

1. **Introduction:** People are particularly susceptible to “that which is almost true,” especially things which take the form of counterfeits that appear convincingly real. Outright lies (gross distortions of reality) are more easily detected but may be believed anyway if there is a strong desire that they be true.
 - Satan is the king of deception. Chapters 12 and 13 provide a description of Satan’s daring attempt to counterfeit the Holy Trinity. The description of his scary counterfeits is not intended to make us anxious. It is to make us alert and prepared to respond faithfully and knowledgeably to related false teachings.
 - Revelation 12 -13 are difficult to fully understand and seem mysterious.
 - The NIV and some other versions have rightfully moved verse 12b into chapter 13 as verse 13:1a. The dragon standing on the shore of the sea begins the story of the beast who comes out of the sea.
2. **Satan’s Imitation of the Holy Trinity:** God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Satan, himself, counterfeits God the Father. Then having failed in his pursuit of the woman, her child, and her other offspring, Satan calls forth two evil spirits (beast from the sea and beast from the earth) to continue his diabolical mission of blaspheming God, deceiving the inhabitants of the earth, and persecuting believers. Satan plus the two beasts are an unholy counterfeit trinity.
3. **Revelation 12:17b-13:1-2:** *And he (the dragon) stood on the sand of the sea. 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. 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. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.*
4. **The First Beast – A Counterfeit Son of God:** Everything the first beast does mirrors the actions of the Son of God, but everything is twisted and corrupted.
 - Just as Jesus received all authority from the Father (John 5:22; Matt. 28:18), 13:2 says the dragon gave the first beast “*his power and his throne and great authority.*” Furthermore, the first beast appears to have suffered a mortal wound and then been restored.
5. **Revelation 13:3:** *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.*
 - Verse 3 describes the apparently fatal wound and the beast’s recovery that astonished the world.
6. **Revelation 13:4:** *And they (the people of the world) 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?”*
 - It is all an elaborate “counterfeit.” Jesus truly died and truly rose from the dead. The beast only appears to die and only appears to rise from the dead. Reality versus counterfeit.

- The gullible response of the people of the world is worship of the beast. As seen in verse 4, they worship because they say, *“Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”*
7. **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. ⁶ It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.*
 - The world responds to the beast with worship and the beast claims authority over the nations.
 - Just as the Messiah rules the nations (Ps. 2), the beast claims global domination.
 8. **Revelation 13:7-8:** *Also, it (the beast) 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, ⁸ and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.*
 - The beast represents a political and religious world system empowered by Satan that demands total allegiance from all nations. The war is a global campaign of physical oppression, imprisonment, and execution directed at believers. Believers are physically conquered but not spiritually.
 - From verse 5, we saw that *“it was allowed* (for the beast) *to exercise authority for forty-two months.* That is, authority was permitted but with limitations. The beast’s ministry is temporary, but Christ’s ministry is eternal. In other words, evil is time-limited and the countdown has begun. Goodness is eternal.
 - Another limitation is, only those *“whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain”* will fall under the influence of the beast and worship him.
 9. **Revelation 13:9-10:** *If anyone has an ear, let him hear: ¹⁰ 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.*
 - Verse 9 says that everyone (including believers) should listen carefully to the warning against danger from the beast. The warning is to be taken seriously.
 - Verse 10 reminds that God protects every believers’ soul but, in common with all people, a believers’ physical body is vulnerable to persecution. Some believers will face captivity or death by the sword as part of the difficult path they will experience under the beast’s wicked rule. Believers are to remain faithful to God, spiritually vigilant, and endure what they cannot avoid.
 - The beast from the sea is considered by many to be the Antichrist.
 10. **The Second Beast – The Counterfeit Spirit:** Satan is a counterfeit of God the Father, the first beast is a counterfeit Son of God, and this second beast will be a counterfeit of the Spirit.
 11. **Revelation 13:11-15:** *Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 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. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front*

of people,¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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 rises out of the earth. It has two horns and attempts to look like a lamb. But when it speaks, the deception fails for it speaks like a dragon. The beast from the earth has the authority of the beast from the sea. It causes the earth's inhabitants to worship that first beast whose mortal wound has healed thus counterfeiting the Spirit's role with Christ.
- The Holy Spirit points to the true Christ. The counterfeit spirit points to the false Christ. The Holy Spirit leads believers into true worship (Jn 4:24). The counterfeit Spirit leads people into idolatry.
- The counterfeit Spirit *"performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people."* Elijah brought fire down from heaven in 1 Kings 18. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came down as tongues of fire.
- The counterfeit spirit mimics Elijah, Pentecost, and the miracles of the Holy Spirit. But the actions of the counterfeit Spirit are designed to confirm deception, not truth.
- Verses 14-15 describes the counterfeit Spirit's actions in performing false miracles to trick people.
- He commands the world to make an idol (image) honoring the beast from the sea, the one who survived a deadly wound. The counterfeit Spirit gives life to that image so it can speak and order the death of anyone who refuses to worship it.

12. Revelation 13:16-18: *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,¹⁷ 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.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.*

- Verses 16-18 describe the famous "mark of the beast," the mark of the beast from the sea.
- The point of the "mark" is allegiance to the beast from the sea. The number of the one who is identified by the mark is "666." Verse 17 implies that the mark of the beast is either the beast's name or his number.
- Verse 18 says number of the beast is the number of a man, and his number is 666. The implication is that the man's name can be determined from his number. What then does "666" mean?
- Many guesses have been made. One is, since "7" is the number of wholeness and completeness, to be identified as "666" was an insult implying you were not whole and complete. Some other guesses are:
- (1.) 666 implies Nero, because the mathematical values of the Hebrew characters that spell Nero Caesar is 666. A variant Hebrew spelling of Nero's name totals 616, a variation found in

a few early Greek manuscripts of Revelation. That strongly supports the theory that John was writing a coded reference to the Roman persecution of Christians under Nero.

- (2.) 666 represents various repressive world systems at different times in the world's history.
- (3.) 666 implies falling short. Divine perfection or completeness would be represented by 777.
- (4.) In the same way, 666 could represent human effort falling short of divine requirements.
- (5.) Many other variations including 666 pointing to a future Antichrist or a global political-economic system that demands total allegiance to participate.
- What 666 seems to mean is that the unholy trinity of counterfeit father, counterfeit son, and counterfeit spirit falls far short of the Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Counterfeit holiness, counterfeit sealing, counterfeit conversion.
- In Scripture 7 is the number of completion and perfection. The number 6 is one short of 7 and could represent human power raised to its fullest extent, yet falling short of required divine perfection.

13. **Ephesians 1:3-10**: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

- In Ephesians 1:13, the Spirit seals believers in Christ's name. The counterfeit Spirit seals unbelievers in the Antichrist's name. Chapter 13 is about worship, about allegiance, about who you belong to. Everyone worships something and bears a mark. You will be shaped by the world or sealed by the Lamb. Neutrality is not an option.

14. **Next**: Antichrist!