

10-20-20 Institute: **Rev 12-13** *The Kingdom of God Vs. Kingdom of Satan (or The Woman and her Child vs. Satan and Two Beasts)*

## Introduction to the Second Half of Revelation

John opened his apocalypse by introducing it as a “revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:1). In chapter twelve on, we begin the second half where we find our Savior in great majesty, with wisdom, judgment, and love. Our Savior’s goodness and glory is contrasted with His counterfeits and opposites—three sadistic and sinister counterfeits.

Seventy percent of the last half of the Apocalypse focuses on the wickedness of the Last Days. The messages are directed to us as it unfolds in our day—chapter 12 though is a flashback. The Lord has restored some keys to help interpret it and to heed its warnings.

### Outline of John’s Apocalypse

	Vision: Throne of God	Seven Churches	BC 4000- AD 1000	AD 1000- AD 2000	AD 2000 Last Days & Second Coming	Millennium 20XX-30XX	Final Scenes	Celestialized Earth
<b>Chps:</b>	1, 4-5,	2-3	6:1-11	6:12-7:3	8:1-19:2	20:1-6	20:7-15	21:1-22:6
<b>Verses:</b>	36	51	11	14	201	6	9	33

## Chapter 12: Interlude of a Pivotal Flashback

Chapter 12 is a pivotal point—it “is the key to understanding all that went before and all that comes after” (Draper, Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 429). It also interrupts the chronological flow of the opening of the seven seals. The text does not pick up the seventh seal again until chapter 15. Instead it introduces a series of other visions focusing on satanic power. To do this, it stops the chronological progression with a flashback or interlude explains how and why Satan became the source of evil in our universe.

First it goes back to John’s day, then a premortal war in heaven, and ends war between Satan’s devils and God’s people. This helps the reader understand how humanity arrived at such a state of hatred and wickedness which we will see in the last half of the Apocalypse. As many new images and allegorical figures arise, remember that the chapter portrays the conflict between good and evil (i.e. the woman and her son are good, while the dragon and the land and sea beasts are evil).

The three devilish figures in chapters 12 and 13 are introduced. They are sometimes referred to as a *Satanic Trinity* in opposition to the Godhead:

1. The great red dragon—who represents Satan (Rev 12:9)
2. A satanic sea beast—Leviathan or sea monster (Rev 13:1-8)
3. A satanic land beast—#666, a counterfeit horned lamb (Rev 13:11-18)

As you study, look for seven separate visions—which often begin with a phrase like: “and I saw,” or “and behold” (i.e. Rev 12: 3; 13:11).

### JST in Revelation

The JST changed only 21% of the Book of Revelation (81 of 393 verses). As a comparison, the JST changed over 50% of Genesis (771 of 1,532 verses), and added 15% or 225 new verses; and the JST changed 64% of Matthew (682 of 1,071 verses). The JST of Rev 12 rearranges the order of one verse, too. We will follow the JST order here (as is in the LDS Bible JST).

### 1<sup>st</sup> of 7 Short Visions: The Woman and Her Son (Rev 12:1-6)

**Rev 12:1** “There appeared a great *sign in heaven in the likeness of things on the earth*” (JST *italicized*) The word, “great” is used five times in this chapter—starting with this first sign of a woman. Most English translations change the KJV “wonders” to “sign,” just as the JST does. The sign “carries the idea of giving an identifying sign or token” to communicate that the vision “was authentic, and came from God via a true messenger” (ibid., 83). The sign validated John’s vision. The sign ties the heavenly temple to the earthly temple (as described in Hebrews 8:4-5).

**“a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet”** The woman represents Christ’s church, clothed in celestial clothing and wearing God’s power (Rev 12:7 JST). Some have interpreted her as the Lord’s mother Mary, but the JST corrects this (“the woman which was the church or God,” JST 12:7). She stands on a terrestrial sphere. In the Old Testament (OT), Jerusalem and Zion is always feminine (John Schmitt, “Israel and Zion” *Horizons*, 18 (1991), 20, also John Schmitt, “Gender Correctness and Biblical Metaphors: The Case of God’s Revelation to Israel,” *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 26,

1996, 98-99). Interestingly, I found the same pattern in the Book of Mormon (furthermore, the use of “Israel” is different by each author—confirming multiple authorship). The moon under the woman’s feet may symbolize that its terrestrial existence is subject to her through God delegating His power (which is also called priesthood power).

- **The Woman** is “the church of God.” Biblically God’s bride or wife is the church (Rev 12:7 JST; etc.)
- **Her son** is Israel or God’s people, Zion. D&C 76:28 defines the child as “the kingdom of our God.”

**“and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”** As mentioned earlier, there are two different Greek words used for the English “crown” in the KJV. This one, “*stephanos* / garland, honor, glory,” was a laurel wreath garland worn by victorious athletes at the Olympics, or by soldiers and generals. In the Book of Revelation, most occurrences of *stephanos* refer to God giving this, the laurel wreath / crown, as a divine reward (see Rev 2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10; 14:14). The second word for crown is “*diadems* / a royal crown,” and symbolized political domination (see Rev 12:3; 13:1; 19:12). In this verse, the woman’s *stephanos* / laurel garland, speaks of her victory overcoming the world and Satan’s influence.

The “twelve stars” fit into the symbolism of twelve representing God’s order or power. Stars are orbs of light, and link to God’s creation and order. The twelve stars may symbolize the twelve apostles standing at the head of God’s church.

**Rev 12:2 “The woman being with child cried, travailing in birth. . .”** (JST *italicized*) The challenge of Christ’s church to bring forth God’s kingdom or a generation of righteous is likened to labor pains (i.e. Isa 13:8; 21:3; 21:3; etc.). Her labor is not in vain, as it represents the creative suffering that will bring life and joy. We see this same symbolism used in the OT where the image of a woman suffers in childbirth to bring forth Zion (i.e. Isaiah 13:8; 26:17; 66:7-8; Micah 4:10; etc.) This may refer to the primitive Christian church as they lived with all things in common trying to establish a Zion society like Enoch (Acts 2:44).

**Rev 12:5 // 12:3 JST “And she brought forth a man child”** The JST moves verse five up to announce the birth of the woman’s son. Changing the verse order helps the continuity of knowing what is the work of the church / woman. Here the son is the offspring of God’s people—a Zion society, or the millennial kingdom of God.

**“to shepherd all nations with a rod of iron”** (NR) The word in KJV, “rule” is actually, “*poimainó* / to act as a shepherd, tend, herd (Strong’s #4165). The inevitable plan is for the offspring of the church to tend the nations. Three times in the Book of Revelation, John refers to a protecting kind shepherd who rules with a stern “rod of iron” (Rev 2:27; 19:15). In chapter 11:1, a different rod is used to measure the temple. Does shepherding also include a measurement? In the Book of Mormon, the “iron rod” is “the word of God” (1 Nephi 11:25). If we can combine these meanings, we find that God’s church, or Zion, will shepherd the world with God’s word (including both scripture and divine revelation).

**“But her child was taken away to God and to his throne”** (NR) But, God snatched away the baby boy to heaven. This is often interpreted as the Savior, or early Christian saints leaving the earth preceding the apostasy. I also see the possibility of Enoch’s Zion and Melchizedek’s people, who were both translated or taken from the earth to live in a heavenly sphere. Whoever it was, God protected the child with a mighty power. The “imagery suggests that the Lord took certain priesthood keys away as a means of preserving both kingdom and church” (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 441).

### **Satanic Forces Gather Pre-mortally and on Earth (Rev 12:3-6)**

**Rev 12:3 “Another sign appeared in the sky, a great, fiery-red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, on his heads were seven diadems”** (NR) This sign is fierce and dangerous. Verse 9 identifies the dragon as the “old serpent, called the Devil.” The KJV, “great red dragon,” is actually in Greek, a Leviathan, or sea-monster (see LXX Job 40:25; Ps 73:14; 103:26; etc.). The Greek word did not mean a fire-breathing dragon, but one who personifies “malevolent and seething chaos, often represented as the dark primeval waters, which oppose not only God but all that is holy” (ibid., 436; *TDNT* 2:281). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “There is a mistranslation of the word dragon . . . The original word signifies the Devil, and not Dragon, as translated [in the KJV]” (*josephsmithpapers*, Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton—B, Page 5).

The numbers are used to help us understand the allegory or riddle, not necessarily a literal number. The devil’s seven heads and “crowns / *diadems*” refer to his political domination. The number seven, represent complete or whole domination or “insatiable cruelty” (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 437-438). The horns are signs of power. The has usurped his power and only carries counterfeit or false sovereignty. His crown contrasts with the woman’s garland of victory. The OT prophet Daniel also wrote of a dreadful ruler with ten horns who fought against God (Dan 7:7, 20, 24).

**Rev 12:4 “His tail dragged off a third of the stars of the sky, and he threw them to the earth”** (NR) The third part refers to a limited portion or part. In this context, the stars represent the spirit children of God who were deceived by Satan pre-mortally and became devils, unable to progress with him (also see Dan 8:10; D&C 29:36-37). They lost the opportunity for mortality or their second estate, and a life of progression with God after mortal death (Abr 3:26, 28)

**“and the dragon stood before the woman”** Satan stood in a position of confrontation or attacking. The devil is especially interested in the baby boy.

**“ready to devour her child after it was born”** (JST *italicized*) This does not sound like the birth of Jesus because Satan was not allowed to destroy Him—neither at birth, during his ministry, or in death. It was Jesus’ role to destroy Satan’s hold on humanity. Some interpret this as the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt (Mt 2:13-15). But biblically, “son” is used for Israel or Zion. If this is the case here, then we understand that Satan only has a short opportunity to snatch it. He has no ability to destroy God’s people once they become “pure in heart” as a Zion society. (Zion is never destroyed in scripture.)

**Rev 12:6 “the woman fled into the wilderness, where she *had* a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore years”** (JST *italicized*) Satan did not destroy God’s people. God lead his people or church to a place to keep it safe. The timing of 1,260 is also used in Rev 11:3 as the specific time of 42 months for two prophets to preach in Jerusalem. However, the JST changes it to “years” not days—suggesting a long period of time without a Zion people. It may be a symbolic period prior to the Restoration when the Lord’s priesthood power, saving ordinances, and people / woman / church come out of the wilderness or apostasy (D&C 5:14; 33:5; 109:73).

Scholars have interpreted those who are hid by the Lord in several different ways, including:

1. Those “lawful heirs according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God” (D&C 86:9).
2. The people of Enoch and Melchizedek who are hid from the earth until the Second Coming (Moses 7:62-64).
3. Certain bloodlines were preserved. “The wilderness church represents the righteous descendants of the ancient Saints . . . and they were hid from the world and the dragon by God. Thus, certain bloodlines were reserved” (ibid., 444).

In any case, eventually the woman’s offspring (which represents God’s people or the church) will overcome the adversary.

**Rev 12:7 “There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon . . . and his angels fought against Michael”** (JST *italicized*) This “interlude” in the story is a flashback to a pre-mortal war in heaven (D&C 27:11; 76:25-26; 128:21; Moses 4:1-4; Abraham 3:27-28; Bible Dictionary “War in Heaven”). It describes a battle between Michael the archangel (or premortal Adam, D&C 107:54), and Lucifer (who became Satan). It is actually the same war now, we just a change in battlefields. Elder McConkie discussed this war:

What kind of war? The same kind that prevails on earth; the only kind Satan and spirit beings can wage—a war of words, a tumult of opinions, a conflict of ideologies; a war between truth and error, between light and darkness, between the gospel of Jesus Christ, with all its saving power . . . The battle lines are still drawn. It is now on earth as it was then in heaven; every man must choose which general he will follow (Bruce McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament*, 3:518).

Michael is the only angel named in this book.

**Rev 12:8-9a “the dragon prevailed not against Michael, neither the child, nor the woman which was the church of God, who had been delivered of her pains, and brought forth the kingdom of our God and his Christ [9] neither was there place found in heaven for the great dragon”** (JST 12:7 *italicized*) The JST location is different. The changes emphasize Satan’s loss both in the past and future. God will always win. God will protect His church and people to bring forth His kingdom.

**Rev 12:9b “the great dragon *who* was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and also called Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels . . .”** (JST *italicized*) This verse lists five of Satan’s names. They each describe his sinister motives: Dragon (as one who is out to destroy), old serpent (the deceiver and counterfeit in Eden), “Devil” means “slanderer,” and Satan is a Hebrew word meaning “adversary or accuser.” A decade after he recorded the JST, the Prophet Joseph spoke on this verse in Nauvoo as metioned above. His scribe recorded with a quill as much of the sermon as he could as Joseph spoke extemporaneously: “[Revelation] ch 12 v 9 it there reads ‘that old serpent called the devil,[’] and it ought to be translated devil in this case and not dragon. Every thing [*sic*] that we have not a key word to, we will take it as it reads” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, "Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton-B," p. 6).

According the law of opposition, God allows devils to have power on the earth. Simultaneously, He gives His people power to avoid satanic temptations and to cast out the devil. Faith filled Christians the world over have been empowered by God to call on the name of the Lord Jesus the Christ and cast out devils. It is a gift of the Spirit (Mt 10:8).

### A Voice from Heaven (Rev 12:10-12)

**Rev 12:10** “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters . . . has been hurled down’” (NIV) Another loud voice proclaims victory in a two-verse poem of praise. God’s supreme power will conquer. We learn that the devil accuses people day and night (after he sets the traps to tempt us). Through God’s infinite mercy, our desperate need for a redeemer was met in Jesus of Nazareth. Once the devil and his henchmen were cast out, Christ offered salvation to the rest in heaven.

**Rev 12:11** “They *have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word for they loved not their own lives but kept the testimony even unto death*” (JST *italicized*) Those who “love not their own lives,” infers they give their will to God and live to serve Him selflessly. Power to overcome Satan and his forces comes through the atonement of Jesus (2 Nephi 9:25-26). Our Savior allows humans to tap into His power if we are obedient and faithful to our testimony to the end, and are willing to sacrifice all that is required to enjoy the companionship with the Holy Ghost.

**Rev 12:12** “rejoice, *O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. And after these things I heard another voice saying, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth yea, and they who dwell upon the islands of the sea! for the devil . . . knoweth that he hath but a short time*” (JST *italicized*) Satan’s work accelerates because of his limited time. He wants to cause as much damage and misery as possible knowing that there is no ultimate victory for him. His greatest triumph is destroying eternal families and, thus, their exaltation. To some degree, we have seen this partially fulfilled—both spiritually and physically with natural disasters.

### The Dragon and the Woman (Rev 12:13-18)

**Rev 12:13-14** “The dragon . . . drove off the woman who . . . was given the two wings of a great eagle, so she could fly into the wilderness . . . where she was sustained for a time, times, and a half time, away from the serpent” (NR) When Satan was cast to the earth, he and his devils persecuted the church or people of God. To combat satanic forces, the woman / church was given power to fly away and be nourished (D&C 77:4). Exactly what these times mean is unknown, but Daniel 12:7 uses the same phrase.

One way to interpret the “time” is as a year—360 days. The ancients used different calendars—lunar and solar. To maintain continuity to the calendar, some extra days. The Roman calendar of John’s time used 30-day months. If “time” referred to a year of 360 days (twelve 30-day-months), and the second “times” was doubled to be 720 days, plus a half time would be 180, the three would total 1,260. This number is used commonly in the Book of Revelation as 42 months or 3 ½ years (Rev 12:6; 11:3). Symbolically, this number speaks of our Savior’s mission. Even though we can only speculate about God’s “time,” we can understand the importance that God kept His people, or His church, away from Satan’s powerful pollutions for a season.

**Rev 12:15** “from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent” (NIV). Satan tries to destroy the woman or “church of God” from her protected hiding place (Rev 12:7, JST). The Serpent’s flood is filled with lies, corrupt counterfeits, and apostate doctrine.

**Rev 12:16** “the earth helped the woman and opened her mouth and swallowed the river” (NR) The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that the earth also has a spirit and it acts in harmony with God’s will to protect the church. The water imagery can remind us of Moses and Joshua calling on God to move the water for the children of Israel. God’s creations act together to carry out His directions. In one way or another God will support His people and deliver them. Behind the scenes we have an omniscient God protecting the woman / church.

**Rev 12:17** “The dragon was angry because of the woman and went away to make war with the rest of her offspring who kept the commandments” (NR) Note with whom Satan wars his fiercest fight—it is against disciples of Christ or those who keep God’s commandments. This is why “any compromise with the worldliness is actually a concession to Satan. Such a view should shock modern disciples out of spiritual complacency and move them to full-hearted resistance to the world and its allure” (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 480).

## Chapter 13

Rev 13 focuses on Satan's two henchmen. The three of them make up a counterfeit to the Godhead as a Satanic trinity:

- A beast from the sea in the first half, and
- A beast of the land in the second half of the chapter.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Short Vision: Beast from the Sea (Rev 13:1-10)

**Rev 13:1** *"I saw another sign, in the likeness of the kingdoms of the earth; a beast rise up out of the sea, and he stood upon the sand of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns . . . ten crowns (JST italicized)* As the blaspheming beast stands on the sand, he reflects the "foolish man" from Jesus' counsel when he advised His disciples to build on the rock (Mt 7:26). The heads, horns, and crowns depict Satan's attempt to counterfeit God's power. The word for "crown / diadems" describes the devil's political kingdoms (see Rev 12:1). It comes from the water, which is often a reference to chaos in scripture.

Biblical scholars see this as referring to the Roman Empire coming out of the Mediterranean Sea and the seven heads as Rome's seven mountains. But, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "where God ever gives a vision of an image, or beast or figure of any kind he always holds himself responsible to give a revelation or interpretation of the meaning thereof, otherwise we are not responsible or accountable for our belief in them" (*josephsmithpapers.org*, "Discourse, 8 April 1843, as Reported by William Clayton—A," p. [2]). During the first week of April 1843, he publicly preached on several parts of the Book of Revelation (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 186-187). Saturday's discourse included a reminder that these beasts are merely allegorical messages: "the beast that rose up out of the sea should be translated as the image of a beast" (*josephsmithpapers.org*, "History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843]," p. 1523). This ten-horned-beast-of-blasphemy may represent organizations or ideologies that oppose Christ's teachings.

**"and upon his heads the name of blasphemy"** In the KJV, this new beast has blasphemy written on each of his seven heads.

Rhodes new translation emphasizes, "the beast does not carry the name of blasphemy but rather has a blasphemous name." (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 486). In the ancient world, knowing the name of a god allowed one to control it. Blasphemy can refer to claiming you are God when you are not, or attempting to be worshipped, or acting in God's place without authority (Gaskill, *Revelation*, 152).

**Rev 13:2** *"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"* (NIV) The dragon or Satan works closely with the blaspheming beast and delegates power to it. Each of the attributes are described as wild, ferocious, and flesh eating. Rather than visualize a ten horned beast, look for the meaning of these symbols. It is described as the most heinous of all its predecessors. Daniel 7:1-7 describes a similar beast, but Joseph Smith explained that it represented an apostate tradition:

Their [*sic*] was a nice distinction between the vision which John saw as spoken of in Revelation, & the vision which Daniel saw, the former relating only to things as they actually existed in heaven—the latter being a figure representing things on the earth. God never made use of the figure of a beast to represent the kingdom of heaven—when they were made use of, it was to represent an apostate church (Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 170-171, also see 188).

**Rev 13:3** *"One of the heads was . . . dealt a death wound, and [it] . . . was healed . . . And the whole world marveled at the beast"* (NR) The beast's head is wounded so severely that he will die from it, but he still functions for a time. Biblical scholars have labeled this as the death of certain political leaders, the Protestant Reformation, or a specific national division. John uses the same word for the divine Lamb's wound (Rev 5:6). This is consistent with Satan constantly striving to usurp Jesus' position. It suggests that "the beast is a parody of the Lamb" (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 487). Whatever causes the wound, with the help of Satan, it continues to coexist for a period of time. As the beast had power to live, the world "marvels," or admires it enough to put their trust in the beast.

**Rev 13:4** *"They worshipped the dragon, because he had given power to the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? And who can fight against him?'"* (NR) Myopic humans worship devilish ideology when they trust or pursue godlessness. They follow out of fear, though, not love.

**Rev 13:5-7** *"The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months . . . to make war on the saints and to conquer them"* (ESV) This satanic influence slandered God, things heavenly, and the saints for 3 ½ years (again!). In opposition to the two powerful prophets in Jerusalem who preached 3 ½ years, the sea beast has a *temporary* victory. Three and a half years may signify a restricted or specific period, of half of a "whole," or just evidence of the beast as attempting to counterfeit (Rev 11:2).

**Rev 13:8** *"All . . . will worship him, whose names have not been written in the scroll of life of the Lamb"* (NR) Those written in "the Book of Life" (NKJV) have been sealed on their foreheads (D&C 77:9). On October 25-26, 1831, Joseph taught "when we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb's Book of Life we have perfect love and then it is

impossible for false Christs to deceive [*sic*] us” (*josephsmithpapers.org*, "Minutes, 25–26 October 1831," p. 13). The Book of Mormon also taught more about this idea and quotes God as saying, “the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life and unto them will I grant an inheritance at my right hand” (Alma 5:58). This may be those who are symbolically referred to as the perfect number: 144,000 (Rev 7:4 and 14:1).

**“The Lamb who had been slain from the foundation of the world”** (NR) The last phrase of this verse may be paraphrased, “the Lamb who was foreordained to be slain from the foundation of the world” (also see Ac 2:23; 1 Pe 1:20). Draper cautiously acknowledged, “This still leaves us with a problem. Christ was not slain . . . [until] the meridian of time. This is clearly a case of the *perfectum propheticum* in which the writer, by inspiration, uses the past tense to signify the assurance of the fulfillment of a future event” (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 493). It describes God’s planning and omniscience before time on the earth began.

**Rev 13:9-10 “If any man has an ear to hear, let him hear. . . He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints”** This phrase had many different variations and interpretations. Beware not to use the sword or you will be killed by it. Or God controls the times and death of people. The saints who are martyred are allowed by God to die according to His timing. The timing of our lives and the history of the world is under God’s care.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Short Vision: Counterfeit Lamb or Anti-Christ (Rev 13:11-18)

**Rev 13:11-12 “I saw another beast rising out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon”** (NR) The third member of the devil’s trinity is a double-horned-lamb and they all work together. We learn that it is a cunning counterfeit, or wolf in sheep’s clothing, as it receives its power / horns and words from the dragon. As “the word” of the dragon or Satan, it imitates the “the Word of God” (Jn 1:1-4). It does not come from heaven, but under the earth. This is a land beast (or the anti-Christ described in 1 Jn 2:18-22; 2 Jn 1:7). The counterfeit lamb or beast will influence or “morph” into false prophets and the great whore as the account unfolds in Rev 16:13; 17:3-5 (Ibid., 507). It represents evil in many forms—pride, hate, materialism, philosophy, secular humanism, etc. With selfishness as the core desire, humans want what they want more than what God wants. The worldwide idols of lust, power, status, and self-gratification speak to those under the influence of the land monster.

**Rev 13:13-14 “He performed great wonders such that he even made fire come down out of the sky . . . in behalf of the beast”** (NR) Satan’s henchmen can also counterfeit miracles (as Pharaoh’s magicians did in Egypt, Ex 7:11; etc.). These “wonders” or magic acts stem from satanic deceptions rather than from God. Jesus warned, “they shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that . . . they shall deceive the very elect” (Mt 24:24).

**Rev 13:15-16 “The beast spoke and he caused anyone who would not worship the image of the beast to be put to death . . . He caused all . . . to put a mark on their right hand or upon their forehead”** (NR) God is still behind the scenes, as we see with individuals’ agency allowing the false image to function. The counterfeits continue. Rather than disciples receiving the Lamb’s sealing, the poisoned sinners accept the Satan’s mark on their foreheads or hands. Similar to the ancient practice of branding slaves with a mark of their owner or tattooing a deity on one’s palm or forehead, this branding speaks of Satan’s ownership (Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ Press, 2014), 345-346, 349, 351). Hands represent one’s actions, so these people act for Satan. The right hand is significant, too, as it is the clean and covenant hand. The forehead represents their focus, thoughts and desires (Ezekiel 9:4).

**Rev 13:17 “He also made it so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark”** (NR) If there is no commerce without the mark of the beast, then one of the meanings of the mark is money. Hugh Nibley saw the root of Satan’s scam developed from a love of money: “Satan’s first article of faith . . . you can buy anything in this world for money” (Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*. SLC, UT: Deseret Book, 1989, 255).

**Rev 13:18 “Let he who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is a human number . . . six hundred sixty-six”** (NR) The answer to the riddle requires “wisdom” or God’s inspiration. With seven as the Lord’s number for whole and complete, “666” falls short of wholeness. The full meaning of Satan’s number is unknown—though theologians and mathematicians have theorized hundreds of ideas. The use of “*gematria*” and other number games have labeled emperors Titus, Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, the Roman nation, Luther, Saxon, and many more—all the devil. Significantly the word here for “beast / *thrion*,” transliterated into Hebrew also equals 666 (Draper and Rhodes, *BYU NTC: Revelation*, 524-53; Gaskill, *Revelation*, 163). The NIV reads “it is man’s number,” or the number of *mankind*, generally speaking. Who is engraven on our heads and hands?