



YES, NO AND MAYBE

1. I like monster movies more than the people sitting near me.
2. I get uncomfortable when people talk about the Mark of the Beast and the number 666.
3. God gives the devil power to conquer faithful people.
4. God does not encourage blasphemy against Himself.
5. The beast from the sea and the beast from the land are political kingdoms that follow the devil.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND 666

► READ Revelation 13 (NIV)

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

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

9 Whoever has ears, let them hear.

10 "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed."

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

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

« What have you heard about the Mark of the Beast?

» **Vs. 1: A beast coming out of the sea** - The imagery comes from Dan. 7:3. See also Rev. 17:8. This "wild beast from the sea," in Dan. is a vast empire that uses brute force.

• **Ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns** - Note the horns are crowned, not the heads. The Roman Empire seems to be meant here (17:9, 12).

• **On each head a blasphemous name**- In this context means "to bring dishonor to God," "to mock God," or "be an affront to God."

» **Vs. 2: Resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of**

DIG DEEPER



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DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

a bear and a mouth like that of a lion - This beast combines features of the first three beasts in Dan. 7:2. The strength and brutality of the Babylonian, Median, and Persian empires appeared in the Roman Empire. The catlike vigilance of the leopard, the slow and crushing power of the bear, and the roar of the lion were all familiar features to the shepherds in Palestine

» **Vs. 3: A fatal wound that healed** - This recalls a significant detail in the ancient prophecy from Genesis about the serpent and the woman: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen 3:15). The fatal wound could be literally translated “was as if slaughtered to death,” reminding us that when the Lamb first appeared in John’s visions he too was “standing as if ... slaughtered” (5:6 NRSV; the same Greek word). The beast’s wounded head suggests a previous encounter between the Lamb and the beast, probably centered in Christ’s death on the cross. Both the Lamb and the beast were “slaughtered” or “slain” in that encounter, yet both are “alive” (1:18; 13:14), and each in his own way is a “victor” or “conqueror” or “overcomer” (for the Lamb, see 3:20; 5:5; 17:14; for the beast, 6:2; 11:7; 13:7).

« How did Jesus wound Satan at the cross? How does this affect us today?

• **Vs. 5: The beast was given a mouth...and to exercise its authority** - The passive verb points to God as the one who allows the beast to speak. God allowed the beast to have authority.

« Why would God allow the devil’s agents to speak and to exercise any authority?

» **Vs. 7: It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them** - Seven

» **Vs. 8: All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast** - “Inhabitants of the earth” refer to those who follow the devil, instead of God. This does not refer to everyone in general.

» **Vs. 10: If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go.**

If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed - This is, in some ways, God encouraging His followers to remain faithful despite the beast’s aggression against them.

• **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people** - God does not promise deliverance from these trials, but instead encourages patience, endurance, and faithfulness.

« Why would God give the devil power to wage war against us and to conquer us?

» **Vs. 11: A second beast, coming out of the earth** - The earth symbolized a more localized kingdom, whereas the sea represented distant kingdoms.

• **It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon** - It has the image of Christ the lamb, but its words reveal its true character and intentions. This is thought to represent false religion.

» **Vs. 13: And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth** - This is reminiscent of the prophet Elijah (1 Kgs 18:36–39; see Luke 9:54).

» **Vs. 14: It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded** - This is reminiscent of the statue in Daniel 2 that people were commanded to worship. The second beast was allowed (by God) to make the statue of the first beast come to life, so that the statue could talk and could order anyone who did not worship it to be put to death. We’ll see more about this in Rev. 17.

« This second beast is not an Antichrist, it’s a counterfeit-Christ. How is it different from God?

» **Vs. 16: A mark on their right hands or on their foreheads** - Animals and slaves were often branded with the owner’s name. Ptolemy Philadelphus compelled some Alexandrian Jews to receive the mark of Dionysus as his devotees (3 Macc. 3:29). The servants of God receive on their foreheads the stamp of the divine seal (Rev. 7:3). Some commentators are certain that John gets his metaphor from the τειφίλλιν [tephillin] (phylacteries) which the Jew wore on his left hand and on his forehead.

« How do people receive the Mark of the Beast? Should we be fearful about this?

» **Vs. 18: Calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666** - There are many interpretations of the name represented by the number 666. The most widely accepted one is that it stands for the Roman Emperor Nero. Written in Hebrew letters, the numerical value of the letters of the (Latin) name “Neron Caesar” adds up to 666. Some commentators are of the opinion that no one specific person was in the writer’s mind, but that by 666 the writer meant total imperfection. Number six is one short of the perfect seven, and three indicates completeness, so the imperfect number six given three times symbolizes “complete imperfection.”

« How is God’s nature “complete perfection” in comparison with the devil’s “complete imperfection”?

MY PRAYER...

1. In what ways can God build up my patient endurance and faithfulness for the future trials?
2. What can the Holy Spirit do in my life to mark me as God’s own?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?



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