reformers who were trying, desperately, to bring the Roman church back into some sort of coordination and back to its roots. They were the winners from Berthiers arrest of the Pope. When the French arrested the pope in 1798, the biggest winners were the 'protestant' forces, Jews and rebels who had been under the constant threat of oppression and extermination from the Roman Church. Where before 'toleration' of such unorthodox views had been the best that could be hoped for, during the 19th Century, universally states progressively stopped involving themselves in religious matters, and instead of simply 'tolerating' one view, most states became indifferent to the differences between Catholic and Protestant. Although there were still heavy cultural and societal penalties from being a member of one or the other group, only in very rare cases was membership of one or the other a serious problem. This was, by no means, universal; Ireland being the best example of sectarianism remaining, even today, a central part of political discourse, but it was a general movement across the western world to move away from state-enforced Religion.

But this seems to not fit very well with John's language. John seems to imply that the Dragon is worshiped for the beast's wound being healed.

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

If Heaven's court takes away the Beast's authority, why do people worship the Dragon because of it? Well, let's consider what happened when the Roman Church was defeated by Berthier. Napoleon's authority, at that time, was avowedly atheistic. We have discussed, through Chapter 11, that they had started to slacken in persecuting the churches altogether, but the government and authority were, unequivocally, atheist.

If we look at the changed from that point to today, we find that the majority of nations are, at least in practise, atheistic. While the Queen of the United Kingdom is the head of the English Church and, in theory, able to direct its affairs, in practise she leaves such considerations for the Archbishop of Canterbury and only consults on spiritual matters. Similarly, The Lords Spiritual are the 26 bishops of the established Church of England who serve in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom and can be consulted for spiritual matters. In practise, they offer a moral voice to law made in the UK and are rarely needed for spiritual matters as UK Governance is atheistic in practise.

Furthermore, since 1798, the general populace have found it opportune to separate themselves from religion and conduct themselves with an atheistic attitude toward the Bible and its teachings. While the majority consider themselves to have some religious feelings or attitudes, most people do not attend services regularly or take part in religious activities of any kind. When nations stopped compelling their people to attend religious services, the people chose not to and the corresponding religious or spiritual discourse amongst the populace plummeted.

The Devil's point has never been to bring people to his side; his victory comes simply when he leads them astray. If he can convince one or a group to abandon the day God sanctified for another, his victory is done; that group is no longer following God's commandments. If he can frustrate people in such a way as to not attend church, he wins – something this author stands guilty of by his own conviction. It is very easy, from such a point, to drive the individual as seeing religion as pointless and valueless, and fall off the faith branch. Jesus himself expressed this in Matthew 7; ¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and ¹⁵ difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The Dragon simply needed to move God out of the sightline of most people and his victory was begun, and nobody can deny the rise of atheism from 1798 to today. To worship the beast is very easy; it simply requires one to turn their eyes away from God. But it is curious that John says that they also "[worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'](#)" " This is quite a curious idea, that people would actually worship the church. But when we consider the way that this church has affixed itself in the very centre of the worlds affairs, its not a surprise. Even secular leaders turn to the Church, and more specifically the papacy, as a moral authority when they need some kind of support for a decision or law. They hold that as the world's authority, and by making them the centre of such moral authority, they have also put the Papacy and Church in an incredibly safe position. Even the recent sexual scandals involving Catholic Priests have done little to tarnish the Papacy, which has widely been seen as above this type of sordid affair, regardless of what evidence there is to the contrary.

Who, today, one should ask, is like the Roman Church in standing and moral authority? And, as the small state has no army or defence of its own, except that moral standing, who can oppose it? Even its connections with sexual scandals and deals with Fascists and Nazi's have not been able to scar its world wide position.

[⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.](#)

John goes back to Daniel's principal to reenforce what the old prophet said. He was permitted to exist 42 Months which, as we looked at in Chapter 11, is the same 1,260 days also known as the 'Times, Time and half a Time'. However John adds the concept of blasphemy here, and extends that blasphemy charge to being "[against God, ... His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.](#)"

We won't labour the point connecting this to the Roman Church, but lets quickly look at these 4 blasphemies.

"[blasphem\(e\) against God](#)" The pope claims the title of "Vicar of Christ" (Vicarius Christi) which most easily translated comes to "substitute of Christ" or "stand in for

Christ". The pope claims to stand in place of Jesus on earth... if that's not blasphemy against God, I don't know what is.

"blasphem(e) His name" Everything the Church does is in the 'name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. They invoke his name at every, possible opportunity and try to connect themselves to that name come what may. Indeed, they claim the only authority to using that name as we discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

"blasphem(e)... His tabernacle" Crusifixes, veneration of Mary, inclusion of foreign Gods on the walls; we've tackled this ad nauseum.

"blasphem(e)...those who dwell in heaven." This is the simplest one; the pope claims the authority to let people into and out of heaven and even decide who is and who is not a Saint.

John Paul II used this litany in 2002 when making Josemaría Escrivá a saint:

"In honor of the Blessed and Undivided Trinity, for the uplifting of Catholic faith and the increase of Christian life, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul **and our own**, after careful deliberation, having called frequently upon God's help, and with the advice of many of our brother Bishops, **we declare and define** Blessed Josemaría Escrivá to be a Saint, and **we inscribe** his name in the catalogue of the Saints, ordaining that, throughout the universal Church, he be devoutly honored among the Saints." - <https://opusdei.org/en-au/article/decreed-of-canonization-of-saint-josemaria-escriva/>

The pope's claim here, to have the authority to 'declare and define' who God should listen to is clear blasphemy.

Again, this ground has been heavily covered and needs little revision now.

⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The connection between the phrase "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" and the statements about captivity and death are to reinforce the faith that the saints have in their salvation. They do not fear captivity, nor death. Their patience is demonstrated in their peaceful acceptance that, no matter what may come, God has secured them placed in Heaven.

The Beast from the Earth

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

As we discussed in Chapter 10, the fact that this beast comes up out of the Earth makes this beast distinct from all that have come before it. Namely, that it does not come from the areas conquered by Rome, Egypt, Assyria, Greece or Babylon. Instead it comes from a different place altogether, a different part of the world from Eur-Asia.

To identify this beast, we must start to consider its qualities. First, it has 2 horns but they are small and sheepish – lambs horns. As we have previously seen in Daniel and here in Revelation, Horns represent leaders or Kings so this power either has 2 leaders or will have 2 kings. The sheepish nature of those horns is interesting.

He speaks like a Dragon; both evil and powerful. When he speaks, people both listen and are afraid. But Dragons are also deceptive and aggressive, unafraid to offend and quick to use cutting words.

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

This beast will work along with the first beast, and he will be able to exercise their authority when present with them. These are the various blasphemies that the Devil 'authorised' the first beast to do but they can only be exercised when in the presence of the first beast. What this means is somewhat unclear; but it is clear that some authority will be delegated to the second beast from the first, but on a very limited base. Whatever this authority is, it is used to force the worlds population to worship the first beast, to pray to them instead of God.

2 things are important to note here. The beast that we identified at the beginning of the chapter is clearly the beast that is worshiped here. This second beast uses the healing of the deadly wound as the reason for pushing the world to worship them.

This also means that the beast must arise around the time that the deadly wound was inflicted. The second beast marvels at the firsts power and the inflicting of the

wound, so this power is not a middle-ages power. This is important as it rules out England in a later section of our analysis.

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

There is no such thing as magic, so this power will make wonderful signs and mysterious things appear in the sky, so much so that he makes it look like fire comes down from heaven. When we consider the magnificent technologies of the modern world, this makes sense, and any power in the western world has access to marvellous and amazing innovations and inventions. However, the phrase “[makes fire come down from heaven](#)” sounds quite a bit more literal than it does technological. It sounds like this power may actually be able to do something so that fire is able to come from heaven and land down on the earth, but it does not define what type that fire takes, so technology is not out of the question.

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Whatever these signs are, they are done with the purpose of deceiving those who are living on the earth in order to “[make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword](#)”. The addition of the phrase “[wounded by the sword](#)” further reinforces our identification of the Papacy, as the wound inflicted by the French in 1798 was a military one.

The way this is phrased, the power that rises from the Earth is going to claim their authority and their ability to do such signs and mysteries will come from the Beast – or at least for the benefit of the beast. Such will be their purpose that they will make some kind of representation to or some reflective form of the beast; although this language is extremely hard to interpret. We will work more with this image in the next section.

Who is this 2nd Beast?

So, let's take a step back and work out who this second beast is. What we know is he:

- comes up out of the Earth
 - Is, therefore, not one of the previous powers and probably not from Eurasia.
- has two horns like a lamb
- speaks like a dragon
- arises, at least as an individual authority, around 1798
- exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence
- causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast
 - performs great signs
 - even makes fire come down from heaven... in the sight of men
 - deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs... granted to do in the sight of the beast
 - tell(s) those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast

Identifying this beast has been rather difficult, and there has been much debate throughout history about who they are; but when we consider the elements in this it becomes easier to identify. This is especially easy when we consider that it does not come from the areas previously occupied. It comes from the 'new world'. That certainly narrows the choices.

Having "two horns like a lamb" also helps us narrow things. It has 2 princes, but these princes are weak – lamblike – and not powerful like the kings that stepped out of the Roman empire. It could also mean that this power is split, like Greece was, but the fact that their princes are 'like a lamb' could also mean that this is actually a split nation that somehow remains merged. Something that can keep those 2 princes together, like the Roman Empire with its 1 emperor but the 2 consuls that, at least nominally, had the power of law and order.

The interesting thing that contrasts this weak kingdom is the idea that it "speaks like a dragon". With 2 weak leaders, how can it speak in such a manner?

The best answer, and I stress that this is not the only answer, simply the one that fits best to this point, is a combination of the United States of America, when we consider that it constitutes the religious freedom conglomerate of what we often call 'Apostate' Protestantism. It fits the requirements;

- comes up out of the Earth
 - It is far away from Europe and Asia, and, although it came from 3 of the most powerful European Nations; England, Spain and France, it shares their characteristics. It also shares their religious sensibilities.

- two horns like a lamb

- The 2 horns can refer to several elements in American Society.
 - The US has a bicameral legislature, meaning the 2 houses of parliament have the abilities to pass laws and budgets and send them to the other place.
 - The US is dominated by 2 political parties, with the executive swapping between them and the senior leaders being at the will of the party apparatus.
 - The US is a democracy in all its levels, meaning that, while it is natural for 2 leaders or 2 viewpoints to become dominant and for decisions to be split over them, the general populace still has the power to choose between them.

If we look more culturally, however, under the claims of 'liberty means choice', the US looks at almost every aspect of their society as an opportunity to make a choice about something.

Furthermore, the United States had a rather fierce Civil War between the North and South of the nation, which left divisions that extend today. The cultural differences between the North and South weaken both but neither were or are able to survive on their own.

Any one of these together would be valid to match this criteria, but all do add to the complex nature of 2 horns 'like a lamb'.

NB: None of the other powers we have previously discussed were democratic in the form of the United States of America. The Babylonians, Medes, Persians and Greeks were autocratic kingdoms while Rome could best be described as a tribal oligarchy during the Republic and a barely restrained autocracy during the Empire. The Papacy is an elected Autocracy even today, and rarely has the power of the Popes been reigned in by the Roman Curia or College of Cardinals.

- sp(eaks) like a dragon

- The language used by the United States is fierce, aggressive and unyielding. The rhetoric used by Presidents Regan, Bush, and Trump clearly demonstrate that there is no fear of offending other nations with their language, and that they are willing to risk international strife for the good of themselves and their nation, at the risk of all others.

Furthermore, despite the laws enacting the separation between Church and State, most presidents have spoken about religious matters, and the Republican Party holds the religious right as its base.

The United States similarly likes to stick its nose into the world's conflicts, no matter who is at conflict or what the circumstances are. While this is a new phenomenon since the 2nd World War which positioned the United States as the 'world's policeman', Cold War tensions were not the only reason that the United States tried to intervene in matters like the Falkland Islands War or the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda; neither matters that were of direct concern or threat to them.

This is the key criteria that separates the United States from other democracies that might fill the bill; namely Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Those nations, although also of predominantly English and French origins, do not conduct themselves with the exceptionally aggressive manner and do not stick their noses into all of the world's affairs like the US does.

- arises, at least as an individual authority, around 1798
 - The United States Constitution was voted on and passed in 1789, 13 years after the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The war for their independence, nominally, ended in 1783 however there were a large number of other matters that had not been dealt with, and there were a large number of matters unresolved with the United Kingdom that would ultimately cause war to break out again in 1812. This is widely regarded as the 'Second War of Independence' as the English forces sought to regain the American Territories while the United States wished to finally throw off any remaining allegiances to the old country.

In effect, for all their rhetoric on the subject, it is widely considered that the United States' independence was finally fixed by the Treaty of Ghent in 1815, and from that time the US would not again have any concerns about their being re-joined to Britain.

The US remained mostly quiet on the international scene, having their own Civil War to fight until the First World War when, very reluctantly, they stepped into the fray and were a large measure of tipping the balance in the Allies' favour. From then on they have taken a very important front-foot role in negotiations.

Prior to 1776, the US did not exist. Between 1789 and 1815, the US was a fledgling and paranoid nation; afraid of being overwhelmed from any side. After 1815, her rise simply took off, not to be dented until the Vietnam War.

- **Performs great signs**
 - The western civilisation that the United States claims to be the leader of has invented a wide variety of technology in all manner of fields that could fit these 'great signs'. This is especially evident in both medical and military technology, where 'signs' and 'wonders' would apply best.

In medical technology, the abilities to cure some cancers and survive life threatening wounds is little short of a miracle. Such developments, to anyone living only a century ago, would be nothing short of miracles. From simple matters like blood transfusions to the ultra-complex world of artificial limbs, we are running very close to God's own power in the field.

As for military Technology, the last century and a half have seen the widest development in weapons and equipment world wide, and since WW1 has been at the forefront of weapon innovation. From simple communication in the form of 2-way radio, through to multiple-independent warheads on intercontinental missiles, the United States has been at the forefront of weapons technology, adapting and innovating without stop.

This leads to a question about one of the more contentious phrases included in this passage, that this power "**makes fire come down from heaven**". This could be interpreted many different ways; from Rockets coming down to a safe landing which look like fireballs, to bombs containing napalm and high explosives, or it could refer to some future technology where fire itself is able to come down from Heaven. There are a great many options for the interpretation of this passage, and most of them point direct to the United States.

- **Exercises the power of the first beast.**
 - This is an area the United States has not done, but that's not to dismiss them. The power of the first beast, as established, is a spiritual power, and while the United States has tried to "win hearts and minds" it has not yet stepped into the spiritual realm.

Indeed, the major flaw in the identification of the United States comes in this form, as the 1st Amendment to the United States Constitution stipulates that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;". On face value this would preclude the United States from acting in the interest of the Roman Church, but amendments have been reversed before so this is not an insurmountable challenge. Indeed, the 'image'

made to the beast may consist, in some part, of this change of their constitution.

What's more, previous presidents have attempted to use the United States Christian roots to their advantage. The most recent attempt at this was in 2017, when then President Trump attempted to ban travel to the United States from Muslim-dominated countries on the avowed ground of National Security. This was challenged in the courts and would ultimately be expanded by that President so as to not be a specifically, anti-Muslim move, but it nevertheless demonstrates a weakness that the President is not subject to restrictions on Congress.

The use of religious rhetoric in Presidential and Congressional campaigns also demonstrates that, although the amendment might restrict Congress legislating about religion, the politics of leadership in the United States are far from immune to discussions of religion; and with enough support in one direction, it would not be impossible for the amendment itself to be changed so as to permit some measures that would be currently considered illegal.

As for what the image is, we will evaluate this in the next section.

¹⁵ He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Who has granted such power? Only God can make life, but that's not what is being demonstrated here. This is a beast that is able to "... speak and cause ...". We've seen a great many technologies that permit things to speak, but 'cause' is a conviction that requires an intellectual exchange. 'He' – the 2nd Beast – gives power to the image that he instructed to be made so that it is able to both speak and convince the people that whoever does not worship the image itself should be put to death. This is a very advanced piece of strange technology, that is able to speak, rationalise and decide for itself. And what it starts to decide is those who do not worship the item itself, should be killed.

Let us not forget, this is not about worshiping who the image is made too, but the image itself. "*cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*" If we look at this as a piece of technology, then this is an extremely advanced piece of technology, and with artificial intelligence and augmented realities, we are

starting to see this as a possible reality. However, I, personally, don't think this is the case, simply because an AI machine has little interest in religious matters; and worshipping the Roman Church clearly fits that bill. An AI would be much more likely to dismiss religion altogether than promote one viewpoint over another.

Historically we have interpreted this to be associated with 'Apostate' Protestantism; protestant churches that accept the Sunday Sabbath rather than Saturday. In this definition, we only draw a distinction between the other, non- Roman churches that follow Roman practises which are against the commandments, specifically the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and especially the 4th. Any church that accepts the changes made by Constantine, or any other Roman leader that goes against the Scriptures is, by definition, apostate.

The 'image' in this case, is what we illuded to in the last section. Somehow, the 1st Amendment to the United States Constitution is changed or repealed and a Christian element is setup in the Government empowered with some persecuting power. This is actually a lot more complicated than it seems as, in order for this image to "cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" would require a large change to the judicial system as well as the core belief structure of the United States. It would also require that capital punishment – a heated debate in that country – is nationalised and legalised across the nation.

The general interpretation of this passage has also been that the United States would start to impose its will against other countries too, promoting the Roman Church around the world. However, a plaintext reading of the Greek does lead to the conclusion that the beast is promoting itself, and not the Roman Church.

2532 [e]	4160 [e]	2443 [e]	3745 [e]	1437 [e]	3361 [e]
kai	poiēsē	hina	hosoi	ean	mē
καὶ	ποιήσῃ	ἵνα	ὅσοι	ἐὰν	μὴ
and	should cause	that	as many as	if	not
Conj	V-ASA-3S	Conj	RelPro-NMP	Conj	Adv
4352 [e]	3588 [e]	1504 [e]	3588 [e]	2342 [e]	615 [e]
proskynēsōsin	tē	eikoni	tou	thēriou	apoktanthōsin
προσκυνήσωσιν	τῇ	εἰκόνι	τοῦ	θηρίου	ἀποκτανθῶσιν .
would worship	the	image	of the	beast	would be killed
V-ASA-3P	Art-DFS	N-DFS	Art-GNS	N-GNS	V-ASP-3P

This leads to the inference that the United States may indeed setup a national church, like the Church of England in that country. This would have the added benefit of being devoted to the United States, as the Church of England is for that country, and then promote its values around the world. This is not an impossible consideration when one looks at how much sectarian language is used in the United States elections and how quickly they turn to scripture in an, at least declared, atheistic nation. Indeed, if we consider the idea that the 'Image' is modelled after the first beast, this makes logical sense, as the Christian world's protestant churches easily could combine together in a non-Roman Catholic Church that becomes a part of the United States governance.

Regardless, this is most certainly in the realms of the future and these events have not yet taken place.

The Mark of the Beast

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

We have entered a comment that mirrors our analysis of Chapter 7; the Mark of God. The 'He' here is ambiguous as to if it refers to the 'Beast from the earth' or the 'image' that beast creates; but in reality, it is irrelevant which it refers to. The 'image' exercises the power of the beast itself. Irrespective, the beast causes all – everyone – to receive some kind of mark in their forehead or in their hands that is required to do commerce.

This is why this 'Image' to the beast needs to be made part of the established governmental structure of the United States, something we have already seen. Much has been made on this subject about individuals receiving the mark, but on a broader scale, we have already seen a number of these policies playing out. The Mexico City policy, often referred to as the 'Global Gag Rule', is a United States government policy that blocks U.S. federal funding for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provided abortion counselling or referrals, advocated to decriminalize abortion, or expanded abortion services. This policy has followed party lines, with Christianised Republicans implementing it and atheistic democrats rescinding it when they come into office and is a clear demonstration of how sectarian United States politics is. The policy was first implemented on January 20, 1985, by the second Reagan administration, rescinded by Democratic President Bill Clinton in January 1993, re-instituted in January 2001 by Republican President George W. Bush, rescinded in January 2009 by Democratic President Barack Obama,

reinstated in January 2017 by Republican President Donald Trump and finally rescinded by President Joe Biden in January 2021.

In its broadest sense, therefore, the policy of doing commerce could easily refer to a trade arrangement with the United States, whose currency is currently the reserve currency for all world powers. The US Dollar is the 'gold' currency that all nations use to trade, so it would be easy for the US to restrict the use of their currency to prevent those not religiously aligned with them from gaining access to resources.

However the language of the verse clearly indicates that individuals will be prevented from buying and selling things. "(A)ll, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave". This would indicate that, somehow, the image is able to prevent individuals from buying and selling goods. How this is done is not known and its difficult to speculate on what this restriction mechanism would look like – especially as John seems to imply world-wide compliance. In addition to what is stated above, the United States not only dominates politics on the world stage, through banking systems like Visa and Mastercard, they also dominate the practical mechanisms of the world's economy. Much speculation has been made about thumbprint technology, RFID Chips or other microchips and all manner of other things being this mark of the beast, but 2 things need to be brought into perspective too.

We discussed heavily in Chapter 7 the idea that the Mark of God is the Sabbath. The most likely corresponding mark would be the imposition of Sunday as the day of worship. This causes difficulty when we consider the effect of the beast, preventing everyone from buying or selling. Worship on a particular day cannot easily achieve this as there are 6 other days when goods can and would be bought or sold, and restricting buying and selling to just 1 day – the Saturday Sabbath – is as impractical as it fails to match the criteria for buying and selling.

However, the image to the beast does have a strong influence within the United States System under our current interpretation. This means that the Sunday Sabbath is unlikely to be the explicit Mark of the Beast. Instead, the mark will more likely be extended as an option to all people who comply with the laws, including the Sabbath, that individuals can then freely choose to accept or reject. The idea that this is a choice seems to be borne out in other places in Revelation, with the idea that one can receive it. Again, not wanting to read ahead, there are 3 references after this point that would back this position up.

Revelation 14:9 "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, **and receives** his mark on his forehead or on his hand,"

Revelation 19:20 "Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those **who received** the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were

cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Revelation 20:4 “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had **not received** his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

The mark of the beast, in my best estimation, is some kind of technological innovation that is offered to all people who comply with US – and, arguably, western – ideals, including the Sabbath, to permit them to buy and sell goods. Acceptance or rejection is a free choice and, like we are seeing presently with the Vaccine discussion, those who reject the mark will be ridiculed and prevented from participating in normal commerce, and will open themselves up to a frame of persecution.

This is where the fearmongering that we have seen in previous generations needs to be discounted. In the past, the Adventist Church has been happy to promulgate a campaign – at least socially – of building fear about the mark being secretly introduced. However, the referenced verses would indicate that acceptance of the mark is also acceptance of the value structure and belief system – including the Sunday Sabbath – that it represents. That acceptance of the belief system, and not just the mark itself, is supported by Mrs White when she stipulates that angels alone can read the mark.

What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? **It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read;** for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. The intelligent mind has seen the sign of the cross of Calvary in the Lord's adopted sons and daughters. The sin of the transgression of the law of God is taken away. They have on the wedding garment, and are obedient and faithful to all God's commands. – E.G. White, SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, p 968. (Emphasis added)

This also supports some kind of technological innovation, rather than a literal ‘seal’ or tattoo as angels would be smart enough to identify things like RFID codes, but humans cannot without special apparatus. Angels can also much better read the hearts and minds of the individuals displaying some kind of mark, an important factor when we include human nature. We have seen ‘subversive’ groups and people who have been working around the mask, vaccine and check-in mandates in recent times to support those who choose not to comply with those rules, and I see little reason why the same would not be true when the mark is imposed. Smaller communities who can accept individual free choice will find ways to work around the physical imposition of a mark, while the individuals who may choose not to accept one may still accept the belief structure upon which it is based.

In this way, the mark is both a literal and spiritual element and its acceptance is based on accepting both a physical marring of the skin and an intellectual acceptance of the system that it supports. Mrs White is correct in a few forms when she stipulated that **"It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read"**.

Evidently, this mark has something to do with both his name and a number associated with his name. What this means, however, is rather difficult to tell and the next section will outline how difficult it is to make any conclusions in modernity.

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Despite a great attempt from a lot of people to try, we have no understanding in this. We recognise that 666 is an important number – it's a Babylonian number. 6 was the basis of Babylonian numerology and this is certainly a reference to Babylonian numbers, but beyond that, there is very limited understanding of this reference.

The only theory that we have to work with is the idea that Greek letters had numerical values in the ancient world. The best known of these in today's world is π representing the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter – 3.14159 etc. In recent times, it has been common to take one of the Pope's titles – Vicar of Christ (Vicarius Filii Dei) – and translate its Latin version into Greek and calculate the numerology. As Fred has displayed in this element here, the number adds to 666:

V	= 5	F	= 0	D	= 500
I	= 1	I	= 1	E	= 0
C	= 100	L	= 50	I	= 1
A	= 0	I	= 1		
R	= 0	I	= 1		
I	= 1			Total	666
U	= 5				
S	= 0				

As Fred is also quick to point out, this is just one of an unlimited number of alternative viewpoints that can be deduced from translations and from different connections, and furthermore this title is one adopted during the middle ages. It is rather unlikely John was referring to this one title when he wrote his book. This type of speculation is rather useless, although very interesting, and it is really not worth the emphasis that history has put on it.

One other question that needs to be asked before any numerology takes place is which 'beast' is this about? The reference here is somewhat more ambiguous which is where this has a large pit many have fallen into. Is the beast the 1st or 2nd beast of the Chapter? A plaintext reading would indicate the 2nd, however if we assume John is summing up here, it could mean the 1st. We simply don't know and I have nothing to speculate on at this time.

God will reveal this in his own good time.