

## Revelation 13

In the 12: 17 the angry dragon 'makes war' with the seed of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the remnant still in the world, but not of the world, the keepers of our Father's commandments and the bearers of His Son's testimony. Studying this chapter we might perceive some of our enemy's crafty strategy used against us.

**1]** John stands on the sea shore. A monster with seven heads and ten crowned horns rises out of the sea. The heads have the blasphemous name. In Genesis 22 father Abraham obeyed our God's calling and, by God's grace, past the great test that no human father could complete in human wisdom & power alone. By Abraham's offering Isaac upon our Lord's altar, God prepared Abraham for the promise of a unique blessing: our God multiplies the Seed of the faithful to become as many as the sand upon the seashore. In Joshua 11: 1-4 the host of the Remnant's Enemy is also as the sand upon the seashore and well armed. Our great God of Israel destroyed the Enemy and gave victory to the Remnant. In Judges 7 our Lord leads Gideon against the enemies of the Remnant. In the # 12 the enemies are as many as the seashore-sand, but the desire of our Heavenly Father is accomplished again: His Remnant is granted a glorious victory. In 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 13: 15 again the Enemy is numerous and armed with technically advanced armor. God's apparent minority is crowned with victory once more. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel the rebels are as the sand of the sea, but they failed miserably. In Jeremiah 5: 22 we are admonished to honor our Almighty God & trust Him. He is the One that limits the powerful waves by the helpless sand. So great is the wisdom and might of our God and Savior! In Jeremiah 33: 6-22 our God brings back the captivity and, restores His grace to His penitent people to make them numberless as the sand upon the seashore is; all of this only by His grace. In Hosea 1: 9-11 we see the calamity of disobedient and the abundance of God's grace upon them that turn back from transgressions to our merciful and forgiving God. In Romans 9: 26 and on, the writer is

expounding this prophecy and closing with the verse number 33: Christ's disciples shall not be ashamed. John belongs to the sea sand on the shore. John is one of the blessed - watching the current vision of the revelation from the angle of the redeemed and relating to us the pertaining application. John belongs not to the sea or to the land. He is one of Abraham's seed blessed in Christ & multiplied as the sea-sand. A monster arises out of the sea. Isaiah told us in 8: 7-8 the Lord brings upon Judah a surging flood, the king of Assyria in his entire might. In 57: 20 the wicked are like the troubled sea, restless, casting up mire and filth. Psalm 74: 13 tells that God divides the sea by His strength: He breaks the heads of the dragons. With all Christ's redeemed John is standing on that divide between the sea and the land; he beholds the monster come out of the sea. In the chapter 12: 3-4 we see the devil intending to devour the expected Child. Is that Satan personally or one of his evil creations – this is not a meaningful question; it's satanic. Here, 13: 1, we see a monster that accumulated all destructive wickedness he possibly was able to gather: seven heads and ten horns. This monster is motivated and driven by his ambition and lust to be as satanic as he can. The sea is the restless humanity and this beast is formed by the dragon's influence. Human masses carried by satanic lust and deceit form a system of tyranny, slavery, and cruel oppression. The rulers are not ignorant of their injustice and strive to secure their reign by forming classes, massive armies, and police forces. In order to keep the masses subjected, the rulers promote religions favoring the ruling class. Slaves are forced to live like, or worse than, domestic animals; without hope of freedom. The dragon in 12: 3 has seven heads with crowns and ten horns. This beast – in this chapter 13 – has also seven heads, but the crowns are on the ten horns. The heads are named with blasphemy.

One kind of blasphemy is ascribing God's attributes to any creature [Luke 5: 21]; another kind despises His authority [Luke 22: 65]. Satan designed the seven heads with the names of blasphemy to offend God in every possible

way by their godless self exaltation. This governing system demands full control of its subjects' soul and body. The Gospel proclaiming only One God & One Savior is a thorn in the flesh of this system. Such a satanic system will "produce" rulers to perpetuate tyranny and godlessness. The beast is mingled.

**2]** Besides the seven heads & ten horns, his body is like leopard's body, with bear's feet and lion's mouth. It is not clear if all the heads had this lion's mouth, or just one mouth, but it's a monster anyway. The beast gives impression of a very evil domain; an empire of wickedness. Leopard is a swift predator. Bear is a strong and fears fighter. Lyon's jaws are a neck breaker. The beasts that Daniel has seen in his chapter 7 together might compose this one. All the systems of tyranny, classes and slavery are satanic. All the empires we read about in the Scriptures and the ones we observe today have more or less of this monster's character. The dragon gives to this system satanic power, devil's throne and authority of massive godlessness and corruption. Satan is ruling through this system, but the true God sets the limits.

**3]** One of the seven heads has a terminal wound, yet the beast survives and recovers. After the awful defeat in the Red Sea [Exodus 14: 21-31], Egypt continued as an empire for a long time. After Assyrian army was destroyed [2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 19: 35] the empire continued for a time. The Gospel destroys all idols. Satan influences his slaves to continually produce false gospel and idols named by the names of faithful apostles and disciples. The evil spirit attempts similar changes in the experience of all believers. In Luke 11: 24-26 the devil regained his former victim and managed to enslave him in much worse slavery. The dragon's influence is clear and often obvious in the world around us. Some nations are sometimes fascinated and at other times frightened by the false power of darkness. Our relationship with our Lord is more important for our spiritual welfare and progress, than anything the Enemy is doing and will do. Our defeated adversary cannot escape limits imposed by our Master. In the end all of the wickedness will honor

God in God's severe but righteous judgments. All the faithful, that here and now trust and obey our Savior and Lord to the end of our journey, are victorious in Christ now; and, end up in glory.

**4]** They – the world – worship the dragon as the power-giver to the beast – their governing system. They worship the beast saying: Who is like the beast and who is able to make war against him? The dragon's deceptive power of darkness is illustrated in Genesis 6 – 11. These chapters include the deadly wound of one among the seven heads of the dragon, his surviving the wound, and his recovery – to continue evil.

God's grace to Noah and the family, the great flood, the destruction of the wicked, sinful, rebellious world, the new beginning, the development of the new world, I see it all as a deadly wound to one of dragon's seven heads. Noah's negligent drink of new wine and Ham's sin show the Enemy alive & active. Building the tower of human self-exaltation proved Satan very influential. The calling of Abram reveals our God's amazing grace. In this 13: 4 sinful, idolatrous worship of the dragon and his deceptive designs is not an adoration of reverence and gratitude. It's worship in fear filling the void of their soul with noise. Blinded by sin and sinful ambitions, sinners feel not desire to seek and receive our Father's grace in Christ, the only Savior. Carnal man suffers devil's wickedness but fears leaving his evil empire and asking for asylum in the City of refuge where God's Lamb's redemption and Christ's deliverance is; city of peace.

Unwilling and unable to see our King Emanuel's power to deliver souls, the carnal man believe Satan's lie that he must cleave to sin and toil in the yoke of his slavery. By God's grace some slaves flee from death.

**5]** To the beast is given a mouth speaking great things & blasphemies and power to continue 42 months. Who gives this cruel brute such a big mouth to speak great things and blasphemies? We, the carnal, sinful, fearful little Adam's children, we did that. If we live in Christ free from power of sin, the Lamb is victorious in us and through us and this puffing enemy would be

deflated like a child's pierced balloon. Only our Father's grace in Christ delivers us from our doubts and fears. Only the Spirit of our Savior and Lord gives us strength to rebel against the great Rebel and his devices and to strive for faith and loyalty to the Faithful Son of God. This blasphemer goes on for forty and two months; three years and a half. Here we are reminded about: the forty and two stops – steps - from the slavery in Egypt to the entry into their Promised Land; three years and a half of Christ's testimony from the baptism in Jordan to His open – empty - tomb and the angelic proclamation: "He is risen", & the same time of the Gospel nourishment [12: 14]. Until our Lord spells the end of sin and woe and proclaims the final judgment, this monster beast is going to speak great things and blasphemies against our Heavenly Father and His only begotten Son. As long as there is a Remnant saved by grace we need the nourishment in the Spirit of Christ our Savior. If we are here in hundreds or thousands, or only two, three, or, even one alone, when we are gathered in our Lord's Name, He is in our midst, in our hearts, and, in our daily walk. He is our bread of Heaven; our Fountain of Living Water and we are the souls He redeemed to keep His testimony; to be His light & salt.

**6]** His lion's mouth is gaping blasphemy against God, His Name, His tabernacle, and against the Heavenly citizens. Every beastly system, pretending friendship or manifesting fierce hatred, is against God and all that is marked as God's property and possession. In Christ we are safe although we suffer persecution. The enemy blasphemes in two ways: denies our Father's authority, power and grace and, ascribes the divine attributes to himself – a miserable creature – or, to any other created being. The designer of this wickedness is Satan himself in the deceitful conversation with Eve in the Garden of Eden [Genesis 3: 4-5]. In Exodus 5: 2 Pharaoh, the emperor of Egypt, reacts in a similar manner to our Lord's request for Israel. In Daniel 3: 14-15 Nebuchadnezzar speaks in a tone of blaspheme after he had acknowledged earlier in the chapter 2: 47 that our Lord is a God of gods and a Lord of kings. In our time – 20<sup>th</sup> century and a

few more years, some of so called sciences are blasphemies without direct reference to our God's Name. The so called evolution, opposing the Bible testimony concerning God's creation, is in the same spirit of the dragon. Some interpretations of this book – the Revelation – are in the spirit of blaspheme. It's very awful just to think that someone would sincerely believe that the Almighty and His Son made mistakes. But let us look into our own life and spiritual walk before our Lord. If we believe in correct applications and interpretations of the Gospel and we are confident the Lord is watching over us, protecting and guiding us, but when there is a threat of suffering for the Gospel testimony, we are filled with anxiety. Am I giving signals to the Enemy that my Great Creator, my Savior, is not great at all? Are my manners telling the world around me that my doubts and fears are the main part of my testimony; and all my praise and adoration is a facial makeup? It is easier to see inconsistency in the life of others, than in me. Since we know our Enemy's devices, let us pray to defend ourselves by strong faith and confidence in our Savior and Lord. James 4: 7 is instructing us to submit ourselves to God; to resist the devil and he will flee from us. The Light of the Truth in Christ destroys the darkness of deception. The Lamb of God is the Lord. The beast blasphemes our God's tabernacle. All that is holy is targeted by the devil. All that is godless he is exalting. When we live a godly life; when we despise vanity and pride, when we are separated from the world of sin and darkness, we are a city on a hill and our Lord is our strong defense [Matthew 5: 14]. In the minds of this world Satan would deny the very existence of the heavenly host; no wonder: he is an outcast from their realm. He will do all that is in his power to victimize the heavenly citizens in this world. When we are in Christ, He is suffering with us; and we are safe, secured and victorious. Christ is the Lord. We know the devil is as a roaring lion [1<sup>st</sup> Peters 5: 8], but he is our defeated adversary. We must not help him by our fears and anxiety. Let us be sober in Christ's Spirit. Is it easier to suffer a stroke for weeks or months, fall into a coma &, finally die, or, suffer a martyr's death following in the steps of

our Savior?

**7]** To this beast was given to make war against the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over the entire humanity. When we are in Christ, our ever victorious Lord, we are victorious in Him. We cannot bare the burdens in our own power. We are not The Leader; we are The Leader's followers. He told us worry not; fear not [Matthew 10: 25, 28, 31 & 28: 5]. Abram's hope was withering [Genesis 15: 2]. Moses was frustrated at times [Numbers 11: 15]. Elijah was tired [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19: 4]. But none of the faithful turned away from our Lord God; none turned after the vain man-made idols designed by Satan. How then can the beast overcome the saints? I think these "saints" are recorded for our warning and admonishment in chapter 2: 14-15, 20-23 and 3: 1 and 15-17. In 3: 1 the angel of the church has the name of a living, but no sign of life in him. Surrender to the Enemy is an awful predicament. Whenever we compromise with Satan, we are deceived; we are defeated, we suffer heavy loss. Christ is victorious. No saint living in Christ's Spirit is forever defeated. The beast has his power in the darkness; but he craves to have power over the saints. When the compromising saints entangle in the devil's traps, they give him the power over the entire humanity. So sinful, awful, and condemnable is willful disobedience.

**8-9]** All earthly minded men worship the beast. Their names are not in the Book of Life. This Book belongs to the Lamb of God. This Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. I remember a believer talking to me with choking emotions and tears about their monarch. This person talked about their king's assassination. I have never seen her tearful – talking about our Lord's suffering... Verse # 8 is a signal: beware of worldliness; it is idolatry. Our citizenship is in Christ, our true & everlasting, heavenly King. Let us remember our Lord's answer to Elijah: Seven thousand saved! [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19: 18] If Satan tells us that the whole world is on his side, we answer that we would rather be with Noah in the ship of faith and salvation in Christ our Lord. When we trust and obey

our Master, we know our names are in His Book of Life. We know this, because He tells us that in His Truth [Luke 10: 20]. Let us continue in prayers to our Father for good hearing. If we do not hear His words loud and clear, we are too far from the Source and too close to the world of darkness and confusion. We honor earthly government for our Lord's sake and for our Gospel testimony, but we worship only our Heavenly Father.

**10]** Who leads into captivity shall go into captivity. Murderer shall be slain. Saints are faithful in suffering. Our Lord Jesus says in Luke 6: 39: If blind lead the blind they both fall into the ditch. It is not possible for a man to misguide other people and to keep himself on the path of Truth & Salvation in Christ our Lord. It is impossible for a murderer to escape our God's justice and judgment. No man can earn redemption or purchase liberty for his own soul. Christians suffering persecution already live in the portals of Heaven but bloody tyrants live in the gateway of hell. In Luke 12: 4 & on, our Lord Jesus reveals the Gospel Truth. The persecuted believers need not be afraid: they are in the fierce battle for a time. The wicked rulers have strong reason to fear: their judgment is forever, but often their down payment is sooner than they would expect. [Daniel 5: 30 & Acts 12: 23] Two kings, Belshazzar and Herod did not plan their death... A cruel regime persecuting God's children is on the path of God's judgment. Suffering Christians are on the Way of salvation in Christ. It is in the power of our Lord to order the end of cruel tyranny and to bring swift retribution upon the wicked even in this time on the earth. I watched sudden ruins of wicked rulers. Regimes and governments feared in the rest of the world were removed by the invisible power of our Almighty Creator without wars, without 'natural' disasters known in the rest of the world: they just fell apart and past from present time into history. No human skills, military power, nothing could save them. Every violation of our God's precepts and ordinances is under condemnation of His divine justice and judgment. Woe to every soul that disregards God's call to repentance and salvation by grace in Christ His Son. Blessed are all who trust and obey our Redeemer.



No sinner that casts himself at the feet of God's Son in sincere repentance is rejected. No disciple of Christ our Lord is ever forsaken; He is always with us. In this chapter [13] the sea in the first verse and the earth in the verse 11 signify the entire sinful world. In Isaiah 57: 20 the wicked are like the troubled, restless sea casting up mire and filth. The # 11 gives me an impression of the earth - the nations - in the times between major destructions, wars and bloodshed. In Hebrews 6: 8 the earth bearing thorns and briars indicates sinners heading toward curs and burning. As that bad earth naturally bears thorns, so the sinful nations develop cruel and condemnable regimes. In the verses 4 & 8 all sinners worship Satan, the regimes designed by him and his arch-slaves, the rulers. A tempest lasts for a longer or shorter time and afterward it calms down. The most oppressive, cruel regimes sense the need of improving or easing the yokes to their subjects by making timely changes. If the governments have no opposition to blame for ruling regime's failures, they must change appearance. Completely deprived and hopeless masses can become unpredictable time bombs; a danger to the ruler. Some cosmetic changes are used to misguide and force their ignorant slaves into prolonged subjection.

**11]** The new regime is another beast designed by the same destroyer of human soul; the arch deceiver. It rules with a new appearance. It has two horns like a lamb, but its teaching, propaganda and practice push in the same direction and support the same purpose as the first beast; it is just another satanic design. The two horns indicate a claim of twofold authority to govern over all souls and bodies of men. This beast enforces tight grip over all aspects of human life and insists on having full control over eternal future of its subjects. For that purpose the second beast arbitrarily modifies and misinterprets the entire God's Word & declares itself the only credentialed representative of the highest powers in the universe.

**12]** The second beast is investing all of its ability to serve the dragon, and, adds to the massive deception the false deity ascribed to the first beast. The influence of this [2<sup>nd</sup>] beast hurls all sinners into idolatrous worship of

the prime leadership and the basic mode of the existing regime. The dragon is in his hideout.

The first beast's deadly wound that was healed appears to be the lasting brand-name-mark of the satanic worship. I am confident that this satanic transformation method of deceiving humanity has been one or more parts in the history of every sub race and ethnicity; including our – so called – western civilization. I observe some nostalgia in many human personalities and I wonder if this is a subconscious longing to recover the physical comfort & material abundance that man enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. In the soul of genuine disciples there is always a need to grow in the faith and knowledge of God's Son, our Lord. It appears to me that the Wicked Deceiver is continually plotting increase of carnal nostalgia to hinder our soul's need of progress toward uniting with our Lord and separating from the worldly darkness. In my entire journey I see this battle; I owe endless gratitude to our Savior for His victories in our battles. In Acts 21: 20 the believing Jews are zealous of their law which is in many points misapplication of God's Law. In Acts 15: 10 we see that this Jewish law was just an unbearable yoke. In their best observance of their law, they only practiced some parts, and never the entire God's Law given and explained to Moses. There was still that strong longing for the past. I have no doubts that Satan is tempting all gentiles also. If we allow our enemy to obscure our goal, to shift our focus from following our Savior to indulging the flesh, we become lazy, aimless and fruitless. Our true and most delightful way of living is in labor to please our Father, to bless one another and to reach out to the other people in need of Gospel salvation. The Spirit of our Lord draws us forward - toward His glory. Satan tries to impress and overwhelm us with his false glitters [Luke 4: 5-6]. I observed some Christian groups. In difficult times they were fervent in their ministry, beautiful testimony and outreach. In the times of economic progress they lost their zeal. Now they talk of the "good old times" and labor for their carnal ambitions. Trusting in some form of godliness and having no desire to grow in our Lord's grace is a

symptom of dying or, death. 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter's 1 tells us of our Lord's grace in our deliverance and our entire journey. In the verse 9 is the opposite state. By our negligence, idleness and aimlessness, we can heal, or, even resurrect, our terminally wounded destroyer. In the verses 1-8 the devil is defeated; in the verse 9 – we are defeated. The second beast is practicing subtle pretence of benevolence in causing sinners to worship the first beast – not the second. The second beast presents itself not as oppressive despot demanding worship of all its subjects. This second beast starts as a loyal patriot and zealous worshipper of dragon's designs. In # 15&16 its schemes establish its evil power over sinners. The beast's true face is of a bloody dictator enforcing idol worship. In Galatians 1 & 2 and in Revelation 2 & 3 we can sense shortage of zeal and, backsliding to the beggarly bondage [Galatians 4: 9]. Unabated prayers, study of God's Word and labor in our stewardship, clear our spiritual vision to behold our Lord's constant victories and to rejoice in expectation of His final triumph.

**13]** The second beast works apparent miracles, even fire [seemingly] coming down from heaven upon the earth. All these tricks look like miracles in the sight of sinners – the idol worshipers. Gentile myths and sinful superstitions are misguiding and can form mirage from anything in an unconverted mind. At the same time the leaders of the sinful world try to explain all the true miracles in the Holy Scriptures and in the present world as a “natural phenomena”. Satan's important project is his denial of our God's existence; if he can't persuade us by this lie, he tries another: God' Son is powerless archaic superstition. Some “highly educated” worldly “wisdom” “sees” miracles and wonders in their discoveries of some miracle in our God's creation. They magnify their discovery and intentionally deny the Creator and demean the Sustainer of all wonders. Our Lord gives us grace & understanding to know the Gospel truth.

**14]** The second beast keeps deceiving the earthlings by false miracles performed by the power and in the sight of the first beast. The deception and abomination is progressing. The next step is building objects of open,

shameless idolatry. The first beast description “wounded by a sword and lived” is repeated for us. After our Lord’s Gospel destroyed the idols of the gentiles by this sword of the Truth, the priests of false gospels labored hard to please their master Lucifer in creating many idols and naming them saints. All true saints teach against this abominable practice. The false saints were all sinners and some of them were bloody murderers and persecutors of our Lord’s Flock. This wickedness isn’t limited to false gospel. Every world power since Babel tower in Genesis 11: 1, every religious group striving for power and superiority, even some miserable individuals [Genesis 4: 23] fell into the evil snare that Satan first used to destroy himself and afterward continues enticing foolish sinners lusting for supremacy and lordship. One of the seven heads has a terminal wound, yet the beast survives and recovers. After the awful defeat in the Red Sea [Exodus 14: 21-31], Egypt continued as an empire for a long time. After Assyrian army was destroyed [2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 19: 35] the empire continued for a time. The Gospel destroys all idols. Satan influences his slaves to continually produce false gospel and idols named by the names of faithful apostles and disciples. The evil spirit attempts similar changes in the experience of all believers. In Luke 11: 24-26 the devil regained his former victim and managed to enslave him in much worse slavery. The dragon’s influence is clear and often obvious in the world around us. Some nations are sometimes fascinated and at other times frightened by the false power of darkness. Our relationship with our Lord is more important for our spiritual welfare and progress, than anything the Enemy is doing and will do. Our defeated adversary cannot escape limits imposed by our Master. In the end all of the wickedness will honor God in God’s severe but righteous judgments. All the faithful, that here and now trust and obey our Savior and Lord to the end of our journey, are victorious in Christ now; and, end up in glory. Many world powers and religious establishments trust in reinventing their regimes by propagating new reforms to satisfy their constituency or scrupulous supporters. The most successful succeed for some time only; none remains forever. Our Lord Jesus prevailed by suffering and death; and

He rules forever.

**15]** The second beast has power to give life to the image of the first beast. The image speaks; & intends to murder all people that refuse to worship the image. In the verse # 8 we see the worshipers of the first beast: all men whose names are not in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the world's foundation. Since the martyrdom of the righteous Abel and, until our Lord's final judgment, God's faithful witnesses were persecuted, are persecuted, and will be persecuted; sometimes with cruelty and bloodshed, at times with crafty enticements, often with pretence of friendship, occasionally in honest ignorance... This image is enabled to talk to the men that are deaf for the Gospel-call. [Verse 16] In Daniel 3 the king prepared a concert that was intended to "inspire" his subjects to worship king's image. To our God's witnesses the music was not inspiring; rather abominable. Some political books are written in fiery tone. The staunch believers in those teachings get elated by reading these books. Some lustful sinners get much energized reading, listening or watching movies with lustful motives and stimulants. Some campaign speakers can 'set on fire' thousands of listeners and move them into thoughtless actions.

In the times of tumults some masses of blinded people committed atrocities and massacres. To many worshipers of the image refusal to worship might appear as godlessness or betrayal. Not having our Lord's Spirit, the sinners are easily inflamed with murderous intensions and actions. Genuine believers in Christ [sealed in the chapter 7: 2-3] are fully aware that they need the Bread of life & the living water. Cruel regimes and governments need to enflame evil passions of their subjects to turn them against Christians for three or more reasons. Wicked leaders labor to turn the attention of their subjects away from the leaders' wickedness; to scare their less wicked subjects from objecting to leaders' evil deeds. The leaders intend to turn all the unconverted people in their domain so much against Christians that none of the persecutors would ever have any thoughts of believing our Lord Jesus and wake up to obey the Gospel call. In these

bloody leaders' mind there is but one solution: murders of our God's People.

**16-17]** The second beast is raging in madness. No man in the empire may be neutral. Every person must be marked publicly. Men must think & act exactly as the second beast demands. Even if they manage to hide in their minds some reservations or open disagreements, their right hand is marked & must obey it. The slightest disobedience, if detected, is punished severely. The raging dragon haste to his judgment and our Lord is not slack in doing the Father's will. In some regions of the world during the most difficult persecutions, the # 17 had two or more applications. All men's basic daily needs are strictly controlled. Material and physical existence is based on total loyalty to the beast and seems impossible in any other way. In such times our God often surprised His Pilgrims. [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 19: 1-8 & Luke 9: 12-17; & there are many other records.] In my personal tiny experience of persecution, I witnessed our Lord's loving care. Other impossibilities of buying or selling might be spiritual, or social, or intellectual. In the regimes of oppression, exploitation, internal spying and constant danger of falling in disgrace of the government or becoming a target for torture and punishment, Christians can quickly become victims of persecution. The people of Christ's covenant cannot participate in the filth of entertainment used by dictators to keep their slaves under the yoke. Comfort and joy we receive from our Lord is outside the frame of sinners' awareness. In the time of Satan's rage the distance between the free and the slaves grows much greater. At such a time our Father's miracles flash across the human history: the faithful martyrs enter eternal glory and some persecutors are snatched from the pangs of the dragon. [Acts 7 and 9] As long as our Lord allows the beast to fulfill its measure of iniquity, the beastly oppression and cruelty will increase. The mark on the right hand was first - to ensure submission and obedience. Second, the mark on the forehead blindfolds the understanding of the poor victims and they are willing to be controlled by sin. The third degree is the name of the beast. I wonder if this beast is

now lifted in pride above the dragon. Formerly, the second beast honored the first beast and the dragon. Now it seems the second beast is above all as a totally mad megalomaniac. All it knows now is a big endless I, I, I! Its final self-exaltation is its number. The mad beast thinks it's a symbol of glorious majesty. Christ's Spirit reveals us the opposite.

**18]** Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding count the number of the beast: it is the number of the fallen man. The number is six hundred and sixty and six. The number reflects human aspirations of a confused mind and a heart misguided by sin and darkness. This number indicates self-exaltation, self-deception & corruption, self-condemnation & self-destruction [James 3: 15]. God's judgment is coming.

Here the highest accomplishments of Satan meet our God's full contempt. The sinful foolishness proudly and stubbornly displays - as its own achievement - God-given condemnation-mark. Our Lord seals His people [7: 3]. Satan marks his victims in 13: 16. Finally, our God marks Satan, & he can't hide or escape. I noticed, and, even observed, diversity of methods in numerous interpretations of this number... It's amazing: many interpretations begin with a copy of a mistake and abound in ideas of interpretations and applications. Are we, the believers of this era, too shallow in considering the meaning of this Revelation? Are we too light-minded in our study of the Holy Scriptures? Are we just another brand of very religious gentiles like some Athenians [Acts 17: 22]? Am I too proud if I paddle against the torrent of the religious world around me, or, am I blind if I ignore the Word to follow the world? Lord, I pray, guide us & keep us. In many comments I heard - and in some I glanced at - across the internet - the number is recorded as it is in diverse translations of the Revelation: six hundred and sixty and six, or, numerically: 666, but it is mispronounced as "6, 6, 6"; and I did not find triple-six number in the Revelation; not in the entire Bible. Six hundred is NOT six; it is hundred times six! Sixty is not six; it is ten times six! And, finally, six cannot be same as sixty; far less as six hundred. I searched for the same number "six hundred & sixty & six"

through the Book [using a concordance] and, I found two places with this number 'six hundred and sixty and six'. I do not say that these two places provide "the only verses or chapters helpful in a scripturally proper interpretation and application... I do say that these two passages of the old Scriptures helped me think how to consider the meaning of this number. Please, you do the same; and share your insight with me. In Ezra 2 is the list of the Jews and the priests returning from the Babylonian captivity. In the verse # 13 the children of Adonikam were 666. Apparently, the meaning of this name is "rising to power". In Nehemiah chapter 7 is the next list of the people that returned to Judea. These two lists aren't identical. I trust the two lists [and the two books] are placed in the Book in chronological order: Ezra's list is older than Nehemiah's list. In Nehemiah 7: 18 our Hebrew brother Adonikam had 667 children: one more than in Ezra's list! This is the first part of my research related to the number 666 & rejection of the # "6, 6, 6." The second part is in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10: 14 and in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 9: 13. "The weight of gold that that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty and six talents." The following chapter, the 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11, is one of the very, very, sad chapters recorded and preserved for us in the Word of God: Solomon's sins. The third part of the search is in the Gospel books. In Luke 12: 10 and in Matthew 9: 3-45, is our Lord's condemnation of blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. My understanding is that every word in the Bible is meaningful; the Lord has no surplus or some unimportant part in His entire Word [Matthew 5: 17-19]. Our God's judgment against sin is recorded for us to be our warning and protection from sin. If we fall in sin of negligence and rebellion, our God's Word guides us by repentance back to our Father's mercy in Christ. Adonikam had 666 children in the captivity. In the Promise Land, our Lord gave him 667 children. Can a single child make such a huge difference? Yes; when the Child is the Only Begotten Son of our God. We, the fallen Adams, are 666. The only gracious ONE - able and to deliver us from Satan and from our own SELF - is the number 7, the Lamb of God; our only King of kings and Lord of lords. In Genesis 2: 1-3 the Son perfectly completed His Father's work of creation and our Father has



perfect delight in His Son. Our Father blessed His Son's achievements and forever sanctified Him, Who is our everlasting Peace [Ephesians 2: 13-22]. In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 10: 14 we see the king Solomon in the peak of his glory and God's abundant blessings. The 666 talents of gold are a huge sign of God's blessings. Sin is Solomon's downfall.

No man in sin is above the reproach of sin. Only in Christ is true and everlasting salvation and life eternal. In Matthew 12: 22-45 we learn a list of Gospel aspects... In the verses 30-34 the slaves of the dragon confirm their lasting condemnation by equalizing our Lord's grace with their father's crafty deceptions. Pharaoh abused our God's patience and despised repeated warnings until his destruction in the Red Sea. Our Lord's goodness leads to repentance [Romans 2: 1-11]. In the second beast are represented: every injustice, oppression, cruelty, unfair exploitations, slavery, all abuses of men by their wicked rulers. Individual, personal abuse and cruelty of one person against any other being, injustice within a family, molestations of children, murders of unborn children, and all the oppressive wickedness is a part of this system of that beastly governing. Every sinner is a beast going to destroy his own soul in the end - in hell. Since my childhood I have been hearing diverse interpretations of some parts of this book; many of them had no spiritual message, many explain in tiny details applications against other nations, regimes and individuals. Limiting the applications to a certain group or period of time tends to limit our benefit today. These beasts represent human depravity, corruption, godlessness, and all evil devised by our souls' adversary. Christian suffering is for a time; the fruits of godliness last forever. Christ's suffering was matchless; and so is His victory. Evil rules for a limited time; God's justice prevails; His judgment is final. The Revelation reveals to us our Lord's presence in the midst of suffering. In this book we see that no evil can escape God's judgment; and every good deed – in the Name of God's Son - is rewarded. We receive our Father's many blessings as we walk daily in the light of His Word; He leads us to His everlasting glory. Despising God's grace in Christ, rejecting His mercy,

stubborn rebellion – all these are signs of foolish self-destruction. We owe everlasting gratitude, faithfulness and praise to our Heavenly Father for such a Savior as Christ. He has snatched us out of the pangs of these beasts and out of darkness, sin & death. Many godless regimes are fallen; many were wiped from off this earth. Many wealthy people lived, died, and left their wealth to wasteful fools [1<sup>st</sup> Kings 12]. Humble pilgrims, faithful witnesses, martyrs and laborers for Christ receive comfort and strength in the battle, victory in Christ, and eternal joy in glory. In spite of all difficulties in this short pilgrimage, still there is no more beautiful, no more blessed life than the life in the Fellowship of our Savior's Spirit. Great is our Father's mercy, wonderful is His redemption and many are His deliverances. Nothing less than eternity is suitable for our praise and adoration of our Father and our Savior and Lord. Bless the Lord, o my soul, and forget not all His benefits [Psalm 103: 2]. Persecution is not the only type of oppression. Our God's people in this dark world are oppressed in many other ways and manners. We are bombed with numberless scenes of sinful lusts designed to present immorality as irresistibly attractive, delightful and readily available: just say 'Yes', and it's yours. It is apparent that the nasty dragon's five heads are doing all planning and the sin-slaves perform all as faithfully as they can. The ugly sides of general godlessness are decorated and camouflaged as freedom of expression, friendliness and sharing cultural heritage. Sin-pollution is in every segment of public life. The same evil spirit is striving to intrude into our family life. In a business phone book next to a decent profession is the "fun of witchcraft" or "enjoyment" of immorality and perversions. Luxury, lust, wasteful living style and pride - are idolized. I could wonder what good manner is, when a neighbor is at our door. Is the right example and message to our small and young children to politely invite in a partly dressed person, or to get out, close the door behind my back to be sure the visitor cannot enter in and end that visit as soon as reasonably possible. If I meet an acquaintance in public, should I salute or ignore them?

Sinful lusting is highly regarded and nudity just short of total nakedness - is idolized. I already observed some professing believers doing their business in the world, more godlessly than many professing unbelievers; and they claim to be doing righteously and having pure conscience and peace of mind... Now, whose mark is that? Is that the seal of our God in the first part of the chapter 7, or the mark of the second beast in this chapter # 16? I see the answer in our visible testimony: our deeds reflect our faith and our faith indicates our citizenship. The heavenly minded live in Christ; the carnally minded are in sin. This mental, intellectual and so called cultural oppression is just another onslaught of our enemy. Where he has been defeated on the battlefield of violent persecution, the dragon attacks our mind, our heart using his barrage of worldliness, gentile isms and false evolution. What is our genuine Gospel response? In the chapter 12: 7-12 "There is war in Heaven". In the verse 11 our Lord's worriers overcame him [the Enemy] by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony; when the beast threatens them with persecution and death, they still love our Lord more than their life in the flesh. This is Christ-victory! Trusting and obeying our Savior and Lord - is our testimony that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Living in the light of His Word and reaching out to the sinners with our godly example and the Gospel call, we are united with our great invincible Captain. In Him we are victorious for He is God's own Son. The path, our Lord leads us on, may be through suffering, persecution, and death, but He always leads us from victory to victory. He may lead us through this world's isolation, indifference or ridicules, but He always leads from victory to victory. He never forsakes His own and will unite us all in His eternal glory. He may lead us through periods of calm and material prosperity, through the intellectual attacks and barrage of filth and false accusations, but He always leads us to victory. Resist the devil and he must flee. Love not worldliness; for the true love of God declares His own Son to this world; that none of the true believers in Him should perish, but have everlasting life. This Life is in Him, God's Son, our Lord and our Savior.