
**THE BACKGROUNDS AND MEANING OF THE
IMAGE OF THE BEAST IN REV 13:14, 15**

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Problem

This dissertation investigates the first-century Greco-Roman cultural backgrounds and the literary context of the motif of the image of the beast in Rev 13:14–15, in order to answer the problem of the author's intended meaning of the image of the beast to his first-century Greco-Roman readers.

Method

There are six steps necessary to accomplish the task of this dissertation. These steps are taken in the form of exegetical studies, which are done in six chapters, respectively.

Following the introductory chapter, the second chapter is a brief history of the historical interpretations of the image of the beast in Rev 13:14–15, starting with the interpretations from scholars of the first three centuries and continuing on to the present. This historical survey in chapter two demonstrates that an in-depth exegetical study of the image of the beast is much needed. Chapters three to six are an attempt to make up for this deficiency by providing an exegetical study of the image of the beast motif in its original cultural and literary context of the book of Revelation.

Chapter three is a study of the image-of-the-beast motif within its immediate context of Rev 13. Chapters four to six are a study of the image-of-the-beast motif in the latter half of Revelation, i.e., Rev 14–20, with chapters four to five studying the image-of-the-beast motif in the chapters in which this term occurs (Rev 14–16, 19–20), and chapter six studying this motif in the chapters which this term is absent (Rev 17–18).

Conclusion

Rev 13:14–15 depicts the unholy Trinity's attempt to counteract God's goal for the plan of salvation, i.e., the restoration of *Imago Dei* in human beings in the last days, by creating the image of the beast on the earth. The image of the beast is an end-time institution, comprised of a community of people who reflect the character of the dragon, and has the three-fold religious-economic-political power to impose false worship on the earth. This institution is best identified with the end-time Babylon the Great of Rev 17–18.