

Notes on The Seven Signs

The Seven Signs

1. The conflict of the serpent with the woman and her seed (12:1-18)
2. Persecution by the beast from the sea (13:1-10)
3. Persecution by the beast from the land (13:11-18)
4. The Lamb and the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion (14:1-5)
5. The proclamation of the gospel and of judgment by the three angels (14:6-13)
6. The son of man's harvest of the earth (14:14-20)
7. The saints victory over the sea beast and their victory song (15:2-4)

Chapters 12-13

emphasis the persecution of Christians between the time of Christ's ascension and his return. We are greeted by the Dragon and the Beasts.

12:1-18

is the Past, Present, Future.

1-6

The Woman is at least the 12 disciples, at most the entirety of God's people past, present and future.

- (1) It may refer to Israel as she led to the coming Christ. This is then a scene of the birth of Christ and what was happening to protect the child at his birth. Flight into the desert may be their flight to Egypt to escape Herod who is like a beast or dragon.
- (2) The woman may refer to the disciples specifically. This then would mean what we see here is not the birth of Christ but the crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection.
John 16:19-22, Jesus describes the 12 disciple's agony of his leaving like a woman about to give birth. Then it would make more sense that the Dragon persecutes the woman and her other descendants, that's us, while the son who was caught up remains in heaven. We are in a wilderness because this is a trying time/testing time.
 - a. ¹⁹ Jesus knew they wanted to question Him, so He said to them, "Are you asking one another about what I said, 'A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you will see Me'?" ²⁰ "I assure you: You will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. ²¹ When a woman is in labor she has pain because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. ²² So you also have sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one will rob you of your joy.
- (3) Either way, in generalities, she refers to God's true people.
- (4) Side note: there are some fascinating interpretations of this event which actually include Vergo and Leo constellations and their alignment which came to pass in Sep. 2017.

Description of the Dragon.

- (1) Dragon – is another OT word for the evil sea monster that symbolizes evil kingdoms who oppress Israel. But John tells us that he is Satan.
- (2) Fiery Red – war and conquest
- (3) 7 heads – 3 heads from the first 3 beasts + the 4 heads from the fourth beast in Daniel
7. 7 heads could refer to the seven hills of Rome.
- (4) 10 horns – complete wicked power/authority

- (5) 7 crowns – His power is carried out through earthly kingdoms. 7 Kingdoms = all the kingdoms.
- (6) Sweeps a 3rd of the stars out of the sky. - Who are these stars? Angels? Followers of Christ? See Daniel 8:10,
 - a. ⁹“Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. ¹⁰It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. ¹¹It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. ¹²Because of rebellion, the Lord’s people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

She is taken into the wilderness and fed there, a place prepared by God. This sounds like John 14:3, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

- (1) Could be in connection with the first Exodus, to point a second exodus.
- (2) John also associates the dragon with Egypt and Rome, since the OT metaphors of the sea monster predominantly portray Egypt as an opponent of God’s people, and John sees in Revelation 12 a replay of the exodus patter. But now Rome pursues God’s new Israel into the wilderness and tries to drown them there.
- (3) In Rev. 12:3, 9 it is “The Great Dragon” which is an allusion back to Ezekiel 29:3 which speaks of Pharaoh the great dragon. This is the only time this title is seen in the Old Testament.

7-12

Possible Background Roman Myth:

Relation to Ancient Myth - Leto and Apollo. The goddess Leto who was pregnant with Apollo, the son of Zeus. She was attacked by the dragon, Python, because he knew that her offspring had been appointed to kill him. But she was carried to a safe island by winds sent by Zeus. The god Poseidon hid the island under the water by flooding it so that Python could not find the woman and her child. Clinging to a palm tree on the island, Leto endures nine days’ labor before giving birth to Apollo, the sun god. Four days after Apollo was born, he found the dragon and slew it. HE then inaugurates a “golden age” among the gods, full of music and celebration.

Certain figures of the first century (August, Nero, and Domitian) adapted the Apollo myth for purposes of political propaganda. Domitian, for example, liked to dress in the costume of Apollo and to be portrayed as the sun god in works of art. The emperor thus presented himself as a new Apollo, the divine son of the goddess Roma, who overcomes the serpent (Rome’s obstacles) and inaugurates a golden age for Rome.

So this passage presents a situational problem for John and his readers, including us. Where is Satan in this story? On the earth. So look out! But who can stand against the Dragon? We can. This section shows us how.

- (1) Vs. 10 – The kingdom is on earth now. This is like the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. When did this happen? The day of Pentecost/crucifixion of Christ.
- (2) Vs. 11 – references the crucifixion of Christ. That is how we defeat the devil here and now by the blood of the lamb.

The picture here is of Satan waging war during the time of Christ's ministry and being cast down to the earth. This is the scene of the war in heaven that we often put at the time before creation. Have we missed something?

13-18

Dragon persecutes Christians

Flees to the wilderness via two wings which is reminiscent of Ex. That talks about God being

She is nourished for time (1), times (+2), half a time (+.5) = 3.5 years, same as the witnesses of Revelation 11. This refers back to Daniel 7, 9, and 12, which commences at Christ's ascension and ends at his return. It is a figurative time to refer to the trial period of persecution. Harm will come but we are sealed and protected.

Elijah had a 3.5 year judgment ministry against Israel

Time, times, half a time = 1260 days = 42 months = 3.5 years. (11:3, 11:11, 12:6, 12:14)

The earth helped the woman and opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon had spewed. Allusion back to the parting of the red sea.

Could also be an allusion back to Isa 42:15, 43:2, 44:27; 50:2 where the rivers will again be a danger for God's people, but he will dry up the sea and rivers. (the 6th bowl, the river Euphrates is dried up).

The Point is that the people are not the ones who are the enemy. There are spiritual forces at play and those who are persecuting Christians are slaves to the Dragon.

The two Beasts of chapter 13

The Beast of the sea looks a lot like the Dragon. He draws his power from the Dragon. I would argue the Beast is not Rome but takes advantage of Rome.

It is possible that these are an allusion to two parts in scripture. Daniel 7 and Job 40-41.

Daniel 7 describes four beasts. ¹In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream with visions in his mind as he was lying in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and here is the summary of his account. ²Daniel said, "In my vision at night I was watching, and suddenly the four winds of heaven stirred up the great sea. ³Four huge beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

⁴"The first was like a lion but had eagle's wings. I continued watching until its wings were torn off. It was lifted up from the ground, set on its feet like a man, and given a human mind.

⁵"Suddenly, another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up! Gorge yourself on flesh.'

⁶"While I was watching, another beast appeared. It was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads and was given authority to rule.

⁷"While I was watching in the night visions, a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had 10 horns.

⁸“While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. There were eyes in this horn like a man’s, and it had a mouth that spoke arrogantly.

These are a reference to 4 Kingdoms: Babylon, Persia, Greeks, Rome

Job 40:15-41 describe the Behemoth from the earth and the leviathan from the Sea. Beast of the sea is “king over all that are proud” (41:34)

13:1-10

Description:

- (1) 7 heads – one head is fatally wounded. Some say this is a reference to Nero and the belief that he would come back from the dead to attack Rome with Parthia. It is not a full recovery, like Christ’s.
 - a. The Leviathan Myth of ANE had 7 heads.
 - b. The 3 heads of the first three beasts and 4 heads of the 4th beast from Daniel 7
- (2) 10 horns – This and the crowns are connected. It is a reference to Daniel 7’s fourth beast. They are interpreted as 10 kings.
- (3) 10 crowns (3 more than the dragon had).
- (4) Like a leopard, feet like bear, mouth of a lion = $\frac{3}{4}$ of the beasts from Daniel 7.
- (5) Mouth given to him to speak blasphemies.
- (6) Given authority for 42 months, which = 3.5 years.
- (7) His power comes from the Dragon and all will worship him.
- (8) Who is able to wage war against him? – sounds like “who can stand” from the judgement of the lamb in chapter 7.

The epitome of blasphemy is to attribute deity to someone who is not God. This the roman imperial cult did, as did the local cults of Asia Minor Temples were dedicated to Rome and Augustus in Asia Minor, and coins bore the emperor’s divine names. Domitian purportedly asked to be called “our Lord and our God”.

He is imitating the dragon.

13:11-18

Description:

- (1) Out of the earth
- (2) 2 horns like a lamb but sounded like a dragon.
- (3) Exercises the authority of the first beast.
- (4) Performs great signs – causing fire to come down from heaven.
- (5) Directs the people to make an image of the beast (idol). This idol is given power to speak.
- (6) Gives out the mark of the beast.

He is imitating Jesus. This is a religious beast. One who draws the people to worship the first beast, a false religion promoting the government of it’s land. In the time of Rome it was Imperial Cult exercising forceful worship of the governing authority, Caesar.

The Mark of the Beast. This is a recapitulation of the Seal of the Lamb from chapter 7. They are being marked by Satan for his purposes.

He is going to be renamed as the false Prophet in chapter 17.

666 = What is the 666? Ronald Wilson Reagan, The Pope, A microchip, Barak Obama, Prince Harry. The Omen movie actually has a brand on Damien under the hair of 666.

Caesar Nero transliterated into Hebrew *nron qsr* = 666: nun=50, resh=200, waw=6, nun=50, qoph = 100, samech =60, resh = 200 (this is called Gematria). A strong textual variant that says the number is 616. One of the oldest has this number. Irenaeus in the 2nd century alluded to a second tradition of 616 in 180. 616 = Caesar Nero. Many textual critics say 616 is the original. You can also add up the numerical value of the initials of the emperors from Julius to Vespasian and it comes to 666.

1. Very first mention of Nero as 666 is in 1831AD by a German Scholar.
2. Nero is in the 5th century in a document used to equate 616 but done differently. It's not transliteration into Hebrew.
3. It doesn't explain why there was a transition to 616. Or to 666 if 616 is the original.
4. Why does John call Nero, Caesar? Why honor him?
5. Why give it in a code? If you honor him by Caesar why not just say it? It assumes his Greek audience knows Hebrew. In other places he explains the Hebrew.
6. The Beast symbolizes something bigger than just Rome.

13:17 "The name of the beast" 15:2 "over the number of his name" The Greek word for Beast is therion. Transliterated into Hebrew = 666. T=400, 14:1 the lamb who had his followers and had his name written on them. Lamb + Theos into Hebrew = 777.

Deut. 6 would put a falactory box on their foreheads and on their wrists which is the shema. This is an image of that. The anti-shema.

There is evidence that to enter into a trade guild you would have to worship the emperor and then you would be stamped with the name of the emperor or guild.

Both Christ and Beasts have swords, have followers who have their names written on their foreheads, have horns, are slain, rise to new life and are given new authority, have authority over every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and receive universal worship. The significance of the parallels is that the chief opponent of Christ cannot be limited to on historical person or epoch. That is, just as Christ's rule spans the whole church age, so the evil activities of this ultimate counterpart, the devil and his servants, span the same time.

When believers successfully resist the beast's deception, they avoid identification with the essence of his name, which is imperfection personified. To be identified with someone's name is equivalent to partaking of that person's character. Since the seal or name of God is invisible, refers to a spiritual reality, and is on all true believers, so likewise is it the case with the beast's number for unbelievers.

Worship equates who you are stamped by.

We will be observing the day of the Lord once again, and the judgment against those who follow the beast. John will draw a line in the sand between those who worship God and obey him and those who worship the beast and follow him. Chapter 14 is how you know which one you belong to.

14:1-5

The lamb on Mt. Zion (on earth or heaven?) vs. 1-2 are all descriptions of Jesus we have already had before. Mt Zion is distinction to Zion by itself occurs only 19 times in the OT, at least 9 of which allude to a remnant being saved, in connection with either God's name or God's sovereign rule. This Mt. Zion is the end time city of God's rule with man on earth.

With him is 144,000 who had his name and father's name on their foreheads = 777.

It reemphasizes who belong to Jesus in contrast with those who belong to the beast.

They keep themselves pure.

Follow lamb wherever he goes. . . to death.

Offer first fruits.

blameless

14:6-13

"Fear God" is the eternal message of the gospel.

Judgment day. . . again

First mention of Babylon the Great and it is already fallen.

Wine of God's wrath is the blood of the saints.

Vs. 12 this calls for the perseverance of the saints who obey God's commands. How do you fear God? You persevere in the faith.

Vs. 13 is a be attitude. Blessed are those who died in the Lord.

YES!!! LET THEM REST FROM THEIR LABORS< FOR THEIR WORKS FOLLOW THEM!!! This is "Well Done good and faithful servant."

Those who remain faithful to the very end will inherit eternal life.

14:14-20

Daniel 13 harvesting the earth, giving judgment.

Vs. 15 = It is time to judge.

Winepress of God's wrath.

Trampled outside the city, Outside reflects back to not measuring the outer courts of the Temple from chapter 11. To be outside are those who do not belong to God.

Blood is as high as the horses Bridals.

180 miles is actually 1600 Stadia – $40^2 \times 10^2 = 1600$ stadia (180 miles)
 $16 \times 100 = 1600$. Also 40^2 . 40×40 . This is an apocalyptic way of describing the mother of all judgments.

Isaiah 63:1-6

“Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?

Who is this, robed in splendor,
striding forward in the greatness of his strength?

“It is I, proclaiming victory,
mighty to save.”

² Why are your garments red,
like those of one treading the winepress?

³ “I have trodden the winepress alone;
from the nations no one was with me.

I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.

⁴ It was for me the day of vengeance;
the year for me to redeem had come.

⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help,
I was appalled that no one gave support;
so my own arm achieved salvation for me,
and my own wrath sustained me.

⁶ I trampled the nations in my anger;
in my wrath I made them drunk
and poured their blood on the ground.”

15:1-4

Which are the last – he has used $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ in the trumpets. He used a 4^{th} in the seals. Here he uses lasts. To show we are winding down to the very end of God’s judgment.

Sea of Glass is a little crazier. It is mixed with fire.

Sea functions as Chaos. The last time we saw the Sea was in chapter 13. So they have overcome/standing by the sea. They have overcome that which comes from the sea.

Song of Moses. Ex 15 & Deut 32:3-52 – Chiastic structure to this psalm.

- (1) This hymn begins and ends with God’s deeds.
- (2) Then it moves to who God is.
- (3) In the middle, “Who can stand”

The emphasis then is man’s comparison to God who is awesome and wonderful. How should we interact with this being? It is an ethical question. It points to what we do in response to who he is, we carry out the proper witness.

Application:

- (1) Satan is God’s marionette.
- (2) So are we.