

SERMON:

Revelation 13

The Saga of the Dragon:

Chapter 3 + 4 – The Dragon's War

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Revelation of John is a Christocentric book that shows us the pattern of this world from Christ's first coming to His second coming.

John wants us to see the spiritual realities around us, to recognize the dangers that face us, and to know that God is going to win.

Revelation calls us, then, to wisdom, to perseverance, and to worship.

OUTLINE OF REVELATION

Prologue (Revelation 1)

1. The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

The Throne Room of Heaven (Revelation 4-5)

2. The Seven Seals (Revelation 6)

144,000 Sealed and a Great Multitude (Revelation 7)

3. The Seven Trumpets (Revelation 8-9)

The Two Witnesses (Revelation 10-11)

4. The Sevenfold Saga of the Woman and the Dragon

THE SAGA OF THE DRAGON: SEVEN STORIES

- 1. The Woman and the Dragon**
- 2. The Child Victorious and the Dragon Defeated**
- 3. The First Beast**
- 4. The Second Beast**
- 5. The Lamb and the 144,000**
- 6. The Three Angels and a Voice from Heaven**
- 7. The Harvest of the Earth**

THE SAGA OF THE DRAGON: A RICH ALLEGORY

Allegory: a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning (Oxford)

Purpose: to tell a rich story that makes us feel a certain way so that when we interpret it, we see a new perspective



REVELATION 12:17

¹⁷Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

REVELATION 13

¹And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ²And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

REVELATION 13

⁵And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

REVELATION 13

⁹If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

*¹⁰ If anyone is to be taken captive,
to captivity he goes;*

*if anyone is to be slain with the sword,
with the sword must he be slain.*

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

REVELATION 13

¹¹Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

REVELATION 13

¹⁵And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

¹⁶Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

¹⁸This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

Proposition: The Dragon's war against the church will be waged with identifiable weapons. So the church needs to recognize these weapons and be ready to respond rightly.

A. The First Beast: Imperial Power

B. The Second Beast: Cultic Worship

C. The Beasts and Us: The Dragon Is Still Active

THE DRAGON'S WAR ON THE CHURCH

THE FIRST BEAST

Imperial Power Wielded Against the Church

REVELATION 13:1-10

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REVELATION 13:1-2

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EPHESIANS 2:1-3

The Dragon has
real power

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience--- ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

REVELATION 13:1-2

The Dragon has
real power

The Beast is how the
Dragon will wage war

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**The Beast represents
the Dragon well**

REVELATION 12:3

³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

REVELATION 13:1-2

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The Beast is how the
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The Beast represents
the Dragon well

DANIEL 7:3-7 **Babylon** **Persia** **Greece** **Rome**

³And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. ⁴The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. ⁵And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' ⁶After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. ⁷After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

REVELATION 13:1-2

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The 1st Beast represents the 'imperial' power of this world that exalts itself in place of Christ

Every worldly power (kingdom) is merely one more iteration of the beast

MATTHEW 4:8-11

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

⁹And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" ¹¹Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

REVELATION 13:5-8

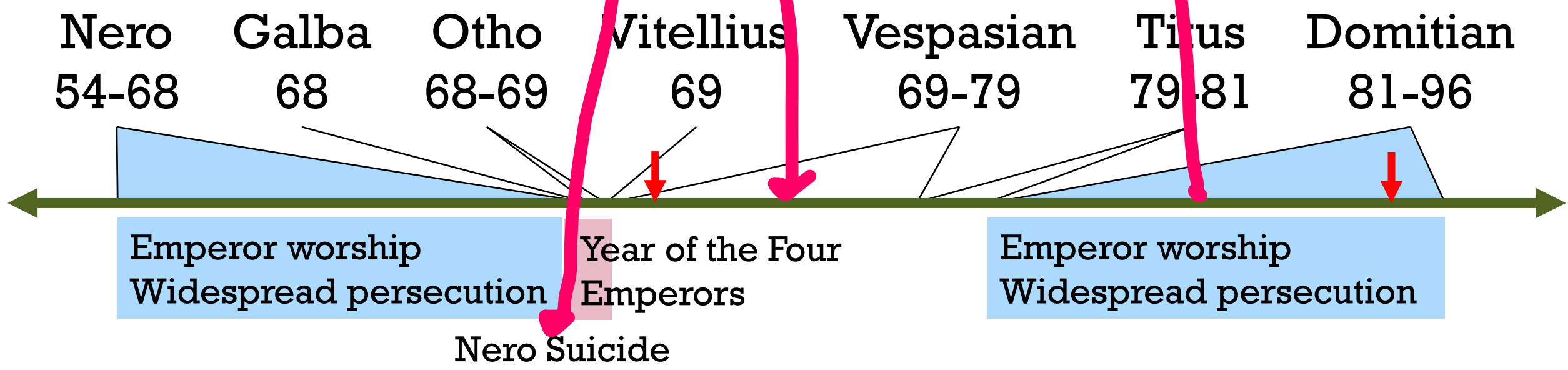
The beast is the enemy of God and the saints and rules the whole world

⁵And the beast **was given** a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and **it was allowed** to exercise authority for forty-two months. ⁶It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷Also **it was allowed** to **make war on the saints and to conquer them.** And **authority was given** it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸**and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.**

But the beast is under God's authority

REVELATION 13:3-4

³One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"



REVELATION 13:9-10

⁹If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

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with the sword must he be slain.*

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**Believers will not be
able to escape the
beast: persecution
will come**

THE DRAGON'S WAR ON THE CHURCH

THE SECOND BEAST

Cultic Worship Wielded Against the Church

REVELATION 13:11-18

¹¹Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

REVELATION 13:11-18

¹⁵And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. ¹⁶Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. ¹⁸This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

REVELATION 13:11-14

2nd Beast: a mockery of the Lamb

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The 2nd Beast institutes a false religion in mockery of the Lamb

REVELATION 13:15-18

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GOVERNOR PLINY TO EMPEROR TRAJAN

... Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome. ...

EMPEROR TRAJAN'S REPLY

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance....

DANIEL 3:4-7

⁴And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

⁷Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

REVELATION 13:15-18

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DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

REVELATION 13:15-18

Identification or Loyalty

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REVELATION 13:15-18

6: imperfect, fallen short

666: complete imperfection (trinity)

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What is the number of the beast?

REVELATION 13:15-18

Caesar Nero = 666 (Hebrew)

Caesar Nero = 616 (Latin)

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What is the number of the beast?

REVELATION 13:15-18 **A clear decision to worship the power and practice of this world instead of Christ**

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THE DRAGON'S WAR ON THE CHURCH

THE BEASTS AND US

The Dragon Is Still Active

THE DRAGON STILL USES THE BEASTS

The Dragon in Revelation used two beasts to hunt the church:

- The First Beast: the power of the kingdoms of this world**
- The Second Beast: the deception of cultic worship**

Both of these are still wielded as weapons by the Dragon:

- The power of the kingdoms of this world still oppose God the King and persecute His Kingdom**
- The world still exalts false religion and demands conformity and worship**

APPLICATIONS

- 1. We must be ready to endure, because the first beast will hunt us down and kill us**

REVELATION 13:9-10

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**Our call is to faithfulness
regardless of the cost. We
must be ready to count the
cost and follow Christ.**

LUKE 14:25-33

²⁵Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

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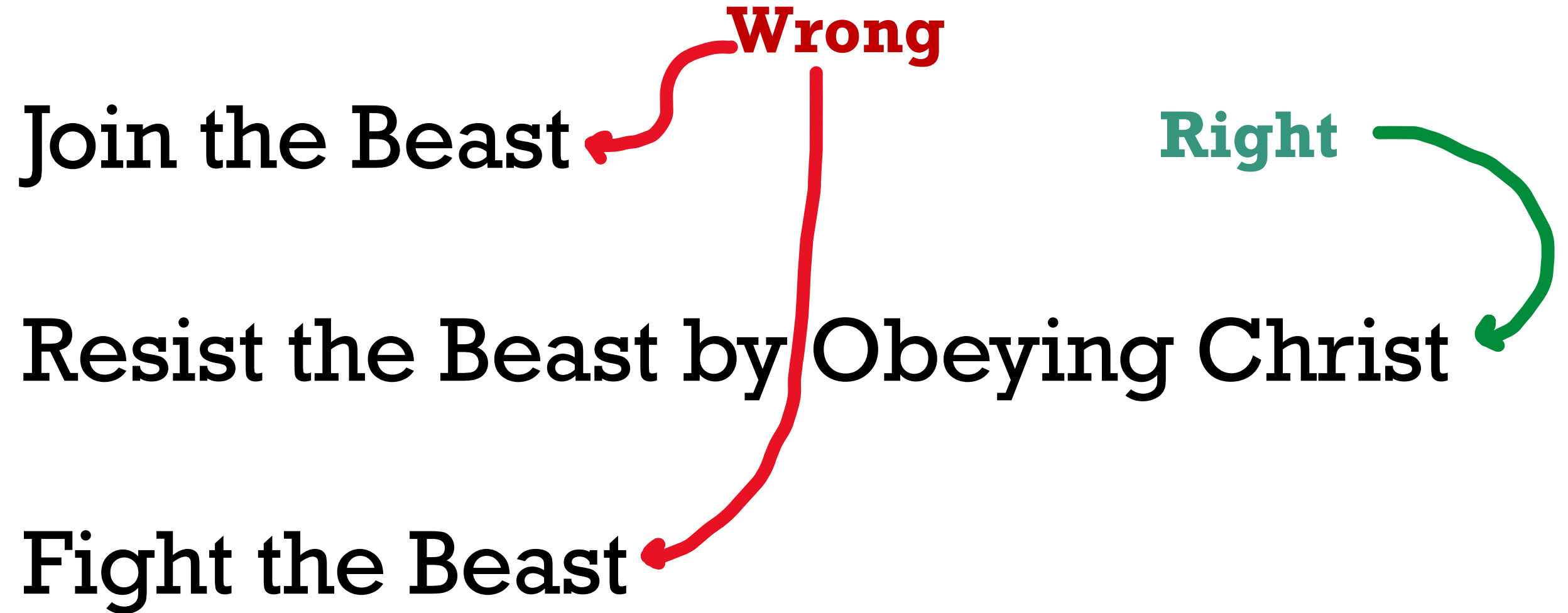
*if anyone is to be slain with the sword,
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Important: Our call is not to fight against or defeat the beast, our call is to faithfully endure. None of the teaching about the beast should lead us to an anti-government position or a revolutionary bent. We resist not by fighting, but by obeying Christ and dying.

Our call is to faithfulness regardless of the cost. We must be ready to count the cost and follow Christ.

THREE OPTIONS



DANIEL 6:7,10

⁷All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. . . .

¹⁰When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

APPLICATIONS

- 1. We must be ready to endure, because the first beast will hunt us down and kill us**
- 2. We must be careful not to enter into alliance with the beast, believing it could be our ally**

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- 2. We must be careful not to enter into alliance with the beast, believing it could be our ally**
- 3. We must be careful to identify the false worship the world demands of us**

REVELATION 13:15-18 **A clear decision to worship the power and practice of this world instead of Christ**

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What is the number of the beast?

FALSE WORSHIP IN OUR WORLD TODAY

- **Celebration of sexual deviancy (LGBTQ...)**
- **Freedom of self even at the cost of murder (abortion)**
- **Freedom from God ordained roles (transgender, egalitarianism)**
- **Submission to government as savior (COVID...)**
- **Exaltation of 'race' as sin and gospel (critical race theory)**

APPLICATIONS

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- 2. We must be careful not to enter into alliance with the beast, believing it could be our ally**
- 3. We must be careful to identify the false worship the world demands of us**
- 4. We must refuse to participate in the world's worship and remain faithful to Christ even at the cost of our lives**

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- 2. We must be careful not to enter into alliance with the beast, believing it could be our ally**
- 3. We must be careful to identify the false worship the world demands of us**
- 4. We must refuse to participate in the world's worship and remain faithful to Christ even at the cost of our lives**
- 5. In sum: we must love our lives not even unto death**

REVELATION 12:7-12

¹⁰And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹²Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

KIDS' QUESTION:

WHAT TWO WEAPONS DOES THE DRAGON WIELD AGAINST THE CHURCH?

The power of the kingdoms of this world
and the deception of false worship.

KIDS' QUESTION:

HOW DOES THE CHURCH DEFEAT THE DRAGON?

By loving Christ through faithful obedience,
rejecting the demands of the beast, and
faithfully enduring the persecution that comes.