



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelations 13:11-18

"The Beast from the Earth"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our Scripture reading is in Revelation chapter 13 verse 11 through verse 18. And the Apostle John writes,

"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence." (That is the presence of the first beast.) "And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom, let him who

has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

Now that clause, "and his number is that of a man," is perhaps a correct rendering. It can be translated that way. But in the light of the fact that there is no definite article, and in the light of the fact that the term "man" is often one that refers to man generically, that is, the name for man that includes women such as "we" in English. We say mankind such and such or man is a sinner. We don't mean to exclude the ladies when we say that, we mean all of us; man generically. It is possible to render this expression, "for the number is that of man". In other words, in a symbolic way the number represents man in his weakness and sinfulness. We will say more about it later on. "And his number is six hundred and sixty-six." May the Lord bless this reading of His word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for this great book, the Book of Revelation, the apocalypse. We thank Thee that it is an unveiling and by it we learn things that have to do not only with ourselves, important though that be, but of things that have to do with Thee, even more important. We thank Thee for the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth within it. Set forth not simply as the Lamb of God, who offered the atoning sacrifice, but also as King of kings and Lord of lords and who shall come and into whose hands shall be given the right to rule in His Kingdom upon this earth.

We thank Thee for the glorious hopes that are bound up in Him, in His coming, in His Kingdom and then in the new heavens and the new earth at last before us. We are grateful and thankful for all Thou has given in the word for our benefit. We pray Lord that we may be responsive to Thy word.

Thank Thee for this beautiful day that Thou has given to us. And we thank Thee that we can enjoy it and at the same time realize that this is a gift from a loving God. We thank Thee. We worship Thy name. We pray Thy blessing upon us this day and upon the meetings that are carried on in the name of our Lord wherever they are carried on.

We pray for our country, we pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ. We pray for this local church and its leadership and its members and friends and those who are visiting with us today, we pray a special blessing upon them. May there be responsiveness to the word, and may it also be communicated to them, a blessing that comes from our triune God.

We pray for the sick and for those who are bereaving, particularly. We bring them to Thee. Encourage them. Strengthen them. Give consolation. We thank Thee that though art the God of consolation. For those that are in the hospital, we pray especially for them. Lord, give healing as it pleases Thee. Give wisdom, give encouragement to those who minister to them. May now Thy blessing be upon us in this hour. We pray particularly and not forgot those who have asked them to pray for them whose names are found in our calendar of concern. Bless them. Answer their prayers affirmatively Lord, if it please Thee. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is, as I mentioned in the reading of the Scriptures, the beast out of the land. When one thinks of the Bible as a whole, one surely sees that the purpose, the program of God, succeeds because of an unseen Father, because of an incarnate Son, and because of the power of the Holy Spirit. That is perhaps the fundamental revelation of the word of God. There is a triune God and in His activities as Father, incarnate Son, Holy Spirit, the divine work is carried on and brought to its brilliant and satisfactory conclusion.

The program of Satan, on the other hand, counterfeits and counterfeits with remarkable resemblance to the purposes of God. On the one hand we have the Holy

Trinity, on the other hand we have an evil triumvirate; an evil trinity. And there with the unfolding of the word of God of the teaching concerning the false prophet, that revelation of the evil triumvirate is brought to its completion. This triumvirate is composed of an unseen dragon. He is the anti-father, the anti-God, the restored beast, the one who has the supernatural experience. He is the antichrist, who as you know, had the experience of bodily resurrection. And then there is the power of the false prophet, the unholy not the holy, the unholy spirit. In fact, in the New Testament there are two expressions that might be used of these two programs and persons in this particular connection. The apostle writing in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 16 speaks of the "mystery of godliness". But then the apostle writing in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 also writes of the "mystery of lawlessness".

So we have these things that relate to each other; one genuine and one the counterfeit. The origin of the infernal trinity, as over against the eternal trinity, is probably related to the origin of sin described for us perhaps in typical form in Isaiah chapter 14. And the reason I say perhaps is because the origin of sin is something of a mystery itself, but we do know that when Adam and Eve were created sin was already in existence in the universe. For when the serpent came to test them, it was obvious that sin had already taken place in the celestial sphere. Bible students and Bible theologians believe that sin began in that sphere. Going through the Bible to find places where this might be suggested, one discovers that there is not a whole lot written about that, but one place in Isaiah chapter 14 may be related to it. I am going to read these verses, verse 12, verse 13, and verse 14 of Isaiah chapter 14. The prophet writes,

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning," (or o shining one, o Lucifer)
"son of the dawn!" You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above

the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High'."

Now it is striking that the antichrist as set forth in the word of God, seeks to do precisely that. For when the time comes for him to have his image set up, he is to have it set up as an image of himself and to call upon all men to worship him. That may be the origin of what finds its final manifestation in the infernal trinity; sin beginning in the heavenlies with the chief of the angelic beings, Satan himself.

Now we have noticed that in the Book of Revelation, we are dealing with things that have their beginnings in the earlier chapters of the Bible. In other words, to understand the Book of Revelation, one must understand other parts of the word of God. That is I'm sure why people looking at Revelation like to think of it as a very difficult book to understand. It is not as difficult as people think, providing they have some understanding of the other parts of the word of God. G. Campbell Morgan, a great Bible teacher of another generation of the 20th Century, once said, "The older I get and the more I study the Bible, the more I find that when I take a text, it takes the whole Bible to explain it." What he meant by that was simply that the texts of the Bible are bound up with other texts and to fully understand them, it is important to understand what the Scriptures say elsewhere about that truth.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to like to say, "I approach the Bible and a particular text, and what I do on a particular text or even with a particular word is to take the Bible, the whole of the Bible like a pyramid and turn it up and put the point on the word or the text." Telling in his own way that that's how one is to read that Bible. That is on any particular text, one should look at it in the light of the rest of the Scriptures. Theologians call something like that the analogy of faith in which we are very careful to understand texts and passages by the other parts of the Bible, for the Bible is a unity. Let us never forget that.

Now in chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation, we have made the point that you cannot understand it if you do not understand Daniel chapter 7. And even if you understand Daniel chapter 7, you may find some other things found in some other passages that also are very necessary. But at any rate, we pointed out when we came to chapter 13 building upon Daniel 7 that this chapter presents an attractive, cunning world emperor with a supernatural experience. And we are to look at him not as we might look at a Khomeini. But we are to look at him as we might look at some very popular world figure.

Now you can put in that any name you like, but I am sure that when the antichrist comes, he will be regarded by the world as a very attractive world figure. It will be very easy for individuals to submit to him. When Christ was here on the earth, He was tested by Satan. He was given three specific tests. One of them was to accept the kingdom's of this world from the hand of Satan if He would bow down before him. The Lord Jesus responded, "Thou shall worship the Lord Thy God and Him only shall Thou serve." The time is coming when the dragon shall offer the kingdoms of this world to another individual, not Christ, but the antichrist and he will swallow Satan's bait to his ruin and also to the ultimate ruin of all associated with him, including the dragon.

Now we look at this passage again as we've looked at the other, we'll look at the rise of this beast, the second one. We'll look briefly at his career. The rise presented for us in verses 11 and 12, the career in verses 13 through 17, and then we'll conclude with the counsel of the Lord God in verse 18, in which we are told to count the number or calculate the number of the beast. But looking now at the rise of the beast in verses 11 and 12, notice first his origin. We read in chapter 13 and verse 11, "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth."

Now it is possible to render that term "earth" as land. The Greek word frequently means "the land" and often refers to the land of Palestine. So it is possible to understand this to say that the false prophet will rise out of that part of the world; that is from the

land of Palestine. That would make it particularly deceptive, if he were of course. But we are not absolutely certain that that is the force of it and I don't want to make that point too much. I do know that there will be false christs, false messiahs, and it is entirely possible that the false prophet shall be someone associated with the ancient land of Palestine. His description is given in very graphic terms. He is first of all said to be another beast.

Now in the original language there are two words for another. One means essentially, another, of the same kind or similar kind. The other word means another of a different kind. Let's for example just assume that you and I were to go into a store and as you were walking along you noticed that the Parker Pen Company had a very, very nice pen on one of the counters and since you wanted something like that you tried it out and you took it home. When you got home another member of the family said that a beautiful pen you have, does it write well? And you say, "See for yourself." And you write and you like it and you say I think I will go and get another like that. And you say, "Well, I'll do it for you. I happen to be going there." So you go in and you put your pen on the counter and you say, "I would like another pen like this."

Now of course you would mean another of the same kind. If you were very dissatisfied with the pen, however, you might walk in and you might throw it kind of on the counter and say, "I want another pen." In that case, you do not want another Parker, you want some other kind. You want Blanc, for example. In fact, that is what we all secretly would like to have. [Laughter] I have one on my desk, incidentally, and you may wonder how I got it. It was given to me by someone. It will hardly write at all. So I don't have desire for more Blanc like I once had. But at any rate, this "another" is another of the same kind.

So the second beast is another like the first beast. Not a different beast, but another wild beast. But of course these are figurative expressions to speak of the false

prophet. Further, John says, "This other beast is one that had two horns like a lamb." Someone has said that this description is a stroke of genius. Think of it. A horned lamb.

Now since we were reading Daniel chapter 7 you may remember that in Daniel chapter 7, reference was made a ram and a ram of course is a horned lamb. A ram.

Now I don't think there is any direct reference to the Medo-Persian Empire, probably the reason the why we have a horned lamb as descriptive of the second beast is the fact that in this very book our Lord Jesus is pictured in the figurative way as a Lamb slain. In the 5th chapter having, "seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into the earth." But a horned lamb suggests immediately the Lord Jesus Christ, but there is a great deal of difference between this horned lamb and the Lord Jesus. In the first place, our Lord speaks the word. This one's speech betrays his origin as being from the pit and not from the Lord God at all. He is deceptive, his words are deceptive.

Incidentally, because of this description that the second beast had two horns like a lamb, it has sometimes been suggested that the second beast should be regarded as the antichrist rather than the first. I do not think that that is true, and most Bible interpreters do not believe that that is true. If we think of the lamb as representing suffering and sacrifice and gentleness as the Lamb did. Then that is something that pertains to all three persons of the Trinity. The gentleness that characterizes the Lord Jesus Christ is a gentleness that characterizes the Spirit and characterizes the Father. It is characteristic of God to be that kind of a person.

So the two horns like a lamb suggest the deceptive nature of the false prophet, but do not identify him specifically as the antichrist. Other things make it highly probable that the first beast is to be regarded as the antichrist. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spake as like a dragon. So it is said. "He spoke," verse 11, "as a dragon." In other words, what we have here is a grim parody of Eve's seduction in the Garden of Eden bringing to pass the fall of Adam and the fall of Eve in the Garden of Eden.

So we are to expect here then something very deceptive in the false prophet. He is called the false prophet later on in the book more than once in the unfolding of him as one of the leading figures of the last days. The man who led me to the Lord and to whom I often refer, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, in one of his articles on the Book of Revelation has said, "Being of a curious turn of mind," he went to Boston or while he was in Boston decided that he would go to the mother church of Christian Science in order to see what it was like. And he describes what it was like when he got there. He said, "I went through the building. I was astounded at the inscriptions which I saw in the main auditorium. As I was seated in the auditorium, there were two great inscriptions on the right and on the left of the platform. To the left one would read, 'When he the spirit of truth has come he will guide you into all truth.'" You recognize that as a quotation from Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit. "Then a dash after that, Jesus."

And he said, "I remember feeling a slight shock at seeing the bare name of Jesus without any titles like Lord Jesus or Jesus Christ." But as he looked over to the right of the platform he saw the corresponding great inscription, "Christian Science is the spirit of truth guiding into all truth – Mary Baker Eddy." Then he said, "I looked at the back of the auditorium after realizing I was looking at a colossal blasphemy. I turned around and found that toward the rear of the auditorium there were likewise two inscriptions. The one said, 'I will come again and receive you to myself – Jesus'. And the other said, 'Christian Science is the second coming of Christ – Mary Baker Eddy'. Here then," he said, "I had evidence of a blasphemous system which pretended to be Christian, which pretended to speak to souls in the name of Christ, but which in reality was the voice of Satan."

Further it is stated in verse 12, "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast before him or in his presence." Now if you are reading carefully in these verses from 11 to 18 and comparing them with verses 1 through 10, you'll note that the characteristic word in verses 1 through 10 was the word "given". In other words, the first beast was

given authority to do this. It was given to him. A number of times the term given is used; underlining the fact that it is the dragon that is ultimately the authority behind the evil trinity.

Now the characteristic word of the second beast, the false prophet, is the word "to cause or to make". In the Greek text one tends to render it "cause". So, this is authority given to him. And so we read, "He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast." He causes them to worship. What it is, is false religion. For he represents false religion, he is the false prophet, he brings to pass the surrender of mankind to the worship of secular power.

Now that is precisely what many people would have us to do today. For example, in a book that John Dewey wrote many years ago called, *A Common Faith*, he had an exaltation within in which he went into some detail to make humanism an active common faith. In humanism, Mr. Dewey said, "Are all the elements of a religious faith that shall not be confined to sex, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind." That is true since the fall in the Garden of Eden. And he says, "It remains for us to make it explicit and militant." This is one of the spirits that dominates our system of education throughout our land.

Unless you are aware of this, you will be deceived in our educational systems. If you are aware of it, then of course, it is possible to counteract it. But at any rate, what is looked for here is a universal victory of humanism in the affairs of men. The false prophet trying to bring to pass the worship of the antichrist, who in turn is the one, who is the object of worship; beast worship. While the worship of the first beast is to be the international religion. We are finally, believe it or not, to have ecumenical religion. But the ecumenical religion will be the worship of the first beast or of the antichrist.

It is very striking that people are still anxious to have that kind of unity in the religious world. It might be helpful to remember this, that there has never been in the

history of the Christian church, uniformity in Christian things. Uniformity did not exist in the earliest church. You read the letters that the apostle wrote to the Corinthians. Read the letters that he wrote to other churches and you will find that there was never uniformity even in the earliest days of the Christian church. But there was unity. The unity was the common relationship to the Lord through Jesus Christ. So ideally and truly there was one church, one body, one baptism, and so on. But uniformity without a common faith, common union in faith, that has never been found in the history of the Christian church. That has been stated by many of our finest Christian theologians in Europe as well as in the United States.

One of the striking things about our human nature is that we can as individuals differ so much and yet have a common faith. G. H. Lang, a well known interpreter of the word of God who was very interested in Germany and had a relationship with the gospel ministry in Germany of more than just simply an acquaintance, has said in one of his books, in I think in his commentary on Revelation, that he went into a home of a Christian in Germany. He didn't mention Germany, but I'm almost certain that is where it was. He said in a Christian home on the continent in nineteen hundred and thirty-eight, and found in that home five statues or pictures of a well known dictator.

Now he said, they were Christian people, but they were great admirers of this dictator. I am almost certain, though I cannot prove it from that book, almost certain that it was Adolph Hitler. That is they were Christians in 1938, who regarded Hitler highly because of the political situation and the things that had happened in Germany since the collapse of the nation at the end of World War I. And so there can be a great deal of lack of uniformity, but unity. But here we are to have unity and uniformity. If we don't have unity then individuals are put to death.

We've had the National Council of Churches trying for generations now to produce uniformity in the Christian church. It has not only failed but has become something of a laughing stock because they are not even in harmony among themselves.

And recently the head of the National Council of Churches has been forced to resign because of disagreements within the organization itself. But ecumenicalism is ultimately to characterize the religious worship of the people of this earth.

The career of the beast is described in verse 13 through verse 17, and it is obvious that he is something like the minister of religion in this world-wide government. And what he does is glorify the emperor or the first beast. Well, that is the work of the Holy Spirit in counterfeit. Because the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, the Lord Jesus said. So the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, the unholy spirit, the prophet who is false glorifies the antichrist. That is the work that he does. "He performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men." He leads in the universal worship of people, and he performs great wonders in authentication, just as the Lord Jesus performed His great wonders to demonstrate His Messiahship.

You read the Gospel of Matthew chapters 8 and 9, and our Lord performs nine miracles, why? Because the Old Testament said the Messiah when He would come would perform miracles. So He does it, so that men might see the marks of the Messiah. And now in counterfeit of that, the false prophet performs wonders. They are lying wonders, as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 2, but they are wonders so far as the world is concerned. And he even calls fire down from heaven. And when you think about the Old Testament and realize that when Elijah called down fire from heaven, that was the means by which Israel was convinced that the Lord was God and not Baal. You can how deceptive the miracles of the false prophet will be. I can easily see that when that takes place, people saying wasn't that the sign of the true work of the Lord God in heaven. Many who are not taught in the word of God will surely be deceived by that. In other words, as a kind of false Elijah he prepares the way for a false messiah.

Now you learn one thing by Paul's statement in 2 Thessalonians 2, he talks about individuals who condemn because they did not have the love of the truth. It is not enough my Christian friend to have truth. One must have a love of truth. There are

individuals who sit in our churches that have truth in the sense that they have committed themselves to a creed that is according to the teaching of the Bible. But that is insufficient to deliver you from the deception of the evil one. There is a great deal of difference between having truth in the sense of the knowledge of truth, and truly loving truth and having an appreciation of it in a personal way. I think that individuals who do not love the truth are those who will be deceived even though they are able to parrot the words that we would say are truth.

This raises another question for in verse 14 he says, "He deceives those who dwell on the earth because the sign which were given to him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the beast, who had the wound of the sword and who has come to life." Now the image of the beast we are taught in over places will be placed in the holy place, in the temple. Jesus spoke about the abomination of desolation. When you see him standing in the holy place, then of course, terrible things are at hand. The holy place, a reference to the temple. Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 says the same thing; that the image will be set in the temple. Now that tells us that the temple must be rebuilt, does it not? In other words, if it is true that the abomination of desolation, that an image of a man is going to be put in the temple for men to worship, you must have a temple in order for that to take place.

So we are not surprised then that people are now speaking, since Israel has control of the land, are now speaking of the rebuilding of the temple. Time magazine, I have the article before me, just a few weeks ago had an article entitled, "Time for a New Temple?" In our own *Dallas Morning News*, perhaps building off that, on October 28th, has a lengthy article on Jews divided over the possible rebuilding of the temple. But we know that according to the word of God it will take place.

Now the miracle is described in verse 15, "And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed." That may seem very

strange to us now, but in ancient days these types of miracles were frequently claimed. I am going to read you just a couple of things that are stated in some of the literature of the times. There were frauds that were practiced on the bank of the Tiber in Italy and they had their counterparts on the banks of the Euphrates. The image of the virgin has been said to shed tears. You read of this in the paper. I am not attempting to attack the Catholic church only, it is just an illustration of that, to those in it who are susceptible to that.

These tenderhearted idols, Lukens, alluded to many years ago when speaking of the prodigies that occurred during the civil war, he said, "Tears shed by gods, our country's patrons, and sweet from lowries told the city's woes." Virgil, as early ago as Virgil, also referred to the same as the, "weeping statutes did the wars foretell and holy sweet from brazen idols fell." And so in history you can find in stances of statutes pouring tears out, some of them even claim to be laughing and various other types of things. With our day and the claims that men have with reference to the production of life, one can see how this is not so far fetched as it might seem to us.

He says also that those who do not worship the beast shall be killed. A kind of capital punishment irony, but nevertheless, it is set forth in the word of God as characteristic of the times. And in verse 16 he causes all, the small and the great, the free men and the slaves; this is universal, to be given the mark on their right hand or on their forehead. Now down south we call that forehead, but nevertheless, forehead. So you intelligent people will understand what I am talking about. [Laughter]

What this mark is we don't really know. It is possible that the mark is the kind of mark used for the branding of slaves in those days. It is possible that it is the kind of mark that is used of certain soldiers who served in certain armies under certain generals. It is possible and probably more probable that this is a reference to the phylacteries that past Jews wore. These phylacteries contained pieces of Scripture and they were bound to

their hands and to their forehead, and possibly this is what he eludes too. But again, it is a parody of the truth.

Instead of having the word of God truly, we have it on the outside instead of on the inside; it is given in order that men may worship the beast. He provides that "no one should be able to buy or to sell except the one who has such a mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name." Evidentially the mark marked out the beast. What this is precisely we do not know. There are at least six or eight different alternatives. But at any rate, the mark of the beast is kind of a ration card. You must have it in order to live. All must eat, so this is a way of discovering who the unbelievers or believers are. One thinks of the instance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Old Testament and how they because of their activities were immediately marked out for suffering.

And finally the chapter concludes with this enigmatical statement. "Here is wisdom let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast; for the number is that of a man and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." The different ways in which to interpret this we could interpret this as some have, chronologically. That six hundred and sixty-six years is said to be the duration of the life of the beast. Very few hold that view now. Thus they have turned to other views like a reference to an historical person. But it is counterfeited or it's put in a form that those who understand who know but those who don't understand would not know.

Gematria was a method of spelling by numbers. You must understand that in order to understand that in the Greek language there are no numerals. For example, if you wanted to indicate a one, the number one, there was no numeral one. What they used were the letters of the alphabet. *Alpha*, the first letter of the alphabet, represented one. *Beta* represented two, so on to ten and then various other numbers in the alphabet indicated various other numbers. So that if you wanted to write something you might just use three letters of the Greek alphabet. You could take a chi and you could take a phi, you could take a sigma that would be write those three letters although the last is not

technically a letter, but used as one and you would have 666. Some of the manuscripts have that. Some write it out, but some just have the letters. That would be 666.

So you can if you have an arrangement with someone, you can say things that you would understand that others would not understand, because obviously, if you have a number six hundred and sixty-six, all of the letters of the alphabet representing different figures, you could come up with different names that might add to 666. Dicebound, one of the students of early Greek language has an illustration of a particular piece of papyrus of which were the words, "I love him whose number is 545, five hundred and forty-five."

Now the person who did the loving knew who the person was and knew that his name counted out this way using Gematria came to five hundred and forty-five. So that individual person would know that that was an expression of love for him but no one else would understand because there were many different ways in which 545 might be the number of your name. In case you want to write me a note my number is 645. So if you write a little piece of paper, "I love him whose number is 645." I know that you love me. [Laughter] So I would be happy to get all of those or as many of those as you are willing to write for me.

So here is six hundred and sixty-six. Now with that possibility, the names are infinite. The most popular one is Nero Caesar. And Nero Caesar comes to six hundred and sixty-six, providing you spell it in a certain way. Providing you leave out one little word, similar to our "I," you can come to six hundred and sixty-six. It was generally written in Hebrew, *nrwn qsr*. And so if you wrote it specifically that way, it would come out 666 providing you left out a "y". So it would come to 666. Some of the manuscripts, incidentally, have 616. That would be that number of Nero Caesar in the Latin form of his name.

George Simon, an Irish interpreter, once said, "There are three rules by the help of which I believe an ingenious man could find the required sum in any given name. First if the proper name by itself is not yielded at a title, Nero's name was Nero but they added a

title, Nero Caesar. And it comes out Nero Caesar, 666." But if you don't add the title, Nero is not 666. And he said, "Second, if the sum cannot be found in Greek try Hebrew or even Latin. Thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling."

Now Nero Caesar does come awfully close and that may have been the way by which John intended us to understand the Roman emperor. But we are not absolutely certain about it. Consequently, we are not surprised that certain individuals have revised the spelling in such a way as to identify the pope, John Knox, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Napoleon, and various other people, even some of our modern ones. I think there was one person who sought to come up with John Kennedy, as being the reference of this particular 666. Anyone of course can be ultimately related to it provided you make all of those gyrations with the name itself.

A final interpretation which has maybe more merit is to understand this as the number is that of man, 666. Seven is the perfect number in Scripture, and this falls short in every digit, 666. Underlining six, man created in the six day, given six work days. It is a symbolic way of expression man's total inadequacy. Just the opposite of Harry Emerson Foster who said, "I believe in man."

666. The number of our Lord incidentally is 888. Eight, the number of a new beginning. Eight, the number of perfection. In that sense, a new beginning. The perfection of the octave. Bach could frequently be awakened by his children if they would play something and leave off the last chord, he would wake up immediately and would go over and play that chord. He couldn't stand it. Dr. Chafer use to tell us he tried that on his wife. He was downstairs and she was upstairs and he played a piece, they were both musicians, and he played a piece and left off the last part of it, and she yelled down from above, "Lewis, play that last chord." I don't know whether that is true or not. Dr. Barnhouse said he tried it on his family too. But at any rate, oh to have the marks of our Lord.

I would like to conclude with something that has touched me a good bit. I am an admirer of James Henry Thornwell. Thornwell was a South Carolina theologian, and well known all over the south and well known among theologians for that matter, a very fine theologian. He lived in the earlier part of the 19th Century. He was born in 1812 and died, I believe, in 1862 just after the Civil War had begun. He was a member of the faculty of the University of South Carolina, which in those days was known as simply, South Carolina College. Then later became President of the University of South Carolina or South Carolina College. Then later on after that he became Professor of Systematic Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary which is now not located in Columbia, South Carolina but in Decatur, Georgia; one of the important Presbyterian seminaries. On December 2, 1849, about eleven or twelve years before the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, he gave the Commencement sermon. Can you think of any one of our universities today having a commencement sermon? But in those days they did have commencement sermons. There was that regard for the Christian religion. In his sermon, he preached on the priesthood of Christ. It is available. It is in his works of four volumes and the date December 2nd.

In his concluding words after his sermon on the priesthood of Christ, he made these points. He said, "If Jesus a priest is appointed by God by a divine oath, then it follows that all have sinned; for priests are for sinners. Not only that, if Jesus is a priest, then sin cannot be pardoned without satisfaction and atonement. For that is what priests do. They make satisfaction and they provide atonement. And then if He is now in the holiness of all representing His people then notwithstanding our guilt and pollution, we may come to the throne of grace." And then he added in this sermon, and you can just imagine the students of the institution and the graduating class listening, "Why should we perish when the mercy seat is before us and a reconciled God is accessible to all." He said these things were the life of the friends before him.

These are his precise words that he spoke before them. "Young, buoyant, you may not feel the importance of religion now but the scene will change, the days of darkness will come." Little did he know twelve years later the nation would be embroiled in a Civil War and the young people in that room would be fighting in the army and many of them, no doubt, lost their lives. "Calamities may overtake you in which you will need the support of a friend with a stronger arm than any that can be found with the sons of men. The hour of death must come and after death the judgment." Let me remind you that every one of those individuals including Professor Thornwell is now dead. They are no longer with us. "The world now smiles before you, its prospects in chant, its honors charm you but the fashions of this world passeth away. Religion is the principal thing. Let it then be your first care to have Christ as your patron and friend. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby you can be saved. The alternative is faith in this divine redeemer or eternal death. Can you hesitate which to adopt? Can you endure the thought of eternal banishment from God? Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide in everlasting burning? Make Jesus your friend. Confide in Him as your Savior and you conquer the world, trample over death and take hold on eternal life."

Nothing to my mind could be said more plainly and more appropriately for us who if our Lord does not come will one day also be dead. May God in His grace turn your heart to your true condition and to what the High Priest has done in His atoning work and may you flee to Him for eternal life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee that in the word of God we are constantly exhorted to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ that we might be saved. O God, deliver us from the deceptions that the evil one would put on our path. May in this auditorium, may there not be one person who has not given himself whole heartedly to Him who loves sinners and died for them.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.