

LIVING FOR GOD IN AN

UPSIDE

A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE OF I JOHN

DOWN

WORLD

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**Lesson 12  
"Birthmarks  
of Tattoos"**

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

The book of Revelation makes mention of **beasts** in several chapters – **Rev 4 – 6 11 --13 --14 – 16 -- 17—19** and Rev. 20 (Rev. 4 & 6 = **zōon**) – Others =(**thērion**)

- Two beasts are described in chapter 13, one from the sea (v. 1) and one from the land (v. 11).
  - a) The first beast comes "**out of the sea**" and is given authority and power by the dragon.
    - This first beast is initially mentioned in **Rev. 11:7** as coming out of the abyss.
    - His appearance is described in detail in **Rev. 13:1-10**, and some of the mystery behind his appearance is revealed in **Rev. 17:7-18**
    - With the beast out of the sea, regardless of his claims as the white horse rider or peace maker, comes as a **great source of darkness** into the world.
    - He comes **not to save the world**, but to **damn the world**.

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

b) The second beast comes "out of the earth" and directs all peoples of the earth to worship the first beast.

○ The second beast is associated with Rev. 13:11-18 the false prophet.

The two beasts are aligned with the dragon in opposition to God; particularly as they persecute the "saints" and those who do "not worship the image of the beast [of the sea]" and influence the kings of the earth to gather for the battle of Armageddon.

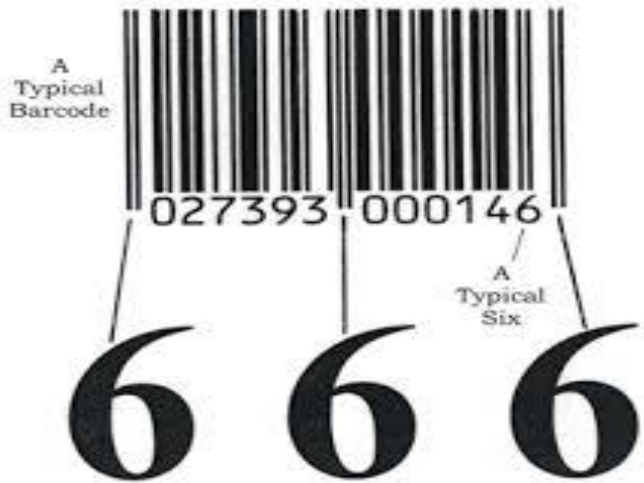
Essentially, what we have in this chapter in the rise of the beast and the false prophet is nothing short of the 'trinity from hell' in that both are the by-product of that old serpent, the devil or Satan.

Eventually, the two beasts are defeated by Christ and are thrown into the lake of fire mentioned in **Rev. 19:18-20**.

Perhaps the most profound thing about the second beast is the mark that he causes all men to receive either in their right hand or on their foreheads.

- Without this mark of 666, no one will be able to buy or sell

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD



With the advent of RFID technologies and medical implant chips, it is not difficult to comprehend how this will be possible



But without overextending the possibility this end-time identification is only given to those who worship the Antichrist.

Further note, with all of the speculation on the meaning of the 666, we are still left with a mystery, for Rev. 13:18 says “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.

- It is not said, *He who readeth*, calculate, but he who understands (nous- mind)
- The mind is contradistinguished from ***the spirit*** in I Cor. 14:14; but here it is contradistinguished from ***wisdom***.

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- We must *calculate*: therefore, it is proper that the numbers should be precisely taken which enter into the calculation
- When the Antichrist is revealed (II Thess. 2:3-4), it will be clear who he is and how the number 666 identifies him.
- The mark is literally placed in the hand or forehead and is not simply a card someone carries.

• Those who worship Antichrist is able to survive due to their allegiance to him

English anthropologist, biologist, philosopher, sociologist Herbert Spencer, in his writing *Principles of Biology* (1864) coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” after reading Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859).

The term saw evolution as extending into realms of sociology and ethics, so he also agreed with the teaching of John Baptiste Lamarck and his theories on orthogenesis

- biological hypothesis that organisms have an innate tendency to evolve in a direction towards some goal (teleology) due to some internal mechanism or "driving force

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

In Darwin's teaching, Spencer's 'survival notion' is best understood concerning the survival being in such a form that the species will leave copies of itself in successive generations."

Spencer expanded Darwin's hypothesis into an all-embracing concept of evolution as the progressive development of the physical world, biological organisms, the human mind, and human culture and societies.

There is an obvious contortion of God's original mandate for His creation to propagate His nature throughout the world (Gen. 1:26-28)

Sadly, the ethics, spiritual guidance, economic motivation, political theory, philosophical orientation and sociological warping of the Upside World is being passed on.

Our world that is living apart from the determinate ways of God is fighting to survive any and all influence to challenges its immoral and unethical existence

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

To the believer our existence is owed to Christ alone for we were dead in our sins until the life of Christ was imparted to us by grace through faith.

- Whenever we transfer existence from God to man, that is the meaning of existentialism

**Existentialism**, which is *particular and individual* existence, turns **objectivism** (*moral truth exists independent of human knowledge*) inside out.

One of the developing architects of existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre stated that “existence precedes essence”, that is only by existing and acting a certain way do we give meaning to our lives.

John declares those who bear the birthmark of God

**I John 5:18-19** We know (**eidō**) that whosoever is born of God **sinneth not**; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself <sup>19</sup>And **we know** (**eidō**) that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- The book of Job shows that **Satan needed God's permission to test God's people**, and the account helps us understand God rejected Satan's accusations against God's His people.
- And the **Bible draws distinctions** between **God's people who follow Him** and all others who are under the dominion of Satan and his angels.
- For **this is not hard to fathom** since nearly all Gentiles worshiped idols, and most also practiced sexual immorality and other sins.

The Greek verb tense of *harmartanō* (sinneth not) in verse 18, means “**does not practice sin**” or *does not make sin a way of continuous living*

- As believers, we do not keep ourselves saved, but we do have the discerning Spirit from God Who helps keep us out of the snares of the devil.
  - **Jude 21** “Keep (**tēreō** – guard; observe; watch) yourselves in the love of God”
  - Because the Holy Spirit was viewed as the Spirit of prophecy, “**praying in** [or by] the Holy Spirit” means inspired prayer

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- The word “pray in” (V 20 proseuchomai) can have several different meanings (a) “**by means of,**” (b) “**with the help of,**” (c) “**in the sphere of,**” and (d) “**in connection to.**”
- Praying in the Spirit **does not refer to the words** we are saying. Rather, it refers to **how we are praying.**
- Praying in the Spirit is **praying according to the Spirit’s leading** and praying for things the Spirit leads us to pray (Rom. 8:26).
- In the same way, the **Spirit helps us in our weakness** as the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

So summarily, we are convinced that everyone fathered by God does not make sinning a way of life, because the Son of God protects the child of God from the Evil One.

- V 19 We know that we are God’s children and that the whole world lies under the misery and influence of the Evil One

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

**I John 5:20-21** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, **that we may know Him who is true**; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.<sup>21</sup> Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

The Spirit and the Word always agree, for “the Spirit is truth” (5:6) and God’s Word is truth (John 17:17).

- The Spirit’s witness within our hearts will never contradict the biblical words of the Spirit

The false teachers of John’s day taught that one had to belong to a special “**inner circle**” before one could understand spiritual knowledge, but John affirms that any true believer can know God’s truth.

Paul, in exhorting against life apart from God, said in **Romans 1:21** “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- All through human history the Divine imprint of God was prevalent, yet some refused to honor God or even be thankful for His kindness.
- Instead, they entertained corrupt and foolish thoughts about what God was like.
- This left them with nothing but misguided hearts, steeped in moral darkness.
- And although claiming to be wise, they were in fact shallow fools.
- For only a fool would trade the unfading splendor of the immortal God to worship the fading image of other humans, idols made to look like people, animals, birds

John declares in these two verses lists two more things that we have full knowledge of:

## **A. We know that the Son of God has come**

- The incarnation was an overwhelming demonstration of God's interest in mankind and proved His concern the highest good of man
- This reality is not simply a historic fact but a **continual abiding operation**—not simply 'came' but '**hath come [hēkō- arrive and be present]**

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- ❑ **Hēkō** includes in the **idea of coming**, the **fact of arrival** and **personal presence**
- ❑ His coming was not like that of a meteor, flashing across the sky and then gone.
- ❑ God “Hath given” (perfect tense), speaks to the reality that the residency of His gift is in the permanent possession of the recipient
- Even though Jesus departed in His glorified body to Heaven, yet He is here in His presence in the Church in the Person of the Holy Spirit
- The believer’s faith is not a matter of intellectual theory, rather it is a personal and growing acquaintance with God through the enlightenment of the Spirit

## B. We know Him who is True

- Believers experientially know, **with an absolute certainty**, that the Son of God has come, and is here, and that He has given us a permanent understanding
- Experientially, we know the One who is genuine, real and true.
- I John 5:20c “we are in God’s Son Jesus Christ God who is true,

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- “True” is not just *alēthēs* (true as not concealing), but *alēthinōs* (genuine; truthful) as opposed to the false and counterfeit
- Here clearly, the genuine God is presented in opposition to the false God of the heretics.
- The tenderness of John is again evidence in **V 21** (5:21) “little children” (teknia – little born ones)
- John admonishes them to “keep” (phulassō --to guard, to watch, to keep watch) that they don’t become victimized by idolatry.
- David Smith in his book *“The Days of His Flesh”* noted the similarity of I John 5:20-21 as a reflection of Jesus teaching in Matthew 5
- Smith in the passage (p. 96-98) says: “The heart is a citadel, and it must be guarded against insidious assailants from without.”
- The word **citadel** is used of the garrison of a city guarding it against attack from without.

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

- “The Cerinthian heresy (*creation was the work of a demiurge and not Yahweh Elohim*) was a desperate assault demanding a decisive repulse” (Smith).
- The caution was to watch for anything that takes the preeminence of God in our decisions, thinking, living and conclusions.
- “Idols” is *eidōlon* (an image, likeness), and the associative by-products produced by truth in those objects.
- John is not thinking about the heathen worship of Ephesus—Artemis and her Temple, but of the heretical substitutes -- **the Christian’s conception of God.**”
- He had just written concerning the genuine God of the Bible and now he warns against the false, counterfeit gods of paganism.
- Vincent word Study suggests that the command has apparently the wider Pauline sense, to guard against **everything which occupies the place of God.**

As we come to close of this study, please note that **obedience, love, and truth** are the key thoughts in this epistle of I John

## LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

They are not only the evidence of salvation and further, the essentials of fellowship with God and man, but they are manifestations of the secret of true and abiding life.

Many people in the world may never know what a Christian is or how they can become Christians, because those who claim to be so blend in so well with this backward, inside out, upside-down world.

Children of God cannot be allowed to trust in religious works and good intentions, which are motivated by the whims and energy of the flesh.

God says that a Christian is someone who has been born again through their faith in the finished work of Christ which makes a child of disobedience into a child of God (John 1:12–13; James 1:18; I Peter 1:3).

You and I who are “born of God” (mentioned seven times in I John) must bear the “birthmarks of believers”: (1) we **practice righteousness**, 2:29; (2) they **do not practice sin**, 3:9; (3) they **love other Christians**, 4:7; (4) they **overcome the world**, 5:4; and (5) they **keep themselves from Satan**, 5:18.

# LIVING FOR GOD IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

I repeat, John emphasizes love, obedience, and truth as the tests of true sonship and if we have God as our Father and love Him, then surely we will also love His other children.

- This love will lead to obedience (see John 14:21 and 15:10).
- Where there is love, there is a willingness to serve and please others.
- God's commands are not irksome to us because we love Him.

There is a societal norm that parents must take care of their children, or else they stand the chance of being incarcerated or worse the children being taken from them.

- Is it a burden for parents to work and sacrifice to care for their children?
- Or do they care for them only because they fear this law?
- Neither is true! They obey the law because they love their children.
- The Christian who complains that God's Word is a burden does not know the meaning of love (Matt. 11:28–30)
- Christians are not to love the world, belong to the world, or yield to the world.
- We are overcomers, overcoming the world, the devil (2:13–14), and false teaching (4:4); and we overcome by faith in God's Word, and not by their own power or wisdom.

# THE FALL FEASTS OF ISRAEL



Mitch and Zhava Glaser

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