

4.12 - Nero

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Among those who seek to relegate the events of the book of Revelation to the distant past, no figure is more often held to be the [Beast](#) of Revelation than the Roman Emperor [Nero](#). For those who ascribe to the Golden Rule of Interpretation, this may seem surprising. How could it be said with all seriousness that Nero fulfills the many details given concerning the [Beast](#) throughout Scripture? A simple reading of Scripture gives numerous aspects of this man which Nero fails to fulfill.

Caesar Nero



[1](#)

Ignoring the rest of Scripture for the moment, the book of Revelation alone reveals the following aspects concerning the Beast:

- Literally killed and resurrected (Rev. 13:3⁺, 8⁺; 17:8⁺, 11⁺).
- Prevails for precisely 42 months (Rev. 13:5⁺).
- Globally rules over *every* tribe, nation, and tongue (Rev. 13:7⁺).
- Has a high-profile accomplice who performs literal miracles (Rev. 13:13⁺).
- An [image of the Beast](#) is given the breath of life (Rev. 13:15⁺).
- Buying and selling are precluded except through identification with the Beast (Rev. 13:17⁺).
- Gathers with other kings to wage war against God (Rev. 19:19⁺).
- Captured and cast *alive* into the Lake of Fire by Christ (Rev. 19:20⁺). (Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68.²)
- Receives global worship (Rev. 13:3⁺).

Outside of the book of Revelation, many more things are said of this figure. Here we mention Paul's comments to show the utter unsuitability of Nero as the fulfillment of the Beast:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, **so that he sits as God in the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God. (2Th. 2:3-4) [emphasis added]

It simply will not do to try and make the "son of perdition" be some other figure such as the Jewish high priest because this person, like the Beast, is the one exalted and worshiped above all else. And when did Nero "sit as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"? Not an *image*, not a *proclamation or edict*, but **the live man sitting in the Holy of Holies**? Since it seems plain from a straightforward reading of Scripture that the Beast is a figure yet future, how is it that [preterists](#) find Nero to fill the bill? The answer, once again, is [hermeneutics, the art and science of interpretation](#). By ignoring the details in the Word of God, the preterists are able to "shoe horn" Nero into what they believe is a fulfillment of these prophecies. They simply refuse to read the text in its literal sense because they are motivated to move the future back to the past and Nero provides their best chance of doing so. In the ensuing discussion, we would ask the reader to notice a key weakness of those who argue for a Neronic fulfillment of the Beast passages of the book of Revelation. They *place great emphasis on similarities which are lacking in objectivity* or are subject to widely different possibility of fulfillment while *minimizing objective details given in the text* which simply do not fit Nero. Anyone who attempts to identify the Beast based primarily on numeric calculations concerning his name ([gematria](#)) while paying relatively little attention to the details of the text is headed for trouble.

4.12.1 - Revival Myth

[Nero](#) was admittedly a very evil man. His infamy is well known. Apparently, some time after his death, a superstitious belief arose that he came back to life.³ This myth is then thought to be the subject of the passages which record that the [Beast](#) will be killed and revived (Rev. 13:3⁺, 8⁺; 17:8⁺, 11⁺). While this might sound like an amazing correlation at first, the idea has some major problems:

1. If the Nero revival *myth* is what is recorded in the book of Revelation, then God's Word is based on pagan untruths.
2. The book of Revelation records a *successful* revival, whereas Nero has not risen.
3. It is unlikely there would have been sufficient time for Nero to die, for the myth to arise, and to have it recorded by John all prior to A.D. 70—the date by which Nero advocates have to have the book written. “Some commentators argue that some passages in Revelation reflect a ‘revival of Nero’ myth, especially 13:3-4 and 17:8, 11, which speak of the demise of the beast and subsequent revival. The Nero myth held that Nero would return from the dead and lead a Parthian army against the Roman Empire. If these texts reflect the myth, then Revelation is better dated later than earlier, since presumably it took time for the myth to arise, develop, and circulate after Nero’s death in 68 AD.”⁴
4. Those in the early church who were most intimately connected with the time of Nero know nothing of the supposed relevance of the myth. “Irenaeus, who was the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was the disciple of John, had no knowledge of the Nero Redivivus Myth. Because Nero has never returned from the dead and never will, the theory that John refers to the Nero Redivivus Myth in Revelation 13:3⁺, 14⁺ ‘ascribes to John a **false prophecy** based upon a silly superstition.’ ” [emphasis added]⁵
5. The Beast receives worship *because of his revival from the dead*. Those who suggest Nero is the Beast fail to account for the clear indication of Scripture that worship of the Beast is in reaction to his miraculous restoration (Rev. 13:3-4⁺, 12⁺). Nero never received global worship nor was he revived. Any worship he may have received did not follow a restoration to life as so clearly portrayed by the book of Revelation.

4.12.2 - The Number of the Beast

The book of Revelation states the following concerning the *number of the [Beast](#)*

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, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 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 six hundred and sixty-six. (Rev. 13:16-18⁺)

John states that the Beast has a number associated with his name and that he “who has understanding” may calculate the “number of the beast” which is “the number of a man,” the infamous “666.”

4.12.2.1 - Gematria

Most who have studied this puzzling passage connect the calculation with the practice known as [gematria](#) where different letters of an alphabet are assigned different sequential numeric values so that words then derive a value equal to the sum of the values associated with their individual characters.

With the late Jews and the Greeks the letters of the alphabet were used to denote numbers; a name then could be given enigmatically in the sum of the numbers denoted by its several letters. Thus in Gen. 14:14 the number 318 was taken by the rabbis to denote Eliezer; the numbers denoted by the respective letters of that name added together form this sum. The Christian Sibylline I. 324 ff. uses 888 for the name [Ἰησοῦς](#) [Iêsous], Jesus.⁶

4.12.2.2 - Nero Caesar = 666?

Advocates of [Nero](#) as the [Beast](#) make much of the fact that two variations of the Hebrew spelling of “Caesar Nero” result in the two different values found in textual variants for the number of the Beast.⁷

This solution reached in the earlier part of the last century independently by a number of scholars (Fritzsche, Benary, Hitzig, Reuss) meets the conditions of the problem so exactly that it is accepted by most scholars of the present day. It's correctness is supported by the fact that if the proper name be written [נְרֹו](#) [Nerō], [נְרַו](#) [nrw], that is, without the final consonant as in the Latin form *Nero*, the number 616 is obtained instead of 666, and thus is explained the variant reading found in some Mss.⁸

4.12.2.3 - A Lock almost any Key will Turn

At first glance, this is impressive. But only if one ignores all of the other more objective details given as to the character and ministry of the [Beast](#) which [Nero](#) falls far short of. Unfortunately, as many who have followed the sensational speculation of our own times concerning this matter are well aware, [gematria](#) is simply not reliable as a major indicator as to the identity of the Beast. There are simply too many degrees of freedom for making names or titles fit.

G. Salmon has developed three rules that have been used throughout the centuries for making any desired name equal 666. His

rules are appropriate for the attempts by preterists to make Nero fit the number of the Beast: "First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling. . . . **We cannot infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock if it is a lock in which almost any key will turn.**" [emphasis added]⁹

in transliterating a foreign word into Hebrew, there is considerable latitude in including, omitting, or varying vowel letters. What's more, there are three possible Hebrew equivalents [*samek*, *sin*, and *shin*] for the Greek letter for "s."¹⁰

This flexibility of gematria is evident in the many suggestions which have been put forth as possible matches for the "666" calculation of the Beast.

Throughout church history, the gematric method has been used to identify the beast as Teitan, Lateinos, Julius Caesar, Domitian, Vespasian, Caligula, the Nicolaitans, and the German Kaisers. Johnson notes that "the sheer disagreement and confusion created through the years by the gematria method should have long ago warned the church that it was on the wrong track." Such confusion probably exists because the meaning of the number may not be evident until the Antichrist appears. Thus the best approach is to avoid all guessing and allow God to give the understanding when it is needed.¹¹

Beckwith also lists a number of historical figures who have been seen as fulfilling the gematria of Rev. 13:18: Mohammed, Pope Benedict IX, Luther, Titan, Latinus, Gaius Caesar (Caligula), Caesar of Rome (requires the reading 616), Caesar of the Romans, Trajan, Hadrian, Trajan, Vespasian.¹² The relative ease with which various names of history can be made to add up to 666 renders the match for Nero inconsequential. "Gematria is not a *means* by which the name is to be discovered; but it will be a *test* and a *proof* by which the name may be identified after the person is revealed."¹³ Gematria cannot be the main point of evidence in any identity of the [Antichrist](#), because "probably the names of about one in every 10,000 people will total 666. This identification is not in itself a sure test."¹⁴ See commentary on [Revelation 13:18](#).

4.12.2.4 - Revealed Too Late

What is especially odd about this assertion that [Nero's](#) name fulfills the [gematria](#) for 666 is that Neronian advocates are also those who hold the view that the book of Revelation is almost entirely about first-century events of significance to the time of Nero and John's immediate readership. However, this solution of Nero's name for the number of the [Beast](#) was unknown by John's very audience as evidenced by those who followed closely on their heels. "The name of Nero was apparently never suggested by the ancient commentators, even though his persecuting zeal made him a model of the Antichrist."¹⁵

Irenaeus has only uncertain guesses to offer, and he thinks the Apocalyptist intended the name to remain hidden till Antichrist should come. The language, however, implies that it is discoverable by those who have the requisite wisdom; and the command, 'let him that hath understanding calculate the number,' shows that the author expects some to solve the enigma.¹⁶

[Irenaeus](#) understood [Antichrist](#) to be a future figure and interprets numerous passages much like [futurist interpreters](#) of our own time:

And again, speaking of Antichrist, [Paul] says, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped [2Th. 2:4]." He points out here those who are called gods, by such as know not God, that is, idols. For the Father of all is called God, and is so; and **Antichrist shall be lifted up**, not above Him, but above those which are indeed called gods, but are not.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iii.vi [emphasis added]¹⁷

Concerning men who suggested the number of the beast was 616, Irenaeus wrote in support of the value 666 and indicated that he expected the Antichrist to be a figure *future* to his day:¹⁸

These men, therefore, ought to learn [what really is the state of the case], and go back to the true number of the name, that they be not reckoned among false prophets. But, knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is, six hundred sixty and six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that **he who shall come** claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation. . . . It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to **await the fulfilment of the prophecy**, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned. . . . But **when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire**; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which

kingdom the Lord declared, that “many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxx [emphasis added]¹⁹

For **when he (Antichrist) is come**, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly “be cast into the lake of fire: ” [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and **at the proper time sending such a man**, “that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;” whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: “And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him?”—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxviii.2 [emphasis added]²⁰

Justin Martyr did not believe Nero to be the Antichrist, but expected a future figure who would be destroyed at the second advent of Christ. In his *Dialogue of Justin*, [Justin Martyr](#) cites Daniel 7:9-28 as a Second Coming passage which describes the destruction of the beast at the *future* arrival of Jesus.²¹ The “Teaching of the Twelve” (*The Didache*) written in approximately 70 A.D.²² knows nothing of Nero as the Beast, instead, in concert with Irenaeus, reflecting the [futurist interpretation](#).

For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God and ‘will perform signs and wonders,’ and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will commit abominations the likes of which have never happened before. (5) Then all humankind will come to the fiery test, and “many will fall away” and perish.²³

The unfortunate reality of taking Nero as the Beast is that no believer of his time proved wise enough to benefit from the clues given by God, *even those who lived during the persecution of the Beast*. Thus, God’s Word failed to aid the church until it became obvious to the Church *some 1800 years after the threat the passage was meant to identify had come and gone*.

The Neronic gematric calculation was not even suggested as a solution until Fritzsche first proposed it in 1831. If the preterist interpretation of Revelation 13:18⁺ is accurate, then the discovery of 666 as a prophecy concerning Nero was made roughly 1,800 years too late to assist John’s original audience. Smith summarizes the issue well by noting, “If John’s purpose was concealment, certainly he succeeded admirably, for his meaning was hidden not only from the enemies of the church, but from the church itself, for 1800 years. It is simply incredible that if this solution is so simple, and if it was ever known to the church, it should have been absolutely forgotten until our time.”²⁴

But, as already stated in the text, there are serious objections to the Nero-hypothesis: (1) The language and readers of the Apocalypse suggest a Greek rather than a Hebrew explanation of the numerical riddle. (2) The seer clearly distinguishes the beast, as a collective name for the Roman empire (so used also by Daniel), from the seven heads, i.e., kings ([βασίλεις](#) [basileis] or emperors. Nero is one of the five heads who ruled before the date of the Apocalypse. (3) It is difficult to conceive of a reasonable motive for concealing the detested name of Nero after his death. (4) A radical error, such as the belief in the absurd heathen fable of the return of Nero, is altogether incompatible with the lofty character and profound wisdom of the Apocalypse, and would destroy all confidence in its prophecy. If John, as these writers maintain, composed it in 68, he lived long enough to be undeceived, and would have corrected the fatal blunder or withheld the book from circulation. (5) It seems incredible that such an easy solution of the problem should have remained unknown for eighteen centuries and been reserved for the wits of half a dozen rival rationalists in Germany. Truth is truth, and must be thankfully accepted from any quarter and at any time; yet as the Apocalypse was written for the benefit of contemporaries of Nero, one should think that such a solution would not altogether have escaped them. Irenaeus makes no mention of it.²⁵

4.12.2.5 - Spelling and Language

It has also been noted that evidence is lacking that Christian commentators would have employed Hebrew in response to John’s text. “The earliest Christian commentators never looked to a solution in any language other than the Greek. . . . the *Sibylline Oracles*, which is a Jewish document composed in Greek, does its gematria in Greek rather than Hebrew.”²⁶ Then too, in order for the calculation to work, the Hebrew spelling of Caesar must be *abnormal*. “The preterists’ calculation is built upon a defective spelling of the word *Caesar*. Preterists rely upon the abnormal spelling *rsq* [Hebrew reads right-to-left], while the usual spelling is *rsyq*. The addition of the *yod* would obviously damage the Neronic gematric calculation.”²⁷ Although such abnormal spelling is attested, it is not the common spelling. Beale points to other variables which provide additional degrees of freedom to make the calculation conveniently come out.

Identifying the name with Nero mistakenly assumes a knowledge of Hebrew and of the Hebrew system of gematria among native Greek readers. Furthermore, to choose the name “Caesar Nero” is too convenient for the Neronic dating, since there were many possible titles and names for Nero. Also in transliteration of foreign names into Hebrew there was considerable latitude in treatment of vowels and three possible equivalents for s [ש, ס, ס]. And why would the author not use a Greek form instead of a Hebrew form?²⁸

Mounce pithily observes, “What is not generally stressed is that this solution asks us to calculate a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, and that with a defective spelling.”²⁹

4.12.3 - Failure in Fulfillment

Aside from the more obvious ways in which [Nero](#) fails to fulfill the passages of Scripture as discussed above, there are other problems with the Neronic [Beast](#). Those who have studied the emperor cult within the first century have noted that the cult was not fully developed or enforced as early as Nero. “Nero was not deified, though there is some evidence that he wished to be. However, **there was no widespread demand that he be recognized as such.**” [emphasis added]³⁰ This became more characteristic of the time of Domitian which is the traditional date for the writing of the book of Revelation from Patmos. “It was not until the reign of Domitian that failure to honor the emperor as a god became a political offense and punishable.”³¹

Emperor Domitian Gold Coins



³²

Although Nero was famous for vicious persecution of Christians, it has not been shown that this persecution extended beyond the city of Rome and as far away as Asia Minor which would be required by our text (Rev. 2:10⁺, 13⁺). “The first outbreak of persecution by the Roman government was under Nero in AD 74 (Tacitus, *Ann.* xv.44). This organized retaliation was apparently confined to the city of Rome and therefore distinct from the universal persecution envisioned in Revelation.”³³ Beckwith notes that Nero’s career ends before the fall of the Roman empire whereas Revelation describes just the opposite. “Activities and attributes are assigned to him [the Beast] which cannot be predicated of any Roman emperor in his ordinary human personality, as is also a career falling after the destruction of the Roman empire.”³⁴ It is unlikely, however, that these shortcomings will deter the [preterists](#) who are intent on having Nero be the Beast. The reason can be seen in how Chilton interprets the clear biblical declaration concerning the *time* and *manner* that the Beast is to be destroyed:

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev. 19:19-20⁺)

From this passage, we see that the Beast is destroyed *at the Second Coming of Christ* and *cast alive* into the Lake of Fire. Chilton’s exposition of this passage is typical of preterist tendencies to brush aside the details:

The imagery is borrowed from the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . St. John’s point, therefore, **is not to provide a detailed personal eschatology** of the Beast and the False Prophet; . . . Rather, the Lake of Fire is his **symbolic description** of the utter defeat and complete destruction of these enemies . . . The evil personifications of pagan Rome and apostate Israel are ruined and overthrown. [emphasis added]³⁵

When interpretation majors on “borrowed imagery, symbolic descriptions, and personifications,” it is conveniently elastic. Notice the preterist tendency to resort to symbolic interpretation when the text precludes a first-century fulfillment. Chilton unintentionally places himself among the company of liberal interpreters who oppose a literal hell. For if the “lake of fire” is symbolic here, why not elsewhere? And perhaps there is no literal Lake of Fire after all? Literal interpreters who cling to the Golden Rule of Interpretation and point out the obvious mismatch between the simple declaration of the text and the preterist “fulfillment” are seen as making “much about nothing.” Yet as we said before, the *divine is in the details*. Once again, it can be seen just how important [The Art and Science of Interpretation](#) is when we study the Scriptures. The details concur with Tenney: “One cannot assert that the ‘beast’ is finally to be equated with any single person or power that has yet appeared.”³⁶

4.12.4 - Nero as a Type of the Beast

If [Nero](#) is related to the [Beast](#) in any way, he is related similarly to Antiochus Epiphanes of the time of the Maccabees. His *character*

serves as a biblical “type” foreshadowing the real Beast yet to come. Even then, Nero’s influence on history pales in significance to the final Beast to come.

Another striking character who has been singled out by those who believe that the Antichrist has already appeared and finished his course, is Nero. And here again there are, admittedly, many striking resemblances between the type and the antitype. In his office of emperor of the Romans; in his awful impiety; in his consuming egotism, in his bloodthirsty nature; and in his ferocious and fiendish persecution of the people of God, we discover some of the very lineaments which will be characteristic of the Wicked One. But again it will be found that this man of infamous memory, Nero, did nothing more than foreshadow that one who shall far exceed him in satanic malignity.³⁷

The dominant thought in the Apocalypticist’s prophecy is not that Nero shall come again, but rather than Antichrist will come, the last and most terrible manifestation of the Beast, embodying a Nero reincarnate and demonized—Antichrist, of whom no more fiendish conception can be formed than that furnished by a Nero revived according to popular fancy, and invested with superhuman power.³⁸

See [The Beast](#).

Notes

¹Image courtesy of Mike McCorkle.

²“According to Suetonius, he stabbed himself in the throat with a dagger. According to another version (recounted by Tacitus and almost certainly fiction) he reached the Greek islands, where the following year (69) the governor of Cythnos (modern Kithnos) recognized him in the guise of a red-haired prophet and leader of the poor, had him arrested, and executed the [death] sentence that had been passed by the Senate”—Michael Levy, ed., [Britannica 2012 Deluxe Edition CDROM](#), s.v. “Nero.”

³“The Nero *redivivus* tradition [was] recorded by his Roman historian Suetonius (*Nero* 6.57).”—J. Randall Price, [“Historical Problems with Preterism’s Interpretations of Events in A.D. 70.”](#) in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, eds., [Borrow The End Times Controversy](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 389.

⁴Gregory K. Beale, [The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 17.

⁵Andy Woods, [“Revelation 13 and the First Beast.”](#) in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, eds., [The End Times Controversy](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 240.

⁶Isbon T. Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#) (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 403.

⁷A third value is also attested: “666 was not the gematria used for Ner. 1,005 was.”—Hal Harless, [“666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13.”](#) in [The Conservative Theological Journal](#), vol. 7 no. 22 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2003), 352.

⁸Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#), 404.

⁹Mark Hitchcock, [“The Stake in the Heart—The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation.”](#) in Tim LaHaye and Thomas Ice, eds., [The End Times Controversy](#) (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 142.

¹⁰Woods, [Revelation 13 and the First Beast](#), 246.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 247.

¹²Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#), 404-405.

¹³E. W. Bullinger, [Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1967), 282.

¹⁴Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 13:18.

¹⁵Robert H. Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 265.

¹⁶Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#), 403.

¹⁷Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., [Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I](#) (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature

Company, 1885), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.3.7.”

¹⁸Contrast the passages of Irenaeus below with the bold misrepresentation of his position by F.W. Farrar cited in Chilton: “It is significant that ‘all the earliest Christian writers on the Apocalypse, from **Irenaeus** down . . . connect Nero, or some Roman emperor, with the Apocalyptic Beast.’ There should be no reasonable doubt about this identification.” [emphasis added]—David Chilton, [The Days of Vengeance](#) (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 351. Let the reader beware: go to the source yourself!

¹⁹Roberts, [Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I](#), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31.”

²⁰Ibid., s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.29.”

²¹“But if so great a power is shown to have followed and to be still following the dispensation of His suffering, how great shall that be which shall follow His glorious advent! For He shall come on the clouds as the Son of man, so Daniel foretold, and His angels shall come with Him. These are the words: ‘I beheld till the thrones were set; and the Ancient of days did sit. . .’—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, xxx”—Ibid., s.v. “ECF 1.1.6.3.0.31.”

²²J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, [The Apostolic Fathers](#), 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 146.

²³Ibid., 158.

²⁴Woods, [Revelation 13 and the First Beast](#), 247.

²⁵Philip Schaff and David Schley Schaff, [History of the Christian Church](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 1.xii.101.

²⁶Woods, [Revelation 13 and the First Beast](#), 246.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Beale, [The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), s.v. “Nero not Number of Beast.”

²⁹Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 264.

³⁰Grant R. Osborne, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 6.

³¹Mounce, [The Book of Revelation](#), 33.

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³³Ibid., 34.

³⁴Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#), 397.

³⁵Chilton, [The Days of Vengeance](#), 491.

³⁶Merrill C. Tenney, [Interpreting Revelation](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 189.

³⁷Arthur Walkington Pink, [The Antichrist](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. “intro.”

³⁸Beckwith, [The Apocalypse of John](#), 408.

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