



[Revelation 13:11-17](#)

(11) And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. (12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (13) And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, (14) And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (15) And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (16) And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: (17) And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

King James Version

In [Revelation 13:11-17](#), John describes "another beast coming up out of the earth." This one has "two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon." He "exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence" ([Revelation 13:12](#)), indicating that his authority is the same as the first beast's. If the first beast's authority is global, so is the second beast's; if the first beast's authority is more localized to the environs of the Near East, Middle East, and North Africa, then the second beast's authority is the same.

In the same verse, the second beast "causes *the earth and those who dwell in it* to worship the first beast." The Greek word translated "earth" is the same one used in verse 8. It could mean "[the world](#)," "the country," or "the land." So what is the scope of the second beast's authority?

When it comes to imposing the Mark of the Beast, [Revelation 13:16](#) seems to ascribe universal authority to him: "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads." These three pairs of opposing classifications of people seem to include every person on the planet. However, they have to be seen within the context of his authority, rather than as a definition of his authority. That is, he will impose the Mark across all social, economic, and political strata within the realm of the Beast—there will be no exceptions because someone is rich or has high rank in in the Beast's government. The Mark will be universal for those over whom the Beast rules.

[Acts 26:22](#) contains another example of this phraseology. Paul says he is "witnessing both to *small and great*." This does not mean that he was witnessing to all people on earth but to the "small and great" who were in his audience. [Revelation 19:17-18](#) uses the same rhetorical device to describe the aftermath of the war between the returning Messiah and the Beast:

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great [God](#), that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and *the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great*."

Will the birds devour the flesh of every person on the planet? Again, these classifications of people (free and slave, small and great) describe universality *within an already-defined grouping*—in this case, the people who "gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army" ([Revelation 19:19](#)).

Will the Mark of the Beast be a truly global phenomenon, imposed on every man, woman, and child on earth? If so, the biblical math does not add up! Consider: The second beast "causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark" ([Revelation 13:16](#)). However, in [Revelation 14:9-11](#), an angel proclaims that anyone receiving the mark

shall also drink of the wine of the [wrath of God](#), which is poured out *full strength* into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

If every person (aside from the saints) receives the mark, then every person (aside from the saints) will die at Christ's return! Yet, numerous other prophecies show that not all nations will be destroyed at His coming; instead, all nations will be *ruled* by Him. Hence, a substantial number of people—enough to make up nations—will not "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out *full strength* into the cup of His indignation" because they did receive the Mark of the Beast. Thus, the Mark is not imposed on every person because the second beast is not given the power to impose it on every person. Rather, he causes all *within the rule of the Beast* to receive it.

— David C. Grabbe

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