

*We fight the beast and his system with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left. We bow to the beast when we use weapons of righteousness in the right hand and weapons of this world in the left!*



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### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Do you think comparing the image of the slain Lamb vs. the Beast to that of Mother Teresa vs. John Wayne (or Liam Neeson) is good? Why?
- How have you conceived “the antichrist”? How did you come to have that way of imagining the antichrist? Has that changed?
- In what ways do the empires of the world (then and now) promote ideology that is anti-Christ, anti-the-ways-of-the-Lamb?
- How does the period of time that the beast has authority (42 months) compare to the time that the dragon pursues the woman and her offspring (1260 days)? What might this tell us?
- How does the vision of chapter 14 stand in ironic contrast to that of the beasts in chapter 13?
- Do you think Nietzsche understood what it means to be antichrist based on the representative quote above? Explain.
- What does it mean to say we must fight the beast but only in the ways of the Lamb? Can you think of ways one might try to fight the beast but using the ways of the beast?
- How are we tempted to worship the beast of empire and military power as a means of well-being (Roman peace) today? How are we called to resist the beast in the ways of the Lamb?

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ - 15: *The Ways of the Beasts or the Lamb?*

Jerry Cisar — November 19, 2023

Text: Revelation 13:1—14:13

### Introduction: The Power of Images

*Anytime rulers (or empires) demand allegiance to a way of life that is contrary to the Lamb and His ways they have become the beast. Anytime people give allegiance to the beast and his ways instead of the Lamb and His ways, they worship the beast!*

### I. The Beast out of the Sea (13:1-8, 18)

#### A. The Antichrist

- i. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

- ii. 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7

#### B. Is the Beast the Antichrist?

- i. The Beast stands in relationship to the dragon.

- ii. Who is this beast?

- a) Daniel 7

- b) By describing this beast with aspects of Daniel’s 4 beasts, John is saying that the empire of his time had the worst aspects of each.

Jamie Davies: “If this is a depiction of a political kingdom, as we should expect, then it is not merely the latest in a succession of empires but one that embodies the worst of them all.” (*Reading Revelation in Context*)

iii. It was indeed Rome that waged war against God’s people by their demand for worship and claimed authority over every tribe, people, language, and ethnic group (13:7)

iv. The beast is given proud words to utter blasphemies...

v. ... and to exercise its authority for 42 months.

C. Whose name numbers at 666?

## II. The Beast out of the Land (13:9-17)

A. Leviathan and Behemoth

i. The Lamb slain will conquer these powerful beasts: *the emperor and the entire system that props him up!*

ii. At the heart of the system are values... a way of life rooted in what is important... and it could not be more opposed to the way of the Lamb.

B. The Antichrist by Friedrich Nietzsche

“What is good?—Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man. What is evil?—Whatever springs from weakness. What is happiness?—The feeling that power increases—that resistance is overcome. Not contentment, but more power; not peace at any price, but war; not virtue, but efficiency.... The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our charity. And *one should help them to it*. What is more harmful than any vice?—Practical sympathy for the botched and the weak—Christianity...” (Friedrich Nietzsche)

i. Jesus has no allure of this world (Isa. 53:2-3).

ii. The empire, the beast and its system, is surprisingly beautiful and full of majesty to attract us to it; it has much in its appearance that we should desire it.

## III. The Call for Patient Endurance (13:10; 14:1-13)

A. The Triumphant Lamb and His Followers

B. To be faithful to the Lamb, to remain virgins, requires saying no to the Beast and everything tied to him and his system.

i. To remain faithful, we are told twice, “calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints” (13:10c; 14:12).

ii. Followers of the Lamb cannot worship lifeless images but must image the One they worship with their lives.