

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 7-21-13 PM
"THE SECOND BEAST"
REVELATION 13:11-18
#21 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through Revelation"

John 8:44b (NASB) "...for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Genesis 3:4-5 (NASB) "4 The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 (NASB) "14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds."

1 Timothy 4:1 (NASB) "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons."

Satan and his demons do much of their devious deceiving work through false teachers.

Matthew 7:15 (NASB) "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

Acts 20:29-30 (NASB) "29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

2 Peter 2:1 (NASB) "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."

1 John 4:1 (NASB) "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Jude 1:3-4 (NASB) "3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Acts 20:28 (NASB) "**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

Satan's desire is to counterfeit all that God does and is.

I. His Deceptive Appearance (v. 11)

Revelation 19:20 (NASB) "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."

II. His Dynamic Appeal (v. 12)

Isaiah 14:14 (NASB) “will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

“The secretary-general of the United Nation’s Millennium Peace Summit thinks that all religions apples fall from the same tree and all are equally delicious. At a recent international meeting, he told 1,000 delegates that religions need to accept the validity of all religions or else it will be difficult to attain world peace. Recently the notion has emerged that the pathway to peace necessitates the unification of religions. The Universal Religion Initiative (URI) recently convened with 300 people present representing 39 religions and signed a charter, which officially launched the movement. The goal is that there will come a day in which ‘religious people will no longer insist on a single truth.’”

—Article in *Insight* by James Harder

III. His Deadly Approach (vv. 13-18)

A. His Power (vv. 13-14)

2 Thessalonians 2:9 (NASB) “*that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.”

Matthew 24:24 (NASB) “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (NASB) “¹ 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, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

The phrase in verse 14, “those who dwell on the earth” speaks of unbelievers.

B. His Program (vv. 15-18)

Revelation 14:9b-10 (NASB) “⁹ If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

Of all the weapons in the devil's arsenal (and there are many), it is likely that his most used weapon is deception. Jesus called Satan in **John 8:44b (NASB)** "...for he is a liar and the father of lies." The first sin came into the world as the result of deception. Satan told Eve in **Genesis 3:4-5 (NASB)** ⁴ "You surely will not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Not only is Satan the great deceiver, his angels, his army – the demons – are deceivers. **2 Corinthians 11:14-15 (NASB)** ¹⁴ "No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds." Evil malicious demons deceive by coming as servants of righteousness while they are actually servants of the unrighteous one! The Bible speaks of demons and their teaching in **1 Timothy 4:1 (NASB)** "paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons". Satan and his demons do much of their devious deceiving work through false teachers. Therefore the New Testament is chocked full of warnings and commands concerning false teachers. Here are a few examples. First, Jesus said in **Matthew 7:15 (NASB)** "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." Paul said in **Acts 20:29-30 (NASB)** ²⁹ "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Peter said in **2 Peter 2:1 (NASB)** "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." John said in **1 John 4:1 (NASB)** "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Jude said in **Jude 1:3-4 (NASB)** ³ "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. ⁴ For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Because of that constant danger of false teaching coming from false teachers, one of the primary tasks of Elders is to protect the flock from false teachers. On the wall outside my office there are three pictures to remind me of my task as an Elder, a Pastor, a shepherd of this flock. One picture shows the shepherd leading the sheep to good pasture. The shepherd is to feed the sheep. The second picture shows the shepherd comforting and helping the sheep. The third picture shows the sheep at night being attacked by a vicious wolf and the shepherd with his rod is in combat with the wolf. Before Paul warned about the false teachers that he compared to savage wolves coming into the church at Ephesus, he said to the Elders in **Acts 20:28 (NASB)** "**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

While false prophets and teachers have plagued the church since the first century and plagued the Jews in the Old Testament there is coming one who makes all previous false teachers pale in comparison. This is the one we are looking at in this message. He is called "the false prophet" in Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. We will see as we go on in Revelation that it will be through the doings of this false prophet called here the second beast or literally "another beast" that we see a one world government, a one world religion, and a one world economy.

Before we dig into this text, let me review what we learned about the first beast in Revelation 13:1-10. The first beast is called by many names and given many descriptions in Scripture. He is "the willful king" in Daniel 11:36. He is "the man of sin" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. He is "the son of perdition" and "the wicked one" in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. Here in Revelation 13 he is the beast, but in 1 John 2:18 he is called "the antichrist". The first beast, the antichrist, is likely indwelt by Satan, and with Satan's assistance, he rises to become the world ruler, putting the old Roman Empire together again. We saw that his popularity will be phenomenal. He will be an intellectual, oratorical, political, economic, and military genius. We saw that half way through the great tribulation he sets himself up as god in the rebuilt Jewish temple and

demands that he be worshipped. The second beast, the false prophet that we are focusing on tonight is the helper, the key aide to the first beast, the antichrist.

Remember how we have talked many times about Satan's desire to counterfeit all that God does or is going to do? In the end times he presents the counterfeit Trinity. The dragon, Satan is the anti-God; the first beast is the anti-Christ, and the second beast (false prophet) is the anti-Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is to cause believers to love and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan will cause the first beast to be worshipped by earth's inhabitants through the work of this anti-Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul said of this time in 2 Thessalonians 2:11 that during the tribulation, God will allow those who have rejected the truth to be deceived by the antichrist and buy in to a one world government, a one world religion, and a one world economy. The primary one doing the convincing will be the false prophet.

I. His Deceptive Appearance (V11)

The word "another" means another of the same kind. He has the same heart, same goals, and same power as the first beast – the antichrist. Some view this second beast as an institution, a form of government or an ideology. But he is spoken of as a person in **Revelation 19:20 (NASB)** "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." It is persons, not institutions or ideologies that will be cast into Hell.

While the first beast came up out of the sea (13:1), picturing the nations in turmoil, the second beast comes from the land. Some have interpreted that as meaning that he came from the land of Israel and thus is Jewish. He may be an apostate Jew, but I don't think we can be certain that this is what "coming up out of the earth" means. While the sea is considered foreboding and mysterious, the land was less foreboding and mysterious. This may mean that the second beast is calmer, more peaceful, and more subtle in his deceptive work. A third possibility is that out of the earth may be referring to the abyss that we looked at in chapter 9. The abyss or bottomless pit is the place where an especially powerful and evil group of demons were incarcerated. This second beast will perhaps indwelt by an especially evil demon spirit.

I want to focus on the deceptive appearance of this second beast. Notice that he looked like a lamb, but he spoke like the dragon – the devil. The symbolism here is that while he appears harmless like a lamb, under the sheepskin is the voice, the heart, the motives of the dragon (Satan). The voice of the dragon tells us that he is deceptive and a liar (John 8:44). In spite of his calm, easy-going manner, this man is indwelt by a powerful demon and as we will see, he is Satan's instrument to bring the antichrist to a place of power and to assure that he is worshipped instead of the one true God. Looks and mannerisms can be deceiving. Carefully listen to their message. I have seen many false teachers who seem so calm, so caring, so compassionate who were wolves that appeared to be lambs.

II. His Dynamic Appeal (V12)

What is the means that this second beast uses to deceive people and to cause them to worship the first beast? It is religion. No political system alone can win the following of the people. There must be a religious fervor behind it. That is true even of communism. The communists made a religion out of their devotion to materialism, atheism, and humanism. In the days when Aaron and Moses stood before Pharaoh, he had his Jannes and Jambres who were the religionists of Egypt. Ahab and Jezebel were able to accomplish the evil they accomplished by the prophets of Baal. In today's culture, no Arab political leader can stand without the holy men of Islam. The false prophet's mission will be to use all means available to him to cause "the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast". (V12b) As we saw in the last message, to worship the beast is to worship Satan who indwells him. Satan has always desired worship. The reason for his rebellion was stated in **Isaiah 14:14 (NASB)** "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." He constantly desires to divert worship from God to himself. In the tribulation, mankind will worship the beast because mankind is inherently religious. When we were created, we were hard-wired for worship. Even atheism is man worshipping

himself. When man refuses to worship God become man, they will end up worshipping the one who is man seeking to make himself God.

The second beast, the false prophet causes earth dwellers to worship the beast who was miraculously healed of what seemed to be a fatal head wound. What we will see later on is that the false prophet is establishing a one world religion. We already see the seeds of that sprouting and growing. The Unitarians have a bumper sticker that you may have seen. It is the symbols of the many world's religions all put together to spell "coexist". The question I have when I see that bumper sticker is, "What do you mean by coexist?" If it means to stand for freedom of religion and show respect even in our disagreement, then I'm all for that. If it means to come together to worship and pray together, I'm not for that. There is a different god in Islam. There is no god in Buddhism. There are hundreds of thousands if not millions of gods in Hinduism. There has been a move on for a combination of religions for a long time. I found a quote from an article written several years ago. It said: "The secretary-general of the United Nation's Millennium Peace Summit thinks that all religions apples fall from the same tree and all are equally delicious. At a recent international meeting, he told 1,000 delegates that religions need to accept the validity of all religions or else it will be difficult to attain world peace. Recently the notion has emerged that the pathway to peace necessitates the unification of religions. The Universal Religion Initiative (URI) recently convened with 300 people present representing 39 religions and signed a charter, which officially launched the movement. The goal is that there will come a day in which 'religious people will no longer insist on a single truth'." [Article, "U. N. Faithful Eye Global Religion" by James Harder, *Insight*, October 2-9, 2000, Volume 16, No. 37]. My only point is that we are seeing the movement toward a one world religion that the false prophet will bring to fruition. Under the false prophet, the one world religion will center on worshipping the antichrist.

III. His Deadly Approach (V13-18)

How is this lamb who sounds like the dragon going to fulfill his task of bringing virtually the whole world to worship the antichrist?

A. His Power (V13-14)

The false prophet will gain a hearing and use that to deceive people to worship the antichrist (first beast). How does he gain a hearing? It will primarily be through performing miracles. Learn this; Satan has the power to perform miracles. **2 Thessalonians 2:9 (NASB)** "that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders". Don't be too impressed over what seems to be a miracle. I believe that most of this false prophet's "miracles" will be deception, but I know that there is supernatural power in the satanic realm. The word "signs" in verse 13 is the same word used to describe the signs that Jesus performed. Verse 13 gives an example of his supernatural signs. He makes fire come down to earth from heaven. That seems to be imitating Elijah in 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 1 and what the 2 witnesses did in Revelation 11. The earth dwellers are so blind that they rejected the fire called down on the earth from God's two witnesses, but they will be deceived by the false prophet's fire that comes down from heaven. Jesus warned of this very thing in **Matthew 24:24 (NASB)** "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." Satan's power to perform signs is certainly less than God's power. For example with the plagues, the demonically empowered Egyptians could duplicate on a small scale the first two of the plagues, but they had no power to stop the plagues. After the second plague, they could no longer duplicate them. Why does God allow demonic power? **Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (NASB)** ¹ "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, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." It is a test! Are we going to be wowed by power we can't explain or are we going to walk in God's truth even when things happen that we can't understand?

That phrase in verse 14, “those who dwell on the earth” is a phrase we have seen before in Revelation. It speaks of unbelievers. Those who have been born again during the tribulation will not be taken in by those signs from the false prophet. The false prophet then motivates these unbelievers to make an image of the beast – the antichrist. Human dictators all have such large egos that they have statues of themselves erected. This idol will be placed in the rebuilt Jewish temple and people will be required to worship it (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

B. His Program (V15-18)

How is this ability to speak given to the image? We certainly can't be sure, but it doesn't require a miracle. I recently saw a short video of Celine Dion at her current age singing a duet with Elvis Presley who died in 1979. It was done with holograms, but it really looked real! I think the image talking will be trickery – perhaps robotics or holograms, but gullible people will be wowed by it and worship the image of the beast. Another motivation to worship the beast is that those who refused were killed. The false prophet is now acting like the dragon.

In verses 16-18 we see how the false prophet will bring about a one world economy. From a purely human standpoint, if a person can control commerce, he can control the world. This false prophet gets a satanically originated scheme to control world commerce and thus rule virtually all the world. To participate in commerce (that is to buy or sell) all that is required is to receive some kind of mark that will be given to those who swear loyalty to the antichrist. Just as the 1st century Christians would not swear their loyalty to the Roman Caesar by bowing before a bust of the Caesar and confess “Caesar is lord”, even so the Christians in the tribulation period will not receive this mark. Without the mark, they cannot buy or sell anything. The receiving of the mark is more than something like getting a social security card or some other document today. Receiving this mark will be tied to worshipping the first beast – the antichrist. **Revelation 14:9b-10 (NASB)** ⁹ “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

One Hundred years ago, to perceive of technology that would make buying and selling impossible without a “mark” would have been inconceivable. For our generation, this doesn't sound “far out” at all! We are quickly moving toward a cashless and even paperless culture. One reason we went to on line giving is because some families don't use cash or checks. They do debit and credit cards and automatic withdrawals from their account. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with that or that you are loyal to the antichrist. I am simply saying that the technology is already in place. I want to make it clear that no one knows what this mark of the beast really is. However, it is conceivable to us today more than any previous generation. One of the major problems today is identity theft and credit card fraud. One solution to that would be to standardize numbers and your body would then become the card. That could be done by a barcode that is tattooed on the shin that would be invisible to the naked eye. The most likely place for the code would be the hand or the forehead. To buy something all that would have to be done is to have the code scanned. An alternative would be a small computer chip placed just beneath the skin that could be read by a machine. We already have that technology in place! You don't need to avoid using technology for fear that you will have the mark of the beast. This mark will come with a swearing of allegiance to and worshipping of the beast. Those who receive this mark will know that they are worshipping the beast and giving allegiance to him. True Christians will refuse and likely be martyred.

I suppose verse 18 has caused more speculation and generated more weird interpretations than any other verse of the Bible. What is this number of the beast? It is 666, but what does that mean? I don't know and those who think they know don't know as much as they think. I don't think it is some deep secret. Here is what I believe is the best possibility. In Hebrew, there is an approach called gematria where the numbers have meaning. We know that 7 is the number of completeness or perfection. Six is the number of man. Man was created on the 6th day. Man is short of perfection (7). The number three is often associated with God. God is trinity – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The antichrist will be a man (6) claiming to be God (6 three times). He claims to be god, but he is still only a 6 – a man. Whether that is what the number means or

not, that is a true statement about the antichrist because it is taught elsewhere. Don't get caught up in figuring this out. When the time comes, those who are here who know the Lord will understand clearly what it means and know who the antichrist is and will refuse to worship him and refuse to receive his mark and will suffer rather than be disloyal to God.

CONCLUSION

This sobering passage is not intended to only fuel speculation about its details. It ought to motivate us to examine ourselves to be sure that we are ready for the coming of the Lord for His bride. There is coming a time of great tribulation. The first beast is real; the second beast is real, but Jesus Christ, God who became man is also real.