



Tallapoosa church of Christ

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

Welcome Visitors

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We are blessed by your attendance and worshipping with us.

Prayer Request

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- Jason Rowell
- Teddy Cauthen
- Pete Bridges
- Pat Blumer
- Bonnie Godwin
- Jeremy & Candyce Isabell
- Diane Aldridge
- Peggy Tidwell
- Winnie Crumbley

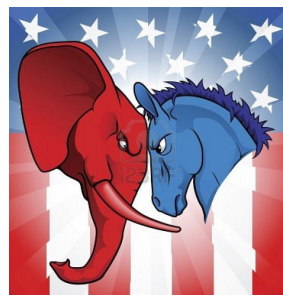
Birthdays & Anniversaries

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- Sharon Estvanko 7
- Ardie McGukin 20

Revelation: What is the Meaning of 666? (Part 3)

I have written [Part 1](#) of a study on the biblical meaning of 666, and afterward I wrote [Part 2](#) which delved into the biblical meaning behind the symbolism of the two beasts mentioned in Revelation 13. This final article will focus on determining the meaning behind the symbolic number itself. Before starting it I highly advise you to read Parts 1 and 2 first, as they bring up biblical facts and principles which are needed to properly understand the true meaning behind 666. To understand the meaning behind 666, it's important to first understand how numbers are used in Revelation. Remember that Revelation announces itself as "**signified**" from the get-go (Rev. 1:1), a book filled with signs and symbolism. Thus, it must be understood that the numbers found within the book have figurative meanings and should not be taken literally.

Most of the numbers in Revelation are figuratively used as a description of something rather than as having an absolute numerical value. We can determine the proper usage of many of the numbers by studying how they were used elsewhere in the Bible. For example, a biblical study of how "12" was used symbolically throughout the Bible helps us understand that the 144,000 of Revelation 7 is not talking about a literal 144,000 people, but rather symbolically was used to describe the entire population of the redeemed from the earth.



We understand that this means Republican vs. Democrat...but would people understand that 2,000 years from now?

I AM
the LORD
your God...
You shall have
NO
other gods
before Me.



God's Plan of Salvation

1. Hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; Acts 16:32)
2. Believe what is taught (Mark 16:16; Heb 11:6)
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
4. Confession (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10)
5. Baptism (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:3-4)
6. After the above five steps, faithful

This Week Leading Worship:

Sunday Morning:

Announcements	Kelly Cauthen
Scripture	Camp Mallory
Song Leader	Cory Payne
Opening Prayer	Joe Mallory
Table	Caden Mallory
	Brandon Estvanko

Assisting

Closing Prayer	Harel Otwell
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Sunday Evening:

Announcements	Harel Otwell
Scripture	Brennan Mallory
Song Leader	Caden Mallory
Opening Prayer/Table	Tony Hotalen
Closing Prayer	Carlos Payne

Next Week Leading Worship:

Sunday Morning:

Announcements	Cory Payne
Scripture	Brandon Estvanko
Song Leader	Harel Otwell
Opening Prayer	Wayne Aldridge
Table	Tony Hotalen
	Kenny Laminack

Assisting

Closing Prayer	Carlos Payne
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Sunday Evening:

Announcements	Joe Mallory
Scripture	Camp Mallory
Song Leader	Brennan Mallory
Opening Prayer/Table	Harel Otwell
Closing Prayer	Tony Hotalen

The Christians of the first century A.D. probably had a better understanding of these numbers than we do some 2,000 years later. Today, many Americans who follow politics can see a comic strip on the editorial page of any newspaper depicting a donkey and an elephant in a boxing match and immediately know that the picture symbolizes the political war between the Democratic Party and Republican Party. Yet, imagine if God grants us another two thousand years and some archaeologist comes along and discovers that same cartoon. Without doing research into what the donkey and the elephant commonly symbolized in 20th-21st century America, any deductions he would make about the picture would undoubtedly be erroneous, especially if he took it literally. In like manner, we would be wise to research how the people of John's day looked at numbers.

In those ancient times, language was primitive and the vocabulary was not nearly as extensive as it is today. Thus, one word or term sometimes had many diverse meanings. Under these types of conditions, men naturally came to use numbers like we use words today. As a result, numbers came to have a certain descriptive meaning just as words do. We do this today to a certain extent in our language. For example, how many tend to associate the number 13 with being unlucky?

How did they look at 666? Breaking it down even more, how did they look at the number "6" back then? To answer this, let's first recognize that 6 falls short of 7. It's 7 minus 1. Why is this significant? Back then, "7" was the number that symbolized perfection, purity, and completeness. The Word of God was called "**pure**" while being compared to "**silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times**" (Ps. 12:6). God rested on the *seventh* day, which was after he had *completed* the creation of the world and universe (Gen. 2:1-2). Jesus commanded that forgiveness was to be done "**seventy times seven**" times (Matt. 18:21-22), which was his way of saying that we are to *completely* and *perfectly* forgive each other. 6 falls short of 7. With this in mind, let me ask you something.

What is the literal definition of the word "sin"? Answer: it literally means "to fall short, to miss the mark."
Who sins? Answer: men sin (Rom. 3:23).
When was man created? Answer: on the *sixth* day (Gen. 1:26-31).

Look at this passage from Proverbs:

"There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him."
Proverbs 6:16

Does God hate only six sins, only seven sins? No, he's using the numbers symbolically here. He's purposefully associating the number 6 with sin and the number 7 with completeness to signify how he completely hates all sin.

What does all this show us? The Christians of John's day, the original readers of Revelation, would have considered the number 6 to be evil, to be associated with sin, to be associated with man. When they encountered this number, they would associate evil with whatever that number was represented with. That's why John says that 666 is "**the number of a man**" (Rev. 13:18). Yet, let's get even more specific. In the original Greek, it doesn't say "**the number of A man.**" It actually says, "**the number of man,**" as in *mankind*. *Arithmos* (number) *anthropos* (man). The Greek word anthropos literally defines humanity, not a specific male person.

Reminders:

www.tallapoosacoc.com

facebook.com/tallapoosachurchofchrist

Sunday Bible study: 10AM

Sunday Worship: 11AM

Sunday Afternoon: 1:30PM

Wednesday Bible study: 7PM

Joe Mallory, Minister

770-597-5009

Cory Payne, Bulletin

770-328-1745

Therefore, 666 is the number of mankind, humanity. Why? Because 6 was symbolic of man. It was biblically symbolic of the sin and evil of man.

It's very important that we remember this, because it changes the whole way people interpret 666. People read in their English Bibles that 666 is the number of "**A man**," and so they begin trying to figure out WHICH man it is. Is it Nero? Is it another Roman emperor? Is it Napoleon? Is it Hitler? Is it bin Laden?

But that's not what the verse was actually saying. The verse was actually saying that 666 was the number that symbolized mankind in general. It symbolized humanity and the evil of humanity.

Do you see how this changes the entire way one goes about interpreting the verse? No longer are we looking for a specific person, but now we see that God is figuratively talking about all of humanity when he mentions 666. When the early Christians first read Revelation 13:18, they would have seen that number 6, the number they associated with evil, used three times. 666. Why is 6 used 3 times in this verse?

Revelation 13:18 calls 666 the number of man, true. Yet, it's also called the number of the beast...but this number is not used to identify the beast. Verses 11-17 already identified the beast rising out of the earth as false religious governmental powers. We saw that in [Part 2](#).

No, rather than identify the beast, 666 is used just like most of the other symbolic numbers in Revelation...in a *descriptive* manner. It's used to *describe* the beast, to give certain information about this beast. Kind of like how we use the number 13 today to describe or associate it with someone or something which is unlucky or superstitious.

Thus, it's our task to understand what information is being given by associating this beast with the number 666. What about the beast is 666 describing? What about mankind in general is 666 describing? The way for us to figure it out is to examine how the number 6 is used in other passages of Revelation and apply that meaning to Revelation 13:18. That's why verse 18 says, "**...let the one who has understanding calculate (or count) the number of the beast...**" The "**understanding**" we must have is an understanding of the rest of Revelation, which is what we will use to determine the meaning of the number of the beast.

No wonder the first part of verse 18 says, "**This calls for wisdom**"...

This is why it's important for us to figure out why the descriptive, symbolic number "6" is used 3 times in verse 18 to form the number "666." Even though Revelation 13:18 is the only place in the entire book where we find the number "666," the number "6" is used in other places in Revelation.

In fact, it's interesting to note that the number "6" is used *three* other times in the book. The first time "6" is used is when the sixth seal is opened (Rev. 6:12-17). To sum up what this passage is talking about, this is a reference to the end of all things, Judgment Day, when Christ comes again. At the second coming of Christ, all physical things on this earth will be destroyed. Those who have not obeyed God will seek in vain to hide from him in any way possible to avoid his wrath.

The second time "6" is used is when the sixth trumpet is blown (Rev. 9:13-21). This passage symbolically describes the terrible situation people who are not spiritual and who do not worship God will find themselves in when Christ comes again. All things which claim to be spiritual but in reality follow the doctrines of men (false prophets, false religions like those represented by the beast rising up out of the earth) will be destroyed. The third time "6" is used is when the sixth plague is poured out (Rev. 16:12-16). This passage symbolically describes how God will gather together all who have not been obedient to him on the day Christ comes again, Judgment Day. This gathering will be a time of unimaginable sorrow for these people.

So we see that each of the three times "6" is used in Revelation, it symbolically talks about the terrible destruction that will come upon the enemies of God on Judgment Day.

What does this tell us?

"666" is the number 6 used 3 times. Elsewhere in Revelation, the number 6 was used 3 different times: the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet, and the sixth bowl of plagues. Each of these cases figuratively describes how the enemies of God will be destroyed on Judgment Day when Christ comes again.

That tells us what 666 means. It is the number of the beast (Rev. 13:18). Specifically, the verse says that the one who has wisdom and understanding is to **“count”** or **“calculate”** the number of the beast which is 666. The word **“count”** or **“calculate”** means [in the original Greek](#) to add up, to find out the end sum, the end result, the end equation, the final vote, the final tally. Jesus uses this same word when he tells us to **“count the cost”** (Luke 14:28), the only other time this Greek word is used in the New Testament.

What will ultimately happen to those governments who persecute Christians and those false religions who use government to persecute Christians?

What will happen to them when “their number’s up,” as it were?



God’s basically telling us that when we look ahead — count up, calculate — to see what will be the end result, the final equation, the ultimate destiny of the beasts of Revelation 13, we will see that at the end of all things... ..on Judgment Day, the day which each of these three “6’s” describes in Revelation, the day described by the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet, and the sixth bowl of plagues... ..what will happen to these persecutors of Christianity symbolized by the beasts is the same thing that will happen to all evil, sinful mankind in general.

What is the ultimate destiny of evil mankind?

They and the beasts will be completely destroyed at Christ’s second coming.

The physical and spiritual power and influence of these beasts will come to an end. Those governments who persecute Christianity both with and without the help of false religions will be destroyed. There will be no powers in existence except God’s.

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet.”

1 Corinthians 15:24-25

On that day, the only people who will have any spiritual hope will be faithful Christians, those who have trusted in Christ rather than the beast.

On that day, what will happen to the first beast, governments who are hostile to Christianity? What will happen to the false prophet, the second beast which symbolizes false religions proclaiming to be godly but who use government to persecute true Christianity?

“And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.”

Revelation 19:20

“and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Revelation 20:10

Remember, though, that 666 is not only the number of the final destiny of the beast. It is also the number of the final destiny of sinful man.

666 — the Judgment Day described by the sixth seal, sixth trumpet, and sixth bowl of plagues — will be the counted, calculated, added up, end result and final tally of any man or woman, any member of mankind, any human being who puts his trust in something other than God.

“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Revelation 20:15

“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Revelation 21:8

Back in [Part 1](#), I introduced this study by talking about how people are scared of 666.

Well, the unrighteous and ungodly among us should be scared of 666, because it is the symbolic description of the judgment of wrath and destruction which awaits them.

What’s sad is that the unrighteous are not scared of this number for that reason. Most of them are not scared of the number at all due to being atheists, agnostics, or people of religions that do not claim to follow Christ. The unrighteous who ARE scared of 666 are scared of it for the wrong reasons, due to believing the lies that say the number describes Hillary Clinton, barcodes, credit cards, or microchips. 666 is a warning which must be heeded, not ignored or misconstrued.



Christians, you and I do not need to be afraid of this number, nor should we be afraid of it. Instead, 666 should give US encouragement and hope because it is a symbolic promise from God that our enemies, those who persecute us and malign us because of our faith and loyalty to Christ, will not win in the end. They will lose. WE will win, and we will win because we stand with God.

That’s the promise of 666 to us.

Jon Mitchell