



The Beasts

Revelation 13

1. The Beast from the Sea (verses 1-10)

2. The Beast from the Earth (verses 11-18)

Let's start with a quiz. I will give you a number and you need to guess what is identified with this number. (The answers are in the footnote.^[1]) First, I have two numbers for you:

3.1415926535

1.618

Next, I have two athletic jerseys for you to identify:

23 (with Chicago Bulls)

99 (with Edmonton Oilers)

Here are some scientific numbers:

-273

365

Here are some books with numbers in their title. Identify the author of the book:

1984

451

Finally, a familiar number:

666

The number 666 occurs in our text today. It occurs in Revelation, chapter 13, which is our text today. In Revelation 13 we see two beasts. Thus, the title of my message is "The Beasts." As I read the text of Revelation 13, listen for these two beasts.

Revelation 13:1-18

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

If anyone is to be taken captive,
to captivity he goes;
if anyone is to be slain with the sword,
with the sword must he be slain.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal

wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

Let's begin by looking at

1. The Beast from the Sea (verses 1-10)

Revelation 13:1

And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

This beast sounds like the beast we saw in chapter 12, when John saw a sign in heaven. "And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems" (Revelation 12:3)." The difference between chapters 12 and 13 is that this creature is a dragon in verse 12 and a beast in verse 13. Other than that, these creatures look alike: seven heads, ten Horns, and diadems on the seven heads.

Verse 1 gives us a bit more detail about the beast. It has

Revelation 13:1

... blasphemous names on its heads.

This gives indication that this beast is clearly against the Lord. This is why many call this beast, "The "anti-Christ." "Anti" means "Against." So, the anti-Christ is one who is "against Christ," the one who will rise to resist the Lord and his people.

We see more about this beast in verse 2,

Revelation 13:2

And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth.

Try to picture what John saw. Picture a leopard with spots and a strong, sleek body. Picture this leopard with paws like those of a bear. Finally, picture this beast with a mouth like that of a lion, fangs and all.

Continuing on in verse 2, we see that this beast was not the dragon of chapter 12. For, we read in the second half of verse 2,

Revelation 13:2

... And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.

The beast is the dragon's representative on the earth to do his will. In verse 3, we are told even more about this beast.

Revelation 13:3

One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed.

We find out later (in verse 14) that this wound was caused by a sword. Somehow, on one of these seven heads there was a giant wound that John considered to have been fatal. Yet, when John saw it, it was healed. This is significant and we will return to this thought later in my message.

Notice the power that this beast yields.

Revelation 13:3-4

... and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

John saw all the earth worshiping the dragon, who had given authority to this beast. Those in the world were thinking that the beast is so powerful, that none can oppose it. So the world worships the dragon, the power behind the beast. Verses 5 and 6 further describe this beast.

Revelation 13:5-6

And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

Here we see the wickedness of the beast. In uttering blasphemous words, it shows itself an enemy of God! It seems as if this beast is doing everything in its power to speak against the Lord! blasphemies against God! blasphemies against his name! blasphemies against his dwelling! It says here in verse 5 that he does so for 42 months. We have seen this time frame come up again and again. Forty-two months, 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). Time, times, and half a time (Revelation 12:14), that is, 3½ years. It speaks of a limited, definite time frame that

this beast has power. Then, in verses 7 and 8, we see the further power of the beast.

Revelation 13:7-8

Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

We see here that this beast is a military force to reckon with. This beast "makes war." This beast seems to have world-wide power! This beast has world-wide admiration, as all who dwell on the earth worship this beast, with the exception of those who follow the Lamb. Reading between the lines, we can figure that this is more forced submission than it is genuine worship. I'm thinking North Korea. You worship the leader, or you are in prison or in your grave.

Of course, those who are faithful to the Lord would never worship such a beast. As a result, they are "conquered." They are in prison, or killed for their faith. The book of Revelation has already anticipated the martyrdom of believers. Remember chapter 6? It records the time when the martyrs were under the altar pleading with the Lord, "O sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10). The Lord heard their cry and responded. "They were 'told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers would be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been'" (Revelation 6:11). And here in Revelation 13, we see the fulfillment of these words, as believers in Christ being killed because of their faithfulness to Christ!

None of this will take God by surprise. We see this in verse 8, where we see a book. It's called "the book of life of the Lamb." It's often referred to as "The Lamb's book of life." It is filled with names of those who are faithful to Christ!

Notice when these names were written in the book. They were written "before the foundation of the world." They were written down before any of us were created. This book is filled with the names of all the faithful followers of Christ of all time! It is no shock to God when any of us come to Christ. From before the foundation of the world, God had it all planned out. He wrote it down in his book. And it is no shock to God when we remain faithful, even under the attacks of the beast. Because, God preserves those who trust in him!

Do you remember the words of Jesus? Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

His sheep are the ones whose names are written in his book from the foundation of the world. They hear the voice of Jesus. They respond to his voice and follow him. Jesus gives them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one is able to snatch them out of his hand. Not even a beast with seven heads and ten horns, who persuades the entire world to worship him!

This, by the way, is the comfort of the book of Revelation. Regardless of how bad things may get in the future, the future is never out of God's control! Even when a powerful, world-wide ruler comes and demands worship of "all who dwell on earth," God's people will be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's, who refuse to bow down to the image of the king (See Daniel 3).

God will preserve and protect his people! Find refuge in that, O church family! If you are trusting in Christ, he will keep you in his hand. And no one will be able to snatch you away! even from this hideous and scary beast.

And by the way, it is no surprise to God that such a beast would rise up out of the sea. Did you notice the passive verbs in verse 7?

Revelation 13:7

Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation

Who do you think "allowed" it? Who do you think "gave" the beast his authority? These are known as "divine passives." In other words, the beast has no authority, except the authority that was given to it by God. God allowed this beast to arise. God gave the authority over the nations. The beast is merely God's instrument to execute his judgment upon the earth!

This is what Revelation is about! It's about the revelation of Jesus, as he comes to take his kingdom. In so doing, he will pour out his judgment upon the unbelieving world. Throughout the book of Revelation, he does this through the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments. But here in chapter 13, God judges the world through this beast.

Now, the big question is this: Who is the beast? We have been through enough of Revelation to understand that the images and symbols have a meaning behind them. And so, who is the beast? Now, a better question to ask might be this: who are the beast? The fact that this beast has seven heads gives us a hint that this beast is representative of several beasts. Further, we are given an interpretation (or sorts) in Revelation 17. In Revelation 17, we have the appearance of a great prostitute and this beast.

Revelation 17:1-3

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

In these verses, we find this great prostitute riding on a beast with seven heads, ten horns, full of blasphemous names. Obviously, this is a reference to the beast of Revelation 13.

Revelation 17:4-7

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly. But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

This is why we turned to Revelation 17. Because this angel tells John of the mystery of the woman and the beast. But mostly, the angel focuses on the beast.

Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

Here in verse 8, we see a tie back to chapter 13:8, which also referenced this book of life, which was written "from the foundation of the world," containing the names of all who would be faithful to Jesus, and enjoy ultimate, eternal life with him. Further, here in verse 8, we are told several things about this beast. "He was. He is not. He is to come."

It's right here that you need to see the true nature of this beast, and how this beast is trying to be God! In chapter 13, we have already seen how this beast draws all who dwell on the earth to worship him! In fact, at one point in their worship, they say, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" (Revelation 13:4). This is like the praise we often render to God. One instance is Psalm 113:5, "Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high!" The beast is an imitation of God! Satan, the dragon, is in heaven, and he sends his likeness to earth, so that it is difficult to distinguish the dragon from the beast. And this beast has a "mortal wound [that] was healed," just like the Lamb of God, who appears as one "having been slain" (in Revelation 5:6).

And here, we read of the beast who "was, and is not, and is to come." Where else in the book of Revelation have we heard something like this phrase? Is this not how we have heard God described? This is the cry of the creatures in Revelation 4:8, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" This is God! The one who was! and is! and is to come! Yet we see here a divine mockery of this beast, who so wants to be God. This be was and is NOT and is to come!

This beast is nothing other than a demonic, counterfeit God, who craves the worship of the world! That's the best way to understand this beast! Satan, parading himself as God, deceiving the nations into worshiping and following him!

Let's continue in Revelation 17, as we see the identity of the beast further explained.

Revelation 17:9-10

This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

Here we see the fact that this beast with the seven heads really represents seven kings! Here, we are told that five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. Now, this was written sometime during the first century, probably towards the end of the century. When this was written, Rome was in power! Rome was a world-wide power. And John is told that one of these heads represent the emperor in his day! John was also told that before his day, there had been five that had fallen!

Now, there are basically two ways that people have taken these five.^[2] Some view this beast as the Roman empire, and the heads as fallen Roman emperors in John's recent history (like Caesar and Augustus and Tiberius and Gaius Caligula and Claudius). Others view these five as fallen empires, Egypt and Assyria and Babylon and Persia and Greece.

The later option is probably the best interpretation, as the beast here in Revelation mirrors the four great beasts that come out of the sea in Daniel, chapter 7, where Daniel tells of a similar vision. Consider the following text:

Daniel 7:3-7

And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

Most Bible interpreters would take these beasts of Daniel 7, as representative of the world-wide powers of history: Babylon and Persia and Greece and Rome. These powers are consistent with the parts of the statue of the vision in Daniel 2. Thus, this is the best way to understand the beast we see in Revelation 13 and its explanation in Revelation 17.

The beast represents the world-wide kingdom powers throughout human history.

Now, we could continue on in Daniel 7, as he speaks more about the 10 horns. Further, we could continue in Revelation 17, as we also read more about the 10 horns. But this will take us further and further into speculation, which is not needed to understand and apply Revelation 13. We will leave the discussion of the meaning of the horns for another day. But let's get back to Revelation 13, and this beast. We left off in

verse 8, which speaks about the world-wide worship that this beast will receive. Then in verses 9 and 10, we have a saying and an application:

Revelation 13:9-10

If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

This takes us back to the worship that this beast requires! If you don't worship the beast, you will be taken captive. If you don't worship the beast, you will be slain. We have seen this in totalitarian governments throughout the history of the world, that require allegiance to the government, or imprisonment and death. This has often been the case throughout the entire history of the world. In recent times, We saw it in Russia before the iron curtain fell.. We see it today in North Korea and in some measure in Iran. To some degree or another, we see it in China and India today. and someday it may come to us!

It was a very present reality for those to whom John was writing. The early church faced much persecution. John himself faced persecution. He was writing as a political prisoner on the Island of Patmos. And the application comes in verse 10.

Revelation 13:10

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Amidst all of the history and speculation of the exact meaning of the beast, this application of Revelation 13 is clear! We are called to endure! We are called to keep the faith! Even if it would cost us our lives, we are to remain faithful unto death. May I remind you that this was the application to the church in Smyrna. They were being persecuted, about to be thrown into prison. And Jesus says to them, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Do you remember the words of the Lord Jesus? "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). So, church family, do not fear the beast. All it can do is kill your body! But fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell! So fear the Lord! Indeed, the beast is powerful. He is a governmental authority. He has at his disposal the weapons of warfare. The beast has much physical power.

If you going to be taken captive, you will be taken captive (verse 10). If you are going to be killed by the sword, you will be slain by the sword (verse 10). The call here is to endure. The call here is to trust in the Lord. It's a call to the saints, to those who have trusted in Jesus. So, know that you are secure in the hand of God. He will not tempt you beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:31). That escape may be death.

Be faithful. Endure. Those who endure to the end will be saved.

Let's move on from the first beast to the second beast. the first beast comes from the sea, the second beast comes from the earth.

2. The Beast from the Earth (verses 11-18)

Revelation 13:11

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

This beast has horns like a lamb and a voice like a dragon. I scoured the internet for a picture of this second beast. The best that I could find was a colored pencil drawing of a dragon coming out of a hole in the ground with a lamb's skin on top of the animal. The reason why I like this picture is that it captures the essence of this beast. It has qualities like a dragon and qualities like a lamb. But ultimately, the beast is like the dragon who is the power behind the beast. But it has a characteristics of a lamb, that it wants us to see.

This picture also evokes the imagery that Jesus used of the false teacher of the his day. He said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves." This is the second beast from the earth. It may come with appearance as a lamb, but inwardly, this beast is like the dragon, the serpent of old.

Let's look at how John further describes this creature.

Revelation 13:12

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.

Again, I can't help but to point out how this is so like the Trinity. The dragon is like the Father. The first beast is like the Son, having a mortal wound that is healed. The second beast is like the Spirit, who directs us to worship Jesus. In John 16:14 Jesus simply says of the Spirit, "He will glorify me." One of the many roles of the Spirit is to convict sinners of their need for Christ, and direct them to Jesus (John 16:7-11), that Jesus would be glorified. This is what we see this second beast doing. He is "making" people worship the first beast.

Look at the persuasive tools of the second beast:

Revelation 13:13-15

It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

The second beast is a miracle-worker. It "performs great signs." Fire from heaven comes down upon command of the best. This beast has resurrection power, it give life to an image of the first beast! All of these miracles are for the purpose of persuading people to worship the first beast! Again, I can't help but to remember the words of Jesus, warning of these things. "For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ... For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:5, 24-25).

The miracles this beast performs are real! This is no sleight of hand. This is no Penn and Teller magic. This is the real deal! And many will come to believe this beast, and worship the first beast. If one doesn't worship the beast, it will cost them their lives.

Do you see a theme here? There's a choice to be made. Who will you worship? Will you worship the beast? Will you worship Jesus? The message (and application of Revelation 13) is about worship. We have seen in the Revelation how Jesus is worthy of all of our worship. Do you remember the songs of praise in Revelation 4 and 5?

Revelation 4:8

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Revelation 4:11

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Revelation 5:9-10

"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

Revelation 5:12

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Revelation 5:13

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

Further, Revelation 7 is filled with similar expressions of praise to our worthy Lord.

Revelation 7:10

"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:12

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

But here in Revelation 13, we see the coming of the beasts, opposing Jesus Seeking glory for themselves!

Church family, don't follow the beasts! Follow Jesus! He is worthy! Don't be persuaded into worshiping these beasts. And don't be persuaded into worshiping smaller beasts in your life that seek to pull you away from Jesus. He is our worthy Lord!

Now, we come to our number.

Revelation 13:16-18

Also it [that is, the second beast] causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

There are many who take this as literally true, that people will be marked on their hand or forehead. I remember seeing the movie, "A Thief in the Night." In the movie, people were literally marked on their hands and forehead with a mark, which looked like the following:

O I I O
O I I O
O I I O

It takes a bit to understand that this all means. It is a binary representation of the number 6. In binary, the first digit has value of 1, the second digit has the value of 2, the third digit has the value of 4, the fourth digit has the value of 8 and so on. The number denoted by the symbols above is 0110, which is the binary equivalent of 6. This 0110 is repeated three times, which corresponds to 666. I see no need for such a physical mark.

I believe that John saw a physical mark on the forehead. But again, you need to take what you read in the book of Revelation as apocalyptic. What John sees in his vision isn't often reality. It corresponds to reality, but it's not reality.

Look forward to Revelation 14:1, "Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." The Lord doesn't need to have physical marks on people to identify them. Ephesians 1:13 says that he has sealed every believer in Christ with his Spirit. Everyone one of you who believe in Jesus are sealed and our for God as his

possession. He who names the stars needs no physical mark to aid his ability to remember those he has sealed. I believe that this mark is an apocalyptic way of identifying those who follow the Lord or follow the beasts.

Now, when it comes to this mark in Revelation 13. John tells us that you can't buy or sell without it. We all know that the technology is totally available to make this happen, especially as we all are equipped with smart phones. It is easier than ever.

It is already coming to places like India. In 2016 the Indian government made strong efforts to eliminate cash from their economy. The government declared the highest bill at the time, the 1,000 and 500 rupee notes (worth about \$6-12), would no longer be accepted as valid currency. Because of the problems this created, the government has since printed a 2,000 rupee note (worth about \$24). But as of this summer, these bills are no longer in circulation, though they are still considered legal tender. The reason that the Indian government has given for this is to make an attempt to curb black money in their economy. There is debate as to whether this has worked or not. However, the point is that we are reaching a time in history where purchasing and selling without cash is a possibility. The time may come when cash is entirely outlawed. This is what John sees in his vision.

If this time comes, we need wisdom as to how to respond. This is the application of the second beast.

Revelation 13:18

This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

The first beast called for endurance (verse 10). The second beast calls for wisdom (verse 18). Wisdom to know what 666 is.

Now, there are many different ideas of what 666 means. I have often heard that people thought this referred to Ronald Wilson Reagan (whose name had six letters in his first, middle and last name). I remember hearing someone tell me that the the internet was 666 as many web addresses begin with www. "W" happens to be the sixth letter in the Hebrew alphabet. So, "www" can be interpreted as 666. I don't think that any of these sorts of interpretations are the best way to go.

I believe that the best way to understand 666s is to glean what verse 18 tells us. It tells us that "it is the number of a man." Somehow, 666 is man's number. Perhaps 6 is what falls short of the perfect 7, which comes up so often in Revelation. In Revelation there are seven spirits of God, seven churches, even seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls. Seemingly, seven is what brings everything to a whole. But six simply falls short. This is man's number, always falling short of God.

And these beasts fall short of imitating the Trinity. Don't follow these beasts.

I want to close with a simple verse from the Psalms.

Psalms 57:7

My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast!

David wrote these words when fleeing from Saul and hiding in a cave. He was in a very perilous situation. Yet, his heart remained steadfast. He was worshipping the LORD in the cave (see verses 5 and 11). This is the call of Revelation 13. When things are at their very worst, with the beast ruling over the lives of the entire planet, our heart needs to remain steadfast, focusing upon the LORD, worshipping him!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on November 12, 2023 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] Here are the numbers with their corresponding meaning:

3.1415926535 – Pi

1.618 – The Golden Ratio

23 – Michael Jordan

99 – Wayne Gretzky

-273 – Absolute Zero in Celsius

365 – Days in a Year

1984 – George Orwell's book

451 – Ray Bradbury's book, "Fahrenheit 451"

666 – The Book of Revelation

[2] See <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/seven-kings-revelation-17>.