**THE MARK OF THE BEAST**

**REVELATION 13:1-18**

The “Mark of the Beast” has been the object of ridicule and the ridiculous. It seems that anytime any new innovation or spectacular event or person comes on the scene, it is subject to be named the “mark of the beast”. This seems to be especially true if, in any way, it can be associated with the number 666. This was recently demonstrated when a man was given a license plate for his car with the number 666. He became really upset because it might associate him with the “mark of the beast”. He negotiated with the Motor Vehicle Department until they exchanged it for a plate with another number. Unfortunately, that is only too typical of the irrational thinking that has been associated with this subject. And religious minded people, I must say, seem to be prone to the most extremes on the matter.

It will be our objective and our task with this lesson to try to find a biblical, sensible answer for this “mark of the beast” that has both plagued and intrigued theological minds for years. We cannot simply choose some imaginary object or event to fill this objective; we must find an answer that fits with all of the text of this chapter that leads us into this arena. Therefore, armed with a determination to find the truth and harmonize our findings with the whole of the scripture, let us begin.

**V1. “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy”.**

The scene of this vision of John, finds him standing on the sand of the sea. The sea, or water, as we have learned from Rev. 17:15, and Is. 17:12-13, represents the rolling, restless masses of “people, multitudes, nations and tongues. John sees a “beast” rise up out of the sea; that is, he sees this beast arising from among the world’s population of people. We have also previously identified these “prophetic beasts” as rising civil powers or governments. This is confirmed to us by god’s own explanation of the beasts foretold in Daniel 7:1-8 and 17-25. Note that in Daniel 7:2, that the four beasts of Daniel’s vision are also seen to “come up out of the sea, in the same manner as the beast which John now sees.

God is showing John A world power arising from among the nations of people. From this initial glimpse of this event, John is given further information about this beast. It is this additional information that will enable us to identify this beast and his place in the world, along with his impact on the saints of God.

This “beast” is first described as a behemoth with **“seven heads and ten horns”.** This immediately removes it from the “literal” arena to the “symbolic”, because there is no such natural beast in all the jungles of the world. Accordingly, we are at once assured that John is seeing the rising of a power, whose domain is divided into seven (consecutive) heads or ruling dynasties; and then further defined by 10 horns, with ten crowns upon the horns. This is a starting point for identifying this beast that is arising out of the “sea”.

Another significant identification of this beast, specifically relating to its seven heads, is the **“name of blasphemy”** appearing on the heads. This informs us that this beast is a blasphemer against God because it is written upon its heads, making it obvious.

**V2. “And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority”.**

This verse continues with more specific markings to help us identify this strange looking beast. Before we look at these additional markings, this is a good place to emphasize again the symbolism of this vision and also how essential it is to incorporate and harmonize every part of this chapter together, and not just selected portions of it. One of our objectives is to identify the “**mark of the beast”**. That means identifying the “mark” of this monster with 7 heads and 10 horns. You can’t just identify some significant object you know about and call it the mark of the beast, without such mark being a part of all of the identifying markings of the beast, plus all of its other qualifications listed in the text. For example, V5 says that the time element of this beast is “forty two months”. Regardless as to how you interpret and apply this time period, the very specifics of the time confines the beast as well as its mark within the boundaries of its limits, with no flexibility on either side.

Now let’s go back to the text of verse two and proceed with its identifying facts. Notice the multiple descriptions of the beast that John sees. Its appearance was like a **leopard; and it had feet like a bear, and his mouth was like that of a lion.** It is strange enough to have a beast with 7 heads and 10 horns; but now it takes on the likeness of three different kinds of beasts. There is something about it that looks like a leopard; its feet, though, appear like those of a bear, and its mouth resembles the mouth of a lion.

Daniel’s prophecy of chapter 7 can help us with these descriptions. In this chapter, 3 of the 4 beasts he describes are a leopard, bear and a lion. The leopard beast represented the Grecian Empire; the bear represented the Medo-Persian Empire, and the lion represented the Babylonian Empire. Our beast of Rev. 13:2 bears some resemblance to all three of Daniel’s beasts, which suggests that it will have features that in some way looks like them. The main body of the beast like a leopard suggests it will arise, not in Babylonian or Persian territories, but from the more eastern Grecian territories. The feet of the bear gives it some likeness of the Persians and the mouth of a lion gives it some characteristic of Babylon.

After this, V2 tells us that **“the dragon gave him (the beast) his power, and his seat, and great authority”.** The dragon, as we have previously shown, represents ancient “pagan Rome”. Thus you have elements of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires, represented in the beast of Revelation, chapter 13; the one with 7 heads and 10 horns. The particular action of the dragon in giving his power, seat, and great authority to the beast would require some contemporaneous existence between them, if only for a short period of time. In addition, by virtue of the dragon dispossessing itself of its dominion and giving it to the beast, strongly suggests the total demise of the dragon at the same time that this action is taken. This tells us then, that at such time that the ancient Roman Empire fell, we can look for the rising up of the beast out of the “sea” of ancient Grecian territories.

We know from history that the ancient Roman Empire (Pagan Rome) divided in 395 AD, into Greek Eastern and Latin Western dominions. Constantine had built his capital at Constantinople (the city of his name-sake) in the eastern portion of the empire. While the western Roman dominion continued with its capital at Rome, it also continued to weaken and finally, the Roman Empire fell in 476 AD. It did not fall by sword. Odeacer, the last Roman emperor, voluntarily, willfully transferred the imperial seat (throne) and authority to the emperor of the eastern empire with its capital at Constantinople. Thus the era of the Caesars, gods of the Romans, ended. The “dragon” had given his seat, power and authority to the emperor of the eastern portion of the empire, rising ominously out of the territories of the ancient Grecian leopard.

The symbolism of the passing of power, as it were, from western to eastern dominion, does not end here. Another strange and mysterious description of the beast now appears to John.

**V2. “I saw one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast”.**

Approximately 50 years after “Pagan Rome” gave its power and throne to the monarch of the eastern empire, which had its capital in Constantinople, Justinian I came to power in 527 AD. He had been assisting his uncle, Justin, who was sickly, in ruling, and upon Justin’s death, Justinian took over. Justinian had a passionate desire to re-unite the eastern and western territories under one throne. To accomplish this he did two major things: (1) He reclaimed some major territories from three of the barbaric tribes that had overrun the west; and (2) He revised and consolidated the entire legal system of the empire into what is known as the “Code of Justinian”. This was done in 529 AD.

Justinian was a very religious man and a staunch supporter of the Roman Catholic Church, with its presiding bishop at Rome, even though his capital was in Constantinople. He also believed that all “Christendom” should be united under one presiding head. Accordingly, this monarch who arose in the east; recaptured the territory of Italy and Rome; which only about 50 years earlier had divested itself of its imperial authority; which is now back under one head with all the empire. Then Justinian, through and by the power of the newly reformed legal system of all the empire, did an amazing and far reaching thing. He acknowledged through imperial law, the superiority of the “Holy See of Rome” over all authority, both civil and ecclesiastical. This authority vested in the “Holy See of Rome”, also was, by imperial edict, over every other kind, degree or conviction or belief throughout the empire.

The changes wrought under Justinian, though maybe not so momentous seeming at the time, were the mold for major events and trends for centuries to come, and they occurred in just a few short years. First, Ancient Rome was divided, then fell completely. The seat of power and authority of Paganism, which had resided at Rome, ruled by her emperors for over 600 years, was voluntarily, willingly given to the throne of the still-reigning eastern empire monarch. Justinian reclaims strategic territories and re-unites the eastern and western territories under one monarch. Justinian, by his new code of laws, completely outlaws all Pagan religion as well as any form of the Christian Church not in full agreement with the Roman Catholic Church. Justinian, by his code of laws, formerly unites the church and the state, and thereby creates the Roman Church-state religious-political system, combining the religious and political powers under one empire. Finally Justinian, again by his code of laws, empowers the “Holy See” of Rome as head of all “Christianity”, and superior to all civil authority. It is universally acknowledged by all history of the church of this era, that Christianity has risen in the world but has fallen In her allegiance to God and his truth. She had become baptized paganism, and from this point on plummets into the abyss of the dark ages.

Now we will apply verse three to these events. (1) One of the heads of the beast receives a deadly wound; Western, Pagan Rome falls; (2) Its deadly wound was healed; western and eastern Rome united again, and under the auspices of the combined civil empire, along with the Roman Catholic religion, was restored as the beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, with the name of blasphemy on his heads. Is there any wonder that the whole world was amazed at this awesome combination of events and the resulting affects they had on the world.

Verse two tells us that the dragon gave its power to the beast. We have described how this happened, in that Pagan Rome voluntarily relinquished its imperial throne to the power which ultimately became the beast. Now we see another strange anomaly as:

**V4. “They worshipped the dragon which gave its power to the beast”.** “They” undoubtedly refers to “all the world” of the previous verse. But how did they worship the dragon which now has been subdued, even outlawed, by the beast? They worshipped the dragon **because** it had given its power unto the beast. More than this, the dragon was worshipped because it now lived and was exemplified in and through the beast. On many occasions and by many symbols, we have seen paganism subdued and vanquished, only then to see it survive in the kind of Christianity that succeeded it. “Baptized paganism” is a phrase often used to illustrate a Christianity in name only, but paganism in belief and practice. We prepared an entire lesson, quoting directly from the historian Edward Gibbon, showing in specific detail how paganism was outlawed and how it simultaneously survived in the teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, they worshipped the old “dragon” practices, clothed in a Christian name.

**V4. (Also) “They worshipped the beast”.** There was nothing like the (Roman church-state) beast. There was no power that could (successfully) make war with the beast. It ruled and completely.

**V 5. “And there was given unto him (the beast) a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies”.** In chapter 7:25 of Daniel, he prophesied this very thing when he said: **“And he shall speak great words against the most high, and shall wear out the saints of the most high, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times and the dividing of time”.**  We specifically described many of these blasphemous words in the lesson from Revelation chapter 17, where we listed and explained many of the erroneous doctrines of the Roman Church, which she spoke against God. We named the doctrines of the “Mass”, “Confessional”, “Purgatory”, “adoration of saints and relics”, “Papal infallibility” and more. Undergirding all of these blasphemous doctrines was her strident, imperious, perfidious and tyrannical intolerance of the word of God and her prohibition of it to the common people. As Paul foretold in II Thessalonians 2:4, **“that the man of sin would oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God”.**

**V5. “And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months”.** The beast with 7 heads and 10 horns, with characteristics as a leopard, bear and lion; to which the dragon gave all of his power and authority; which had a name of blasphemy and was worshipped by all the world, was given a specific time frame to continue for forty two months. This is the same forty two months; twelve hundred and sixty days and time, times and dividing of time, which we have noted twice in Daniel and also in Rev. 11, 12, and now in chapter 13. It is the same time frame identified in each instance and we have previously placed it as beginning in 529 AD and ending in 1789 AD. We have noted that one of our major objectives of this lesson is to identify the **“MARK OF THE BEAST”**. We are now given a specific time period of 1260 prophetic years from 529 to 1789, as the time of the beast, and therefore of the mark of the beast. By this specific time, every commentator on the mark of the beast is thereby given precise boundaries for its existence. To identify a “mark of the beast” outside of this boundary is a theological error.

**V6. “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven”.**

Everything that came out of the mouth of this beast was blasphemous against God, his name, his true church and his people. “Out of his mouth” refers to the teachings of the beast which were contrary to the word of the Lord. Such was the nature and power of this beast, that it was considered by God to be in complete opposition to him in all it said and did.

**V7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindred, and tongues, and nations.**

Under the reign of the beast, the saints of God (those outside the creeds and control of the beast) were oppressed, denied, denounced, persecuted and martyred. Beyond this, the beast wielded power over all people and nations, and:

**V8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

There was universal worship and adoration of the beast, except by the remnant who truly tried to follow the will of God and not the creeds of the beast. While all of this blasphemy by the beast and his universal worship were going on, John says:

**V11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.**

Now another beast, this one coming up out of the earth (the previous beast came up out of the sea), and he had two horns like a lamb, and he talked like a dragon. Let me reiterate here that a beast in the prophecies of both Daniel and Revelation refers to some form of a civil power. Also, horns are necessarily attached to the “head” of a beast and form a distinctive part thereof. Already we have seen a beast with 7 heads and 10 horns rising up out of the “sea”. This same monstrous beast (with 7 heads and 10 horns) was also seen in chapter 12 and 17. In addition it is described in chapter 12 as having a tail long enough and strong enough to draw one third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the ground. Without any doubt, this beast with 7 heads and 10 horns is a huge monster.

Then in V11, we are confronted with another beast (civil power) arising, not out of the restless, shifting sea, but out of the (stabilized, solid) earth. More specifically, this beast has only 2 horns (instead of 10) and they were like a “lamb’s” horns. This beast, characterized with 2 horns like a lamb, suggests to us that it is small (as to its civil dominion or territory) when compared to the beast with 7 heads and 10 horns. Thus we are to look for a civil authority but one which is limited in the scope of its territorial properties.

However, don’t let the suggestion of a small civil dominion fool you, because this beast “speaks as a dragon”. Immediately we are drawn into the realm of “that old dragon” again. And that is not all………………

**V12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.**

This second beast may not have a very large civil dominion, but his power extends into the realm of the first beast, even to the point of controlling and manipulating it. “Before him” does not suggest that the first beast is gone from the scene; it suggests that this second beast is in control of and manipulates his power, in its stead, as it were, and that right in its presence. In addition he causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast. This beast with horns like a lamb not only manipulates the power of the first beast, it also causes them which dwell in the earth to worship the first beast.

Further in **V13, He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And, V14, deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live. Then in V15, he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.** We will have more to say about this beast, but is there any doubt that we are talking about the Roman Church-State beast, that controlled all the power of the (dragon) beast and caused the world to worship its image or persona. Beyond all of this,

**V16, says: And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead; V17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**

This expression, **Mark of the beast”**, is found eight times in the Bible, all in the book of Revelation, as follows: Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9 & 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20 and 20:4. Here again you are forced into symbolism because of the fact that if you try to make this beast a literal one, you also must have a literal, visible mark on the bodies of these people who are subjects of the beast. I have heard speculation that the “mark of the beast” was your Social Security number, or TV or some other identification method yet to come. (Now we come up with a license plate with the number of the beast and panic sets in). That there is a specific mark of this beast, there is no doubt. It would seem to me that if we properly identify the beast that should essentially tell us what its mark is. However, if you are looking for the beast to arise sometime in the future, then you can do no more than speculate as to what its mark is because you do not even know what the beast is in such case.

Since we have two separate beasts to deal with in this chapter, we must answer the question as to which beast has the mark all must wear in order to “buy or sell”. Reading the text carefully will reveal that both beasts are, in different degrees, involved. The text will show that the mark is the identification of the first beast, but that it is the second beast that “causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, bond and free to receive a mark” (V16). That is also in harmony with the rest of the manipulation and control that the second beast exercises over the first beast.

Back away, as it were, and look at the picture presented regarding these two beasts. You have one monstrous beast, with 7 heads and 10 horns, and, according to chapter 12, with a tail to draw down one third of all the stars of heaven to the ground; huge by any standard. Then you have the second beast, with only two horns and they are like those of a lamb, which certainly suggests a beast of much smaller dominion. However, this second beast with lesser territory, has all the power over the first beast, and in every sense manipulates the first beast. The second beast causes all to worship the image of the (first) beast, and also causes all to receive the mark of this first beast in their foreheads or in their hands. This first beast is a symbol of the **“Holy Roman Empire”, with its 7 heads or ruling dynasties. The second beast, which exercises all control, power; causes “miracles” to occur; demands that all worship the image of the first beast, even receiving the mark of the first beast in order to function in the daily commerce of life, is the “Papal States”, of which there were two. They were truly and legally a civil dominion, albeit very small. That is, the actual world territorial domain of the Papal States was very small. However, the head of the ‘Papal States”, the Pope, had all the power and control over the much larger** **(temporal) Roman Empire. The Pope wielded this power through those “seeming miracles”; through the suppression of the subjects of the empire and by the presumption and exercise of that power which should have belonged to the emperor or king. But as we saw, as far back as 529 AD, Justinian I, recognized the superiority of the “spiritual head” above that of the “civil head”, and thus it was for the ensuing 1260 years.**

The “mark of the beast”, in the right hand or in the forehead, does not mean a “tattoo” of some design, or some national controlling legislation, etc. Instead it reflects a willing allegiance to the beast by way of the works or deeds of their hands, or by the acceptance, belief and support of all that the beast stood for in their minds.

Finally verse 18 says: **“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six. (666).**

This number (666) has been the object of fantasy, speculation, imagination, religious deceit and, yes, a lot of a total lack of understanding of the entire chapter as well as the book of Revelation as a whole. Most commentators just ignore the issue or else leave it simply as stated with no explanation. Again, if it is something that you project to be out in the future, then all you can do is guess as to what it is. In such case it would simply be smart to just ignore the entire book.

Dr. John MacArthur says the number simply means “a man”, though he does not identify what man. James Russell, in his book “Parousia”, says the number represents the Roman Emperor Nero, who reigned from 54 AD, until he committed suicide in 68AD. He arrives at this by stating that, even though John wrote the Revelation in the Greek language, he was “thinking” in Hebrew so that his Hebrew readers, the ones which he says were deep thinkers, would perceive he was referring to Nero. I guess you would call this an early version of “mental telepathy”. Writing one thing and thinking something else, and expect your more astute readers to figure this out on their own. Or would you call it a total inability to figure out the truth?

I think that Dr. Adam Clarke has written a very worthy commentary on this number of the beast and I have taken the liberty to include part of his comments here.

In this verse we have the very name of the beast given under the symbol of the number 666. Before the invention of figures by the Arabs in the tenth century, letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. The Greeks in the time of Homer, or soon after, are thought by some to have assigned to their letters a numerical value corresponding to their order in the alphabet. A system of representing numbers of great antiquity was used by the Greeks, very much resembling that afterwards adopted by the Romans. This consisted of assigning to the initial letter of the name of the number a value equal to the number. This method of representing numbers by letters of the alphabet, gave rise to a practice among the ancient of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians. Seneca, who was contemporary with St. Paul, informs us that Apion maintained Homer to have been the author of the division of his poems of the Iliad and Odyssey into forty eight books saying that he commenced his Iliad with a word that the two first letters, whose sum is forty eight, might indicate such division.

Having thus shown that it was a practice in the apostolic age, and subsequently, to count the number in words and phrases, and even in whole verses, it will be evident that what is intended by 666 is, that the Greek name of the beast (for it was in the Greek language that Jesus Christ communicated his revelation to St. John) contains this number. We have observed that the beast is the Latin Kingdom or empire; if this is correct, the Greek words signifying “the Latin Kingdom” must have this number.

Dr. William E. Brown commends the commentary of Dr. Clarke and offers his own summary of the Greek letters comprising the expression “THE LALTIN KINGDOM”, along with those letters and their numerical value. They are as follows

H = 8

L = 30, a = 1, t = 300, I = 10, n = 50, e = 8, B = 2, a = 1, s = 200, I = 10, l = 30, e = 5, I = 10, a = 1. The total of these numbers equal 666. Thus, “THE LATIN KINGDOM” transposed into letters corresponding to the Greek alphabet used here, fits the number “666”, the number of the beast. Thus do we find the papal or Latin Kingdom, in its nature, character and history, answering the demands of prophecy in all points: (1) a beast or civil power; (2) having two lamb-like horns --- inconsiderable temporal principalities which furnished an army and gathered taxes; (3) have the speech of a dragon, blasphemous; (4) having the image of another (first) beast and exercising all of its power; (5) giving no favors but martyrdom to any but those who have the mark, the name, or the number of his name in their hands or foreheads – i. e., who are easily recognized as subjects of the numbered kingdom.

Since we have indicted the papacy and the Latin Kingdom (Holy Roman Empire) as comprising the beasts of this chapter, guilty of the name of blasphemy it imposes on the beast, and demanding the allegiance of everyone and silencing with martyrdom those who do not yield, and further, marking them with an identification of service, works, support, etc., it is appropriate that we provide some comments from history to support this indictment. Note the following:

The “Decretalia” is an authoritative work in (Catholic) ecclesiastical law, compiled from the ancient Latin fathers, the decrees of the general councils, and the decretal epistles and bulls of the “Holy See”. Each Pope, before his investiture, must solemnly declare the papal decretals true. The following extract will demonstrate its arrogant claim and its awful blasphemy. “**The pope is considered to be the Vicar of Christ, not only upon earth, in heaven, and hell, but also over the angels and the evil spirits. He administers at the same time jurisdiction and power over all patriarchs, a greater one than that of all angels, even so that he can place the latter under his law. The whole world is to be taken for his diocese. He can turn a square into a circle, wrong into right, and can make something out of nothing. He can pronounce sentences and judgments, in contradiction of the right of nations, to the law of God and man, sentences, however absolute, yet always just. He can free himself from the commands of the Apostles, he being their superior, and from the rules of the Old Testament, aye, even from the prescriptions contained in the Gospel”.**

Further it says: **“He sits in one consistory with God, and shares the same judicial school with Christ. The pope is God’s equal, except in sin; so that in cases where he changes his mind, it should be understood as if God himself had changed his mind. From the pope there exists no appeal to God, because he himself is God upon earth, and therefore judges like God”.**

**Archbishop Manning, in a speech in 1869, put these words into the mouth of the pope. “I (the pope) claim to be the supreme judge and dictator of the consciences of men; of the peasant that tills the field, and the prince that sits on the throne; of the household that sits in the shade of privacy, and the legislature that makes laws for kingdoms. I am the sole, last supreme judge of what is right and wrong”.**

**In Koch’s History of Europe, he writes: “ Pope Innocent III (AD 1198) announced himself as the successor of St. Peter, set up by God to govern not only the church, but the whole world. It was this pope that made the famous comparison about the sun and moon. As God (says he) has placed two great luminaries in the firmament, the one to rule the day, and the other to give light by night, so has he established two grand powers, the pontifical and the Royal; as the moon receives her light from the sun, so does Royalty borrow its splendor from the papal authority”.**

Can any thoughtful reader possibly doubt that the name of blasphemy appropriately fits such arrogant and preposterous claims as the papacy has made?

This leaves us with one unanswered characteristic of the beast of this chapter: It is described as having seven heads. If the beast is the Latin Kingdom, that is , the Holy Roman Empire, then it is necessary that there be seven consecutive heads or reigning dynasties of this empire. Counting from Charlemagne the Great and his successors, known as the Carolvingian dynasty, from 800 to 962 AD; the Saxon dynasty from 962 to 1025; the Franconian dynasty from 1025 to 1238; the Suabian dynasty from 1238 to 1474; the Spanish dynasty from 1474 to 1713; the Austrian dynasty 1713 to 1781; the dynasty of France under Louis 16th, you have 7 distinct reigning dynasties covering the time of the existence of the Holy Roman Empire.

Perhaps some will disagree with our interpretation of this 13th chapter as being a prophecy of the rise and domination of the Holy Roman Empire from 800 AD to its fall in 1789 AD, with its initial roots beginning much earlier in the crumbling of the ancient Roman Empire and slowly evolving into an empire comprised of both ecclesiastical and civil powers. In the final analysis it must be determined whether or not this application of the monstrous symbols is the correct one or is there a better application that can be reasonably proven to exist. If, on the other hand, this vision is projected to some time yet unknown in the future, then it must be concluded that we do not and cannot understand its meaning until such time as it is finally fulfilled. With the scriptural injunction that “whoso hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”, it seems that we have an obligation to seek its answers in completed history.

Insofar as the “MARK OF THE BEAST” itself, no matter what era you place the prophecy in, how will you find a better explanation for this mark of the beast then that which history so completely records for us as being the indelible signs and evidence of those who were bound to an allegiance at any cost to the will of the “beast”, the Holy Roman Empire?

Maybe the only real argument against the interpretation set forth herein, is that it denies other theological agendas which are propounded without a fair analysis of the symbols in which it is written. Or maybe the argument is that it is not symbolic at all, but must be literally applied, as some would assert. But this is a premise that is so unsustainable that it is unworthy of any due consideration. In the final analysis, there is no avoiding a symbolic application and this absolutely necessitates an historical answer. That we have tried to give.