

# 666: The Stamp of Imperfection

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## The Great Controversy

1. The great controversy begins with the dragon beast making war with Michael and his angels in **Rev 12:7-9** and continues even though he was cast out of heaven;
2. The inspired record goes on to say that after this beast power was cast out of heaven, it continued to war against Christ as soon as He was born (**Rev 12:4**) and then against His church for 1260 years (**Rev 12:6**), after which hostility abruptly ends because one of its heads received a fatal wound;
3. The great controversy does not pick up again until **Rev 12:17**; this is the final conflict and it is between those who keep the commandments of God and those who don't; between the obedient and the disobedient;
4. The great controversy boils down to being a battle between two classes of people:

There are only two parties upon this earth--those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient [Revelation 12:17; 13:11-17 quoted] (MS 16, 1900). **7BC 974.**

3. The dragon and his hosts represent those who are disobedient and the "remnant of her seed" represents the obedient—those that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of the Jesus Christ;
4. This final conflict is nothing but the resumption or the continuation of the conflict that abruptly came to a stop at the end of the "thousand two hundred three score days" period (**Rev 12:6**) because one of the heads of the dragon received a deadly wound; the conflict resumes because the wound is healed!

## The Two Beast Powers of Revelation 13

5. **Revelation 13** expands on this final conflict of **Rev 12:17** and focuses on the activities of the two beast powers who are employed by the dragon beast of **Revelation 12** (Satan) to cause men to break the commandments of God, either by a work of deception or by a work of intimidation and persecution:
  - a. the "beast rising out do the sea"
  - b. the "beast rising out of the earth"
6. REMEMBER: as far as the great controversy is concerned, both beast powers are raised for only one purpose:--to make men break the law of God;

The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image, is the breaking of God's commandments. **GC 445.**

## Count the Number of the Beast

7. **Revelation 13** closes with a challenge those who are wise to "count the number of the beast." (**Rev 13:18**); to count the number of his name.
8. **The study of the great controversy becomes intensely interesting and more meaningful when viewed with the number "6";**

9. Several questions naturally arise from this: Why count the number when the number is already given as 666? Also, which beast? The sea-beast? Or the earth-beast? What about the dragon beast of Revelation 12?
10. Our pioneers (notably Uriah Smith) have historically applied this number to the Papacy, based on the number equivalents of his Latin title “Vicarius Filii Dei;” but there is more to the theology of the number 666 than is presently understood;
  - a. The challenge is to count the number of his name—not just of a titular name, but his character; in **Exo 33:19**, the name of God is associated with His character;
11. To count the number of the beast is to understand its characteristics. This is counting spiritually, not mathematically;
12. **The beast rising out of the sea is stamped with the number “6” in the 6 things which are given to him in Revelation 13:**
  - i. **verse 2:** the dragon **gave** him his power, his seat and great authority
  - ii. **verse 5:** it was **given** unto him a mouth speaking great things
  - iii. **verse 5:** power **given** him to continue forty and two months
  - iv. **verse 7:** it was **given** him to make war with the saints
  - v. **verse 7:** power was **given** him over kindreds, and tongues and nations
  - vi. **verse 15:** **given** life (resurrected back to life ) when the beast coming out of the earth gives life to the image of the beast

. . .When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; **it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to spring again into active despotism. 5T 711.**

13. **The beast coming out of the earth is also stamped with the number “6” as seen in the six activities it does in Revelation 13, to compel men to disobey men’s laws in defiance of God’s Law:**
  - i. **verse 12:** exercises all the power of the first beast before him
  - ii. **verse 12:** causes men to worship the first beast
  - iii. **verses 13-14:** performs great wonders and miracles to deceive them that dwell on the earth
  - iv. **verses 14-15:** makes an image to the beast
  - v. **verse 15:** causes as many as will not worship the image to the beast to be killed
  - vi. **verse 16-17:** causes all to receive the mark of the beast in the forehead or in the hand
14. **But not to forget, the dragon beast of Revelation 12 is also stamped with the number “6” as seen in the six specifically mentioned activities it does in Revelation 12 to war against Christ and His church:**
  1. **verse 4:** his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth
  2. **verse 4:** stood before the woman to devour the child as soon as it was born
  3. **verse 7:** the dragon and his angels fought against Michael and his angels
  4. **verse 13:** he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child
  5. **verse 15:** the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood to carry the woman away in the flood
  6. **verse 17:** the dragon. . .went to make war with the remnant of the woman’s seed

15. So now, it is clear the numbers of the three beasts put together is what makes up the number “666;” as the counterfeit trinity, the three beasts have one mind and work together to overthrow the Law of God by making men to transgress it either by deception or by compulsion; the number “666” cannot be applied exclusively to a single beast power, but to all three beasts acting as a unit;
16. The question is, why the number “6?” What is so special with the number “6?”

## Why the Three Beast Powers Are Stamped with the Number “6”

17. The activities of the two kings of Babylon mentioned in the book of Daniel set the theological meaning of the number “6”; it is a number that is associated with rebellion, disobedience to the express commands of God and hostility towards those who obey Him;
- a. In Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar’s rebellion against the government of heaven is demonstrated by his idolatrous call to the worship the golden image he set up in the plains of Dura and by his action to punish dissenters; his actions are associated with and stamped with the number “6”;
    - i. First of all, the dimensions of the image of gold are factors of the number “6”—60 by 6 cubits (**Dan 3:1**);
    - ii. Six musical instruments are named in connection with the call to bow down and worship (**Dan 3:5, 10, 15**)
    - iii. Most of all, 6 distinct actions by Nebuchadnezzar are noted:
      1. **verse 1:** the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits
      2. **verse 2:** the king gathered together the princes, the governors and the captains
      3. **verse 4-5:** the king commanded the people to fall down and worship the golden image that the king hath set up
      4. **verse 13-14:** Nebuchadnezzar commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; the previous command in verses 4-5 is repeated
      5. **verse 19:** commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more
      6. **verse 20:** he commanded the most mighty men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and to cast them into the burning furnace
  - b. In Daniel 6, Belshazzar’s contempt and hatred for the Hebrew sanctuary service is demonstrated in his singular act of profaning its vessels in a sacrilegious worship setting;
    - i. Six Babylonian gods are mentioned in connection with Belshazzar’s call to idolatrous worship (**Dan 5:4, 23**)
    - ii. Six distinct reasons why Belshazzar was weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting:
      1. **verse 22:** thou hast **not humbled thine heart** though thou knewest all this
      2. **verse 23:** thou **has lifted up thyself** against the Lord of heaven
      3. **verse 23:** and **have brought the vessels of his house** before thee
      4. **verse 23:** thou and thy lords, . . . have **drunk wine in them**
      5. **verse 23:** thou hast **praised the gods of silver and gold**, of brass and iron, wood and stone
      6. **verse 23:** God, in whose hand thy breath is, . . . **hast thou not glorified**
18. Hence, it is now clear that the reason why the number “666” is stamped on the three-fold powers consisting of the dragon, the sea-beast and the earth-beast is because in the final conflict, they will work together to repeat the old controversies recorded in the book of Daniel. . .

- a. The three beast powers of Revelation 12 and 13 are stamped with the number “6” to teach us that they will follow in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar in compelling men to worship false gods in violation of the Law of God! They follow in the steps of the Babylonian monarch in compelling men to transgress the Law of God and to punish those who are loyal to God’s commandments; this is exactly what happened first in the Dark Ages and then in the time of the end, during the final conflict;

An idol sabbath has been set up, as the golden image was set up in the plains of Dura. And as Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, issued a decree that all who would not bow down and worship this image should be killed, so a proclamation will be made that all who will not reverence the Sunday institution will be punished with imprisonment and death. Thus the Sabbath of the Lord is trampled underfoot. **14 MR 91.**

- b. The three beast powers of **Revelation 12** and **13** are also stamped with the number “6” to teach us that they will follow in the footsteps of Belshazzar in showing contempt for the sanctuary service by attacking it and finding fault with it to undermine its powerful saving influence;
    - i. This is done by posing objections to the different points of the sanctuary doctrine and to introduce confusion (the sanctuary truth is the most attacked doctrine of Adventism!)
    - ii. This is also done by introducing a counterfeit sanctuary service and a counterfeit priesthood to take away the eyes of the people away from the powerful ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary ;
- 19.** The number “6” teaches us that contempt for the Law of God and the sanctuary will be at the very core of the issue in the final conflict; especially the part of the Law of God that demands worship of the true Creator will be at the center of the final controversy;

### Six-fold description of the great city of Babylon in Revelation 18

- 20.** Six-fold description of the sins of Babylon as they come up in remembrance before God (**Rev 18:5**); just as Daniel gives 6 sins of Belshazzar resulting in his being weight in the balance and found wanting, John lists 6 specific sins of Babylon which come up before God in remembrance (**Rev 18:5; Rev 16:19**):
- a. **Rev 13:3-4, 8**--Babylon demands worship which is God's prerogative alone
  - b. **Rev 13:6**—he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, his tabernacle and them that dwell therein
  - c. **Rev 14:8; Rev 18:3**--she made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication
  - d. **Rev 17:2; Rev 18:3, 9; Rev 19:2**--fornicated with the kings of the earth
  - e. **Rev 13: 7; Rev17:6, 14; Rev 18:24**--made war with the saints and found drunk with the blood of martyrs
  - f. **Rev 18:23**--by her sorceries were all nations deceived

### Cain’s Rebellion Stamped With the Number “6”

- 5.** Cain is the first human being to be stamped with the number “6”;
  - a. **Six-fold account of the sins of Cain in Genesis 4**
    - i. **Verse 3:** Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord (sin of impiety; disobedience to God’s specific command)

- ii. **Verse 5:** Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell (jealousy; anger; murder in the thought; see **Matt 5:21, 22**)
- iii. **Verse 8:** Cain talked with Abel. . .Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him (sin of deceit and murder;

**The holy life of Abel testified against Satan's claim that it is impossible for man to keep God's law.** When Cain, moved by the spirit of the wicked one, saw that he could not control Abel, he was so enraged that he destroyed his life. And wherever there are any who will stand in vindication of the righteousness of the law of God, the same spirit will be manifested against them. It is the spirit that through all the ages has set up the stake and kindled the burning pile for the disciples of Christ. **PP 78.**

- iv. **Verse 9:** And Cain said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? (sin of falsehood; lying)

Cain the murderer was soon called to answer for his crime. "The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain had gone so far in sin that he had lost a sense of the continual presence of God and of His greatness and omniscience. So he resorted to falsehood to conceal his guilt. **PP 77.**

- v. **Verse 13:** Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear (sin of self-pity; Cain accuses of God of unfairness and injustice)
- vi. **Verse 16:** And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. . .(hardness of heart, sin of impenitence or refusal to acknowledge and confess sin)

## Lucifer's Rebellion Stamped with the Number "6"

- 6. The history of the number "6" pre-dates Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; it goes all the way back to the beginning of the great controversy, to the time Lucifer sinned in heaven; here we ultimately find the theological basis for the number "6" . . .
- 7. Six-fold description of Lucifer's sin and rebellion given in **Isa 14:12-14**
  - a. **Verse 12:** Thou didst weaken the nations
  - b. **Verse 13:** I will ascend in to heaven
  - c. **Verse 13:** I will exalt my throne above the stars of God
  - d. **Verse 13:** I will sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north
  - e. **Verse 14:** I will ascend above the heights of the clouds
  - f. **Verse 14:** I will be like the Most High
- 8. Six-fold description of Lucifer's sin and rebellion given in **Ezek 28:15:18**
  - a. **Verse 15:** Iniquity was found in thee
  - b. **Verse 16:** By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence
  - c. **Verse 16:** thou hast sinned
  - d. **Verse 17:** Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty
  - e. **Verse 17:** thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness
  - f. **Verse 18:** Thu hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick;

## Conclusion:

9. The reason why Lucifer is stamped with the number '6' is clearly given in **Ezek 28:15**: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways until iniquity was found in thee;" Lucifer went from perfection (number 7) to imperfection as a result of his pride, ambition, desire for supremacy
10. On the other hand the remnant of her seed, goes from imperfection to perfection through the final atonement of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary
  - a. **Verse 1**: stand with the Lamb on mount Zion having the father's name on their foreheads
  - b. **Verse 2-3**: have harps and sing a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders
  - c. **Verse 3**: redeemed from the earth
  - d. **Verse 4**: not defiled with women for they are virgins
  - e. **Verse 4**: they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth
  - f. **Verse 4**: redeemed from among men being first fruits unto God and to the Lamb
  - g. **Verse 5**: in their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God
11. The formula that spells out imperfection is:

**IMPERFECTION = INSUBORDINATION + IMPIETY + INIQUITY + IMPENITENCE**

12. The disobedient are characterized by their impenitence in the time of the end
  - a. impenitence of spiritual Babylon in the Dark Ages (**Rev 3:20-21**)
  - b. impenitence of spiritual Babylon even after the close of probation (**Rev 16:8-9, 21**)
13. In contrast, the obedient are those who heed the call to afflict the soul and "Be zealous therefore and repent (**Rev 3:19**)

In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. **5T 210-211**

14. The question is, when everything is said and done, which stamp will we have on our foreheads? The seal of perfection or the mark of imperfection? Are we going to remain filthy or holy forever? (**Rev 22:11**)