

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

In chapter 11 we saw the Great Red Dragon, referring to Satan himself. Last week at the beginning of chapter 13 we reviewed this character called 'The Beast', more commonly known by his title Antichrist. Today we are concluding chapter 13 with a look at this person referred to as the False Prophet. Three unique characters all centering around Satan's design to overthrow God as the sovereign ruler of the universe.

In Revelation 16:13; 19:20 and 20:10 the “Beast from the Earth” is called the false prophet. The False Prophet is the counterfeit Holy Spirit who will be able to exercise counterfeit miracles through which he will call mankind to the worship of The Beast (Antichrist) and receive his mark – his seal of ownership. The False Prophet, like The Beast will be thrown into the Lake of Fire at the conclusion of the 7-year Tribulation. During that period of the One-Thousand year Millennial Kingdom of Christ, the Beast and False Prophet will be confined in the Lake of Fire all by themselves.

**John 16:14** – He will glorify Me, for He will take from Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

Again, as a counterfeit, just as the true Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, this False One will elevate The Beast

This three-person construction is not by random chance. What we have being played out is a counterfeit trinity – demonic one. Our Enemy doesn't have an original bone in His body. Since the beginning of creation he takes what God has ordained and twists it for his own ends and purposes. Just as we recognize the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, we also have Satan – typified by a Great Red Dragon, The Beast, counterfeit son, and today we will consider the False holy spirit, or, the False Prophet. In fact, in Isaiah 14:14 we are told that Satan thought in his own heart, “ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High God”.

The two beasts are Satanic imitations. We are presented with a false “Christ” and a false Holy Spirit who promote the false god Satan. Remember, Satan can't create as God can but he can effectively deceive with imitation. Counterfeits deceive because *they are similar*; if they were so obviously different it would be easy to tell the difference. We must beware and be familiar with the genuine so as not to be taken in by the fake.

Just as one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to point people to Jesus, the False Prophet will point people to Antichrist.

Although the Antichrist is a very interesting and popular subject, rather than focus too much on him it would be much more appropriate for Christians to intimately know the genuine only begotten Son of God: Jesus Christ.

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

Vs. 11 – Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.

**'another'**: Gr. 'allos': another of a similar kind. Both the False Prophet and Antichrist are of evil origin but have unique and separate roles in Satan's work and end-times plans.

**out of the 'Earth'** (vs. sea): They are different in origin, because one comes out of the sea, the other out of the earth. They are different in rank, because the second is subordinate to the first (causes the earth... to worship the first beast, Rev\_13:12). They are different in appearance, because the second has a mild, “lamb-like” appearance.

**two horns**: horns again represent authority but the absence of a crown suggests the authority is not political.

**spoke as**: He will have the character of a lamb but the voice of a dragon. Remember, the Dragon is representative of Satan and he is the ultimate deceiver. The False Prophet will speak with great deceptive words and all the world will follow after him.

Vs. 12 – He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who live on it worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

One purpose of the False Prophet is to use this false world religion to bring people under the control of Antichrist. They will be in partnership with one another – not competition.

Vs. 13 – He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of the sky to the earth in the presence of people.

**Signs**: In the days of the Exodus, Aaron performed miracles, and up to a point was matched miracle-for-miracle by the magicians of Egypt (Exodus 7-9). However, the key verse in scripture to consider here is **Deut. 13:1-5**,

*If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes true, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let's follow other gods (whom you have not known) and let's serve them,' 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken falsely against the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to drive you*

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

*from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall eliminate the evil from among you.*

God assumes there will be supernatural works on behalf of false prophets and idols, and He warns His people to judge a worker of miracles by their message (the Word of God), not only by their works. Jesus said that some who worked miracles - even in His name - were false followers and would perish in hell (Mat 7:22-23). Jesus said that in the end times, false prophets would emerge and show great signs and wonders to deceive (Mat 24:24). Paul said that the Antichrist will come with all power, signs, and lying wonders (2Th 2:9). The one thing about false prophets is they never look like a false prophet.

Dave Guzik puts it like this, “Knowing all this, the emphasis on signs and wonders among some Christians is frightening. Some Christians say or think, “You can really know where God is and where His power is by signs and wonders.” Thinking this way is to leave yourself wide open to deception. Years ago there was a large, multi-denominational conference of people who thought this way, and their slogan - on a huge banner over the conference platform - read “Unity Under Signs and Wonders.” That’s a unity that Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet could all join in. Signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God’s work are love and truth. Jesus said that some who worked miracles - even in His name - were false followers and would perish in hell (Mat 7:22-23).” (End quote)

**Matthew 12:39-40** – a wicked and adulterous generation seeks

**Fire:** In Revelation 11:5, fire proceeded out of the mouth of the two Witnesses. James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village in Luke 9:54. In 1 Kings 18 Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices in defeat of the 450 priests and prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

Vs. 14 – And he deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

**Earth-dwellers:** All who 'dwell upon the Earth" – One purpose of the 7-year Tribulation is what Revelation 3:10 says, “Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try (Gr. *peirazo*: examine or prove) those who dwell on the earth.”

One of God's designs for Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (a.k.a. “The Tribulation”) is to expose those who would never entrust themselves to Christ as Lord and Savior. These are the ones who will willingly accept the Mark of the Beast – thus swearing eternal allegiance but also confessing Satan's ownership of them.

The word for “dwell” in the eight times it is used about these humans just in Revelation is the Greek word *katoikeo*. It is the same word used to describe the fullness of the godhead dwelling in Christ (Col. 2:9). It is used of Christ taking up permanent residence in the believer's heart (Eph. 3:17). The Holy Spirit could have used the Greek word meaning transitory but this word is much stronger. *Katoikeo* has the idea of permanence to it. *The definition of these people is those who have settled down in the Earth as their permanent home and sworn allegiance to this world's economic and religious system and its dictator – The Beast (Antichrist).* Once they receive the Mark of the Beast they will already have their eternal fate sealed according to Revelation 14:9-11 and 17:8.

“given him”: at the mid-point of the Tribulation the False Prophet will be given power to perform signs and wonders (evil adulterous generation seeks after signs). He deceives mankind to cause them to worship Antichrist and this is the same theme Paul addressed in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false [literally, 'The Lie'] . The Lawless One's coming is energized by Satan (brought back to life). The purpose of these counterfeit miracles by The False Prophet is an effort to “deceive many” so they will worship Antichrist as god.

Some Bible expositors teach that those who hear the gospel prior to the Rapture and reject it will have no opportunity to be saved during the Rapture and they normally use 2 Thess. 2:11 to justify this teaching. The “big lie” Paul refers to in this section of scripture is that The Beast truly is God and therefore, people will worship him as god and accept his mark of ownership on themselves (Rev. 14:9-11). Remember, the option of taking the Mark doesn't begin until the mid-point of the Tribulation and the context of Paul's argument in 2 Thess. 2:9-12 are clearly at the mid-Tribulation point.

“presence of the Beast” (second time): he points people to the Antichrist just as the true Holy

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

Spirit points people to Jesus.

**make an image**: the false prophet comes and says to the earth-dwellers that they should make/worship an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live. This man will be a world leader. There will be an assassination attempt most likely through military action, apparently successful, but he miraculously survives the deadly wounds. Though, according to Zechariah, it will probably leave him blinded in his right eye and without the use of his right arm. Yet the very fact that he survives this assassination attempt causes the world to marvel and it brings him immediately into a prominent position in the minds of so many people because it is by a definite miracle that this man survives.

The image of the beast is animated in some way in that it has **breath** and can **speak**. Whether the image is animated supernaturally or technologically such as by Artificial intelligence the result will be impressive. Psalm 135:15-16) mocks idol worshipers because *the idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not* This image of the Antichrist will be a different kind of idol, because **the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

This idolatrous image is what Jesus, Daniel, and Paul spoke of as the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, and 2Thess. 2:3-4).

**wound of the sword and come to life**: Zech. 11:17

Vs. 15 – And it was **given to him** to **give breath** to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause all who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

**“given to him”**: Demon power in the spiritual realm in addition to the tools of humankind such as the rise of Artificial Intelligence

### **WAR**

The advent of so-called “killer robots” and other uses of AI in military applications has experts worried the technology could end up resulting in war.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk, known for his outspoken views on AI, warned last year that the technology could result in World War III.

The use of AI in military decision-making creates a multitude of ethical dilemmas, and opens the possibility of AI-enhanced — or AI-led — wars.

Frank van Harmelen, an AI researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, said that the use of

these weapons should scare anyone.

“Any computer system, AI or not, that automatically decides on matters of life and death — for example, by launching a missile — is a really scary idea.”

Earlier this year, the U.S. defense think-tank Rand Corporation warned in a study that the use of AI in military applications could give rise to a nuclear war by 2040.

The thinking behind that bold prediction was that the chance of a military AI system making a mistake in its analysis of a situation could lead nations to take rash and potentially catastrophic decisions.

There was a famous incident in 1983, when former Soviet military officer Stanislav Petrov noticed that Russian computers had incorrectly put out a warning that the U.S. had launched nuclear missiles, averting nuclear war.

### Mass Surveillance

China is currently home to an estimated 200 million surveillance cameras, according to a New York Times report published earlier this month. It is also the only country in the world to have begun a “social credit system” that tracks the activities of citizens to rank them with scores that can determine whether they can be barred from accessing everything from plane flights to certain online dating services. What's next from that system is pre-crime incarceration and/or elimination.

### Bias

Tay was an AI chat bot created by Microsoft a couple of years ago. The bot was given a Twitter account, and it took less than a day for users to train it to post offensive tweets supporting Adolf Hitler and white supremacy. The problem here was the fact that the chatbot was trained to mimic users interacting with it online. Considering the oftentimes dark nature of some corners of the internet, it could be said the offending tweets were unsurprising.

The blunder forced Microsoft to pull the account. Many poked fun at Microsoft for the incident but it revealed the fact that AI has the potential to become prejudiced – including against Christianity. “We’re seeing an unintended bias in algorithms, especially machine-learning that threatens to copy and propagate racial, sexual, and other biases.

**breath:** the word for **breath** in Hebrew is *ruach* – the word imitates the very sound of breath – is the same word for *Spirit*, as is the case in both ancient Greek (*pneuma*) and Latin (*spiritus*). God created man by putting His *breath*, His *Spirit*, within him. In this case, the False Prophet is enabled to place a spirit within the image – one of Satan's unclean spirits.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar issued a death sentence in the Book of Daniel for everyone who would not bow down and worship his image, the same will apply in the last half of the Tribulation.

Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

Those who do not worship the image of the beast as god will be killed.

Vs. 16 – And he causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,

It no longer matters at the mid-point of the Tribulation if you are materially wealthy, politically powerful, or the history of your family bloodline. No human will be able to gain the political favor needed to take part in worldwide (or even local) commerce without first swearing yourself to the Beast as your god. It is the denial of Jesus Christ as King of King and Lord of Lord's and it is representative of the Unforgivable sin referred to by Jesus in Matthew 12:31-32. **Willingly taking the Mark of Beast is something from which one cannot repent and be restored according to Revelation 14:9-11.**

Again, the False Prophet compels worship of the Beast, declaring him to actually be true god or you will be excluded from the entire world economic system and this allegiance is exhibited by the Mark clearly visible on the right hand or the forehead. The forehead – representing the mind and the conscious will of the person. The right hand is the strength .

Vs. 17 – and he decrees that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

buy or to sell – If you can't buy or sell you can't eat, which means you'll die. Satan knows mankind's greatest fear is the fear of death (Job 2:4).

2 Cor 1:22 – who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Eph 4:30 – Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

2 Tim 2:19 – Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”

All of these verses refer to God having set His seal of ownership upon the redeemed Church Age saints by His Holy Spirit.

During the Tribulation God will also put His seal on the forehead of the saints (Rev. 7:3; 14:1). This issue of a seal is not new to God. Again, Satan is a counterfeiter and he will institute this same type of program to 'mark' his followers with a seal of ownership.

Gen. 4:15-16 – God placed a mark on Cain

Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

**Ezekiel 9:4-6** – And the LORD said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.” And to the others he said in my hearing, “Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, **but touch no one on whom is the mark.** And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the house.

By the way, It shows that even when judgment comes upon an entire nation, God still knows how to mark and identify the righteous (God destroyed Jericho but spared righteous Rahab because of a scarlet thread and the blood on the doorposts at Passover spared the life of the firstborn).

In Lev. 19:28 the Israelites are forbidden to print marks (**γράμματα στικτά**) upon themselves.

Animals and slaves were often branded with the owner’s name, as Paul (Gal. 6:17) bore the “brand-marks” of Christ. People also who stamped upon their bodies the names of the gods whom they worshiped.

**The Mark:** A Mark symbolizes ownership. The word “Mark” in the original language is 'charagma' which means to engrave. In Acts 17:29 it refers to idolatrous images. In Revelation (Rev. 13:16, Rev. 13:17; Rev. 14:9, Rev.14:11; Rev.16:2; Rev.19:20; Rev. 20:4) this mark acts as a seal for the followers of Antichrist and the false prophet (the spokesperson for the Antichrist). The false prophet (the second beast) is the one who causes people to take this mark. The mark is literally placed in the hand or forehead of the person and is not simply a card someone carries.

***A medical implant chip (for one example) is not the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast will be something given only to those who worship the Antichrist. It is a conscious act of the will when a person aligns him or her self with the system of The Beast and of him as the supreme sovereign over that system. Having a medical or financial microchip inserted into your right hand or forehead is not the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast will be an end-times identification required by the Antichrist in order to buy or sell and it will be given only to those who worship the Antichrist. You cannot be “tricked” into taking the Mark of the Beast and you cannot do so by accident.***

In our worldwide 'credit system' today everyone has a different number (Social Security Number, credit card numbers unique to you, etc.) but in Revelation 13 everyone received THE SAME number.



## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

Vs. 18 – Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

The name or the number:

In the ancient world the letters of the Greek and Hebrew alphabet were used as numbers. The problem in deciphering the number 666 is that 1 in every 10,000 names can be made to reveal the number 666.

As much as Satan would like, he will never achieve the perfection which alone belongs to God. He must settle for the number 666 signifying that three-fold unholy trinity (Satan, Beast, False Prophet). That aside, once the Tribulation begins there will be no question as to the identity of Antichrist because he confirms the seven-year covenant with Israel. When the Antichrist is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), it will be clear who he is and how the number 666 identifies him. Amazingly then, it would seem John is giving this “clue” to the members of the seven churches and therefore, all of us who are around prior to the rapture.

One reason for this cryptic warning for us is what I have always personally maintained. The Antichrist's rise to power will occur gradually and this person will actually become well known in the world BEFORE the Tribulation begins.

**Daniel 12:10** – Many will be purged, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Dan. 11:33, 35).

**Matthew 13:10-11** – And the disciples came up and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” And Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

**Hosea 12:10** - “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.” (Matthew 12; 13:12-14)

**Psa 25:14** “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”

**Amo 3:7** “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”

**John 15:15** - "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

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**Number of a man:** Man was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. Six represents incompleteness (one short of

## Revelation 13:11-18: The False Prophet

seven). Creation was made for man. There are 24 hours in a day (4x6) and 12 months in a year (2x6).

The letters of “Jesus” in Greek add up to 888 (“8” is the number of new beginnings)

### A Sovereign Plan

Revelation 17:16-17 – And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.