

VISIONS OF REVELATION

Session 3: John's Vision of the Dragon (Revelation 12-13)

SYMBOLIC NUMBERS IN APOCALYPTIC AND JOHN'S REVELATION

2 = Reliable witness (see Deuteronomy 19:15)

3 = God (see Isaiah 6:3)

4 = Creation (see Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 7:2)

5 = A handful, a few

6 = Incompleteness

7 = Completeness (see Genesis 1-2)

8 = Jesus Christ

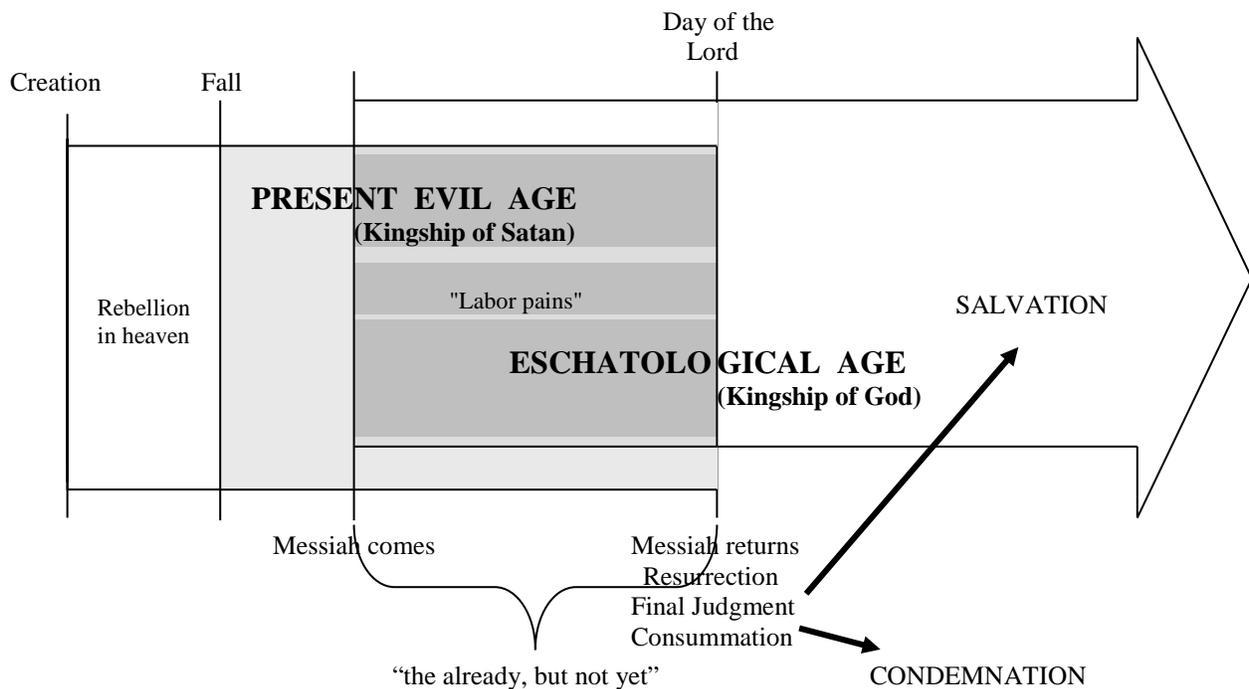
10 = Two handfuls, several

12 = The covenant people of God

“A time, times, and a half time” = $1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2}$ days/years = 42 months = 1280 days
= the period of time between the giving of the revelation and its fulfillment—that is, the period between A.D. 95-96 and the Consummation of God's Kingship (see Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2, 3, 9, 11, 19; 12:6, 14; 13:5)

Multiples of numbers = The full number of the thing described

THE SHAPE OF CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTIC THEOLOGY



THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (Rev 1:19)

"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'" (Rev 4:1)

"The angel said to me, 'These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.'" (Rev 22:6)

A. Prologue (Rev 1:1-20)

B. Part I: The Revelation of "What Is Now" [= John's Present] (Rev 2:1-3:22)

C. Part II: The Revelation of "What Will Take Place Later" [John's Future] (Rev 4:1-22:6)

1. Introduction: John's Heavenly Vantage Point (Rev 4:1-5:14)

- a. John is taken up into heaven where he can see the future from God's point of view.
- b. John sees a scroll with seven seals, symbolizing the redemptive will of God. Only Jesus the Lamb can open the scroll and put God's plan into effect.

2. First Vision of the Future (Rev 6:1-8:1)

John sees a vision of the complete future pictured as the opening of seven seals:

- a. Seals 1-5: The Labor Pains pictured as four horsemen and the souls of Christian martyrs calling for justice (Rev 6:1-11)
- b. Seal 6: The Final Judgment and the end of the world as we know it (Rev 6:12-17)
- c. Interlude: God takes note of who belongs to Him, marking them for salvation. This interlude encourages suffering Christians to view their present in light of the future. (Rev 7:1-17)
- d. Seal 7: The return to primeval silence like before creation anticipates the coming of the New Creation and the Consummation of God's Kingship or Salvation (Rev 8:1).

e. Second Vision of the Future (Rev 8:2-11:19)

John sees a vision of the complete future pictured as the sounding of seven trumpets:

- a. Trumpets 1-6: The Labor Pains likened to the Egyptian plagues, which encourages readers to think of the coming of God's Kingship as a "Second Exodus" for the covenant people of God (Rev 8:2-9:21)
- b. Interlude (Rev 10:1-11:14):
 - (1) God takes note of who belongs to Him, separating Christians from non-Christians as Jews are separated from Gentiles in the Temple.
 - (2) Christians are pictured as reliable witnesses, who proclaim Christ and are attacked and killed, but who are raised to life at the Final Judgment.
 - (3) This interlude encourages suffering Christians to view their present in light of the future.
- c. Trumpet 7: The Final Judgment and Consummation of God's Kingship or Salvation (Rev 11:15-19)

f. Third Vision of the Future (Rev 12:1-22:6)

John sees a vision of the complete future pictured as the Dragon's war against Christ and his final defeat:

- a. The Labor Pains pictured as the Dragon's war against Christians through the beast from the sea and beast from the land (Rev 12-13)
- b. Images of the Final Judgment, which brings the Salvation of God's people and the Destruction of His enemies (Rev 14:1-22:6)
 - (1) Salvation: The song of the redeemed and announcement of judgment (14:1-13)
 - (2) Destruction: The harvest of the earth and grapes of wrath (14:14-20)
 - (3) Destruction: The seven last plagues or seven bowls symbolizing God's complete wrath poured out at the Final Judgment (15:1-16:21 with interlude in 16:25 encouraging suffering Christians to view their present in light of the future)
 - (3) Destruction: The fall of Babylon (17:1-19:4)
 - (4) Salvation: The wedding supper of the Lamb (19:5-10)
 - (5) Destruction: The victorious Christ and great supper of God (19:11-21)
 - (6) Destruction and Salvation: A vision patterned after Ezekiel 37-48, which encourages readers to think of the coming of God's Kingship as a "Second Return from Babylonian Exile" to the "New Jerusalem" and the presence of God in His Temple (20:1-22:6)

D. Epilogue (Rev 22:7-21)

THE DRAGON, WOMAN, AND MALE CHILD (Revelation 12:1-17)

A. The Greek Myth of Python, Leto, and Apollo:

B. The Roman Emperors' Adaptation of the Myth:

C. John's Adaptation of the Myth (Revelation 12:1-17):

¹A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The

dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. ⁵She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

⁷And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

¹³When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. ¹⁵Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

1. The dragon:
 - a. **“that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray”** (v. 9):
 - b. **“an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns (compare Daniel 7:7) and seven crowns on his heads”** (v. 3):
 - c. **“His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth”** (v. 4):
2. The male child:

“a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter” (v. 5, alluding to Psalm 2:7-9):

3. The woman could symbolize:
- _____ or the _____
 - “a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head” (v. 1):**
 - ⁶The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days . . . ¹³When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach (compare Exodus 19:4).**
4. The dragon's response:

^{12b}. . . woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. . . . ¹⁷Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Throughout the “1260 days” or “time, times and half a time,” the dragon makes war against the woman and her offspring through the _____ (13:1-10) and the _____ (13:11-18).

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA (Revelation 13:1-10)

¹And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ²The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ⁴Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

⁵The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all

whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

⁹He who has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 13:1-10

A. Revelation 13:1a, 11a:

^{1a}And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea...^{11a}Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth.

1. The dragon symbolizes _____.
2. The sea" symbolizes the forces of _____ and _____.
3. The beasts from the land and sea resemble _____ and _____.

What do they represent in Revelation 13?

B. Revelation 13:1b-2, 5-7:

^{1b}And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ²The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority....

⁵The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.

1. Compare Daniel 7:1-8, 23-25, which is the source of much of John's imagery:

¹In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

²Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

⁴The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it.

⁵And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

⁶After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

⁷"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

⁸"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. . . .

²³"He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.'

2. In Daniel, the beasts symbolize _____, the horns symbolize _____, and the little horn symbolizes _____. These were _____ that opposed God and oppressed His saints.
3. Likewise, the beast from the sea in Revelation 13 symbolizes _____, that the dragon will use in the same way.

C. Revelation 13:1b:

^{1b}And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had...seven heads

The beast's seven heads may link it to _____, or possibly to _____ (see Revelation 17:3, 9).

D. Revelation 13:1c, 5-6, 8:

^{1c}and on each head a blasphemous name....

⁵The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies...⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven...⁸All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

1. In Daniel, the "little horn" speaking "blasphemies" symbolizes _____.
2. In Revelation, the beast from the sea symbolizes similar _____, such as _____.

3. What is the meaning of Revelation 13:8? (“**All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**”)

E. Revelation 13:3:

One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.

1. This identifies the beast as _____.
2. It is also an example of an important theme in Revelation: Satan's _____ of Christ.

F. Revelation 13:2b, 4-5, 7:

^{2b}The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority...⁴Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

⁵The beast was given...to exercise his authority for forty-two months...⁷He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

G. Revelation 13:9-10:

⁹He who has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

A more literal translation of the Greek text:

“..._____ _____ patient endurance (*hypomone*) and faithfulness _____ the saints.”

THE BEAST FROM THE LAND (Revelation 13:11-18)

¹¹Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ¹²He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. ¹⁴Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

¹⁸This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

A. Revelation 13:11-12a:

¹¹Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ^{12a}He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf,

1. The "two horns like a lamb" identify the beast as a _____ of _____ (see Revelation 5:6 and below).
2. The beast's function (compare Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10, which describe this beast as a "false prophet"):

B. Revelation 13:12b-17:

^{12b}[The beast from the land] made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. ¹⁴Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

1. The second beast acts as a _____ for the first beast.

2. This second beast probably symbolizes _____ powers who support the _____ powers allied with the dragon or Satan.

3. John is probably thinking of:

a. _____ of the _____

See Steven J. Scherrer, "Signs and Wonders in the Imperial Cult: A New Look at a Roman Religious Institution in the Light of Rev 13:13-15," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984): 599-610.

AND b. _____ who _____ with Satan (compare Revelation 2:14, 20)

4. The beast operates for _____ (see Revelation 13:5):

5. Other examples of the "beast from the land":

C. Revelation 13:18:

¹⁸This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

1. Compare Revelation 13:16-17:

¹⁶[The beast from the land] also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

2. Background:

a. Numerical Values of Greek Letters in the First Century (see next page):

b. Calculate the numerical value of a Greek word by adding up the _____ of its letters.

c. The Numerical Value of the Name "Jesus":

1	α	alpha	10	ι	iota	100	ρ	rho
2	β	beta	20	κ	kappa	200	σ	sigma
3	γ	gamma	30	λ	lambda	300	τ	tau
4	δ	delta	40	μ	mu	400	υ	upsilon
5	ε	epsilon	50	ν	nu	500	φ	phi
6	ς	vau*	60	ξ	xi	600	χ	chi
7	ζ	zeta	70	ο	omicron	700	ψ	psi
8	η	eta	80	π	pi	800	ω	omega
9	θ	theta	90	Ϟ	koppa*	900	Ϡ	sampi

*vau, koppa, and sampi are obsolete characters

3. Interpretation of Revelation 13:18:
 - a. “the number of the beast...is man’s number (*arithmos anthropou*)”:
 - b. “His number is 666.” [NOTE: A few ancient manuscripts read “616.”]

SUMMARY OF REVELATION 12-13

SATAN'S PARODY OF CHRIST: A MAJOR THEME IN REVELATION

GOD

- A. The "Trinity":
 - 1. God, the Creator
 - 2. Christ the Lamb through whom God acts/makes war against Satan
 - 3. The Holy Spirit by whom God speaks through the prophet John and calls all people to worship Him
- B. God:
 - 1. Sits on the Throne of the universe (4:2)
- C. The Lamb:
 - 1. Wears many crowns (19:12)
 - 2. Has seven horns signifying complete power (5:6)
 - 3. Wears names such as "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" (19:16)
 - 4. Has authority over all nations (12:5)
 - 5. Receives power, throne, and authority from God; shares God's throne (5:6)
 - 6. Dies and is then raised from the dead (1:5; 5:6)
 - 7. "Overcomes" Satan and his allies by dying as a sacrifice (12:11)
 - 8. Reigns for 1000 years—and this is only the beginning of an eternal reign (20:4; 11:15)
 - 9. His number is "888" (not explicitly stated in Revelation)

SATAN

- A. The "Evil Trinity" (a unit in Rev 16:3):
 - 1. Satan, the Destroyer
 - 2. The Beast from the Sea—i.e., political powers through which Satan makes war against Christ and his saints
 - 3. The Beast from the Land/False Prophet – i.e. religious powers through which Satan speaks and calls all people to worship him
- B. Satan:
 - 1. Wears crowns as a usurper of God's throne (12:3)
- C. The Beast from the Sea:
 - 1. Wears crowns (13:1)
 - 2. Has ten horns signifying power (13:1)
 - 3. Wears blasphemous names—i.e., takes to itself names that rightfully belong to Christ (13:1, 5-6)
 - 4. Has authority over all nations (13:7)
 - 5. Receives power, throne, and authority from Satan; shares the dragon's throne (13:2)
 - 6. Seems to have a fatal wound that has been healed (13:3)
 - 7. Seems to "overcome" Christ and his people by killing them (13:7)
 - 8. Reigns for 42 months (13:5)
 - 9. His number is "666" (13:18)

D. The Holy Spirit:

1. The Spirit of God/Christ (3:1)
2. Empowers John to speak for God/Christ (1:10; 2:7; 19:10; etc.)
3. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy" (19:10)
4. Gives resurrection life to Christ and Christians (11:11)
5. Through the Revelation, calls all nations to worship God/Christ

E. The People of God:

1. "Overcome" Satan by dying (12:11)
2. Worship both God and His Christ (5:13)
3. Are "measured" and "counted" by God (11:1), and sealed with the seal of God (7:3-4; 14:1)

D. The Beast from the Land:

1. Has two horns like a lamb—a parody of Christ (13:11)
2. Speaks like the dragon (13:11)
3. Exercises the authority of the beast from the sea (13:12)
4. Gives life (lit. "spirit") to the image of the beast from the sea (13:15)
5. Makes all the earth worship the beast from the sea (13:12, 14)

E. The People of Satan:

1. "Overcome" Christ and his servants by killing them (13:7, 15)
2. Worship both the beast from the sea—and the dragon that gives it power—as if they were God and Christ. They ask, "Who is like the beast?" (13:4), which is a parody of Exodus 15:11: "Who among the gods is like you, O Lord?"
3. Are marked with "666," the number of the beast from the sea (13:17-18)