

Preterism – Nero (666)

1. First, for 666 to fit the gematria of Nero, his name and his title must be used. This would be, "Nero Caesar." There were many names and titles that could be used. For example, coins have been found with titles of Domitian that equal 666 as well as a coin issued in AD 72 that has a legend which equals 666.

2. Second, the text says that 666 will be the number of his name. Nero Caesar was not his name. It was his name with a title added. This would be the same as adding "President" to the name of George W. Bush.

3. Third, a gematria that fits Nero for 666 must be translated from Greek into Hebrew. The numerical value of Neron Kaiser in Greek is 1005. John, writing to a Greek-speaking audience in western Asia Minor would likely have used a Greek form, not Hebrew.

4. Fourth, within the Hebrew gematria of Neron Kaiser, interpreters still have to decide whether the Hebrew letters ' or ה be included? The gematria for Nero only equals 666 if ' is omitted after the letter ה in Ceasar (נָסָר).

5. Fifth, to arrive at 666 for Nero the ה in Neron must be retained. In other words, to arrive at Nero as the gematria of 666 you would have to omit a letter and keep another, which is odd.

6. Sixth, identification of Nero as the beast of 666 is not supported by the early church. Irenaeus wrote extensively about the possible identity of this beast and named three options: Evanthes, Lateinos, and Teitan. Yet, Irenaeus never named Nero. Interestingly, this view did not arise until the 1830s by four German scholars (O. F. Fritsche, Ferdinand Benary, Ferdinand Hitzig, and Eduard Reuss).

7. Seventh, there is no historical figure during Nero's time that corresponds to the beast of the earth in Rev 13:11-13.

8. Eighth, Nero did not fulfill the tasks of the beast of Rev 13 or his other descriptions in the book of Revelation. If someone is going to take a literal interpretation of 666 and a literal understanding of the forty-two months in Rev 13:5, then there needs to be a literal fulfillment of the duties of the beast (Hitchcock, "Domitianic Date of Revelation," 139-142, 146-154; Hitchcock, "A Critique of the Preterist View of Revelation 13," 341-356).

Website Reference: <http://christopherscotthblog.com/beast-earth-rev-13-11-18/>

"neronic calculation requires using a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name for a readership who knew no Hebrew. It also involves a defective spelling."

— Robert Thomas, Revelation 8-22, 184-185.

"Not only does the evidence suggest that John was given his revelation after AD 70, but preterist interpretations of the beast, his image, and his number are also not exhaustively fulfilled by Nero and the events of AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple."

— Kim Riddlebarger, A Case for Amillennialism, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2013), 152.

"666 does not have anything to do with Nero Caesar."

— Jordan, James B. The Vindication of Jesus Christ: a Brief Reader's Guide to Revelation (Monroe, LA: Athanasius Press, 2008. Kindle Edition), 427.

"A popular interpretation of many scholars is that the number 666 has the numerical value of the name Nero Caesar. We should keep in mind, however, that it was not until the 1830s that four German scholars proposed the name Nero for the number 666. But the choice of Nero's name creates many difficulties. First, to arrive at the number 666 as the numerical value of Nero's name, one has to add the name Caesar. But even then, the expanded name Nero Caesar has the numerical value of only 616. Only when one adds an extra letter n to the name Nero, resulting in Neron Caesar, is the full number 666 achieved. But then one has to resort to the Hebrew spelling of Neron Caesar, which is nun = 50, resh = 200, waw = 6, nun = 50, qoph = 100, samech = 60, resh = 200, for a total of 666. But the normal spelling of the transliterated Hebrew word for "Caesar" is qysr, which includes the letter yodh. This letter, with the numerical value of 10, makes the total 676; therefore, proponents of this numerical scheme have searched for a manuscript that lacks the extra letter yodh. Among the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, archaeologists have discovered a fragment that has the Hebraic (Aramaic) spelling of the name Neron. The next word qysr has two damaged consonants after the letter q, but there is no room for a vowel.

Nevertheless, the questions must be asked, "Why would the author not use a Greek form instead of a Hebrew form?"

— Kistemaker in Mathison, Keith A. *When Shall These Things Be?: A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004), 228-29.

"The discerning Christian should understand that the calculation of the Beast's number 666, using either gematria or isopsephy, does not result in the name Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus or any of its derivatives. As many preterist teachers admit, they must reject the usual spelling for Nero and choose an extremely rare form of his name, which has been reconstituted from a damaged manuscript that may have originally included an extra Hebrew letter. This is nothing short of exercising selection bias and conforming data to fit a predetermined conclusion."

— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2232.

"However, the proposed chronology of Nero cannot account for the prophecy that the Son of Man will appear and subsequently kill the Beast and his armies (Rev. 19:19-21; cf. 2 Thess. 2:8). Preterists teach that "the coming of the Son of Man" occurred in conjunction with Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70; however, the fall of Jerusalem took place more than two years after Nero's death! This may explain why Hanegraaff erroneously places the Year of the Four Emperors (AD 69) and the destruction of Jerusalem during the Neronian persecution."

— Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2232.