

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #31 — A Continuation of Lesson #30
3/21 /2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Thirteen — Part Four
The Anti-Christ

It is helpful for us to review some of the matters we have already seen in our study of Revelation thirteen.

First, the things before us are part of God's explanation of events taking place at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

Second, we realize that the term "**Anti-Christ**" describes a composite being, two individuals who yield the totality of their beings to Satan. The prefix "**anti**" in "**Anti-Christ**" can have one of two meanings. "**Anti**" can mean "**in opposition to**" or it can mean "**in the place of.**" The first individual, whom God calls "**the beast**" (Rev. 19:20), was presented in 13:1. He is characterized as being "**in opposition to**" Christ and is the "**beast rising up out of the sea.**" He is known as the **political Anti-Christ**. The second "**beast**" is presented in 13:11. He is "**Anti-Christ**" in the sense of being "**in the place of**" Christ and is seen "**rising up out of the earth,**" and he will be the one God calls "**the false prophet**" (Rev. 19:20). However, in a sense, both meanings of "**anti**" can be applied to each of these two evil individuals, for both of them oppose Christ and attempt to supplant Him.

These two individuals allow Satan to fill them with his presence, reproducing his nature, as he takes total control over them and Satan pours his power into them, enabling them to deceive and manipulate people into serving him. They then become his slaves and representatives in his rebellion against Jesus Christ.

Third, these two Satan-filled individuals, functioning under and joined with Satan, form a type of **unholy trinity**, a pseudo imitation of the true Trinity of God The Father, God The Son, and God The Holy Spirit.

Satan has long desired to take the place of God and has desperately tried to imitate God ever since he thought that he could supplant God. In Isaiah 14:13-14 God tells us about Satan's evil ambitions:

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Thus, having tried to deceive mankind with the crude tale of **Seminaris** and **Tammuz** (Lesson #30, page 4) as a pseudo imitation of the virgin birth of Christ and only partially succeeding by persuading some of the Jews to worship **Seminaris** and **Tammuz** (Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-5; Ezekiel 8:14), Satan makes one grand last attempt to imitate God with his version of the Trinity. **Satan**, his "**beast out of the sea,**" and his "**false prophet**" function as an **unholy trinity**, a poor and evil imitation of the Triune God. In Revelation 13:11 we come to the third participant in this evil, but powerful, effort to deceive mankind.

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Revelation 13:11 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.

As we come to verse eleven John tells us that he “**beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.**” Whereas the first “**beast**” arose out of “**the sea,**” representative of the restless humanity of Gentile nations, this second “**beast**” arises “**out of the earth,**” symbolically representing Palestine.

This second “**beast**” will be known as **the false prophet** and is the epitome of all false prophets. He will attempt to seduce men into worshipping and serving the first “**beast.**”

Satan seeks to take the place of God The Father; the first “**beast**” seeks to assume the place of God The Son, Jesus Christ; and this second “**beast,**” **the false prophet**, appearing in 13:11, seeks to imitate the role of God The Holy Spirit, but in some ways also imitates God The Son. He most definitely is a religious figure while the first “**beast**” is a political figure. It seems that even Satan is confused in his efforts to imitate God.

“...He had two horns like a lamb,” imitating Jesus Christ, the “**Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world**” (John 1:29). It's a crude imitation as can always be expected when a wolf tries to present himself as a lamb. However, we realize that such presentations are not new for Satan when we recall what Paul had to say in 2 Corinthians 11:13-14 about false prophets: **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”**

In spite of Satan's efforts to conceal the true identity of this second “**beast,**” the nature of Satan made itself evident for “**he spake as a dragon,**” i.e., what came out of his mouth revealed what he was like in his heart just as Jesus had pointed out when He said, **“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things”** (Matthew 12:35). It is always true that the words that flow out of a person's mouth reveal what is in his heart. Satan, the dragon, resides in the heart of the false prophet and thus he speaks evil words like Satan, deceiving men with lying illusions because that is the nature of Satan.

Revelation 13:12 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.

Revelation 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Just as Satan had done with the first “**beast,**” he now does with the second “**beast,**” investing all of his power so that this one is enabled to fulfill Satan's wishes and purposes

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Satan's purpose is made clear. The assignment of this second **"beast"** is to **"cause the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."** This is his assignment and, since he is energized with all of Satan's wicked powers of deceit, he will be very effective in deceiving those who **"dwell"** on the earth. We have examined the meaning of this word **"dwell"** and discovered that it refers specifically to people who are at home in this world, whose hearts are focused on earthly things, who love the things of this world. This was more fully explained in Lesson #30 on page eight where we referenced what God said in 1 John 2:15: **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,"** explaining that if a person is at home in this world, i.e., loves the things of this world, that such a person does not love God.

Also, in 2 Corinthians 4:18 Paul wrote, **"...for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal,"** indicating that a person who has given his life to Christ Jesus and allowed Jesus to come live in his life does not consider this world or the things contained in it to be of primary importance or permanent in his life. These two references teach us that people who belong to Jesus do not love this world nor consider themselves to be at home here. The things of this world do not have a strong appeal to them, satisfy them, or control them.

In contrast, those who **"dwell"** here, consider this world their home and make themselves vulnerable to the illusionary lusts presented by Satan and his emissaries. Such desires control the lives of those who **"dwell"** here and prepare them to be deceived by the illusions of Satan. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand how Satan is able to deceive them into worshipping an illusion presented by the **false prophet**. What they worship is not real. While only a mirage, it is what they have hungered for and prepared themselves to worship and serve. In James 1:14 God tells us that **"...every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed,"** warning us that the lust within a person's own heart is what makes that person able to be deceived by the illusions of Satan. What a person wants, Satan gives!

The phrase, **"whose deadly wound was healed,"** describes the illusion presented by Satan's representative which we discussed in Lesson #30. This expression, along with the ones found in verses thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, helps us to see the powerful influence and almost hypnotic power cast over those who **"dwell"** on the earth.

Revelation 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

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Revelation 13:14 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.

Revelation 13:15 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.

Telling us that **“he doeth great wonders”** reminds us of what we have already read in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 about the illusionary powers of Anti-Christ: **“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”** Even today many false prophets and preachers advertise their **“so-called powers”** to perform miracles. Many thousands respond to their advertisements, hungering for the sensational and sensual offerings presented by those who pretend to be God's representatives. In reality, they are representatives of Satan, preparing the hearts and appetites of the misguided and naive for the offerings of Satan during the **Great Tribulation Period**.

Their powers even include the ability to make what appears to be **“fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.”** When the False Prophet does this, it has not been many days since the **“Two Witnesses”** were actively prophesying with **“fire proceeding out of their mouths and devouring their enemies”** (11:5) and producing fear and awe on the part of those dwelling on the earth. Thus, the False Prophet shows that he too can produce fire. It also reminds us of the power exercised by Elijah on Mt. Carmel as recorded in 1 Kings 18:38. With Elijah it was real; With **Anti-Christ** it is an illusion. The purpose and result of the illusion is clear: to **“deceive them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.”** The illusion works in deceiving those who are hungry for such. We have already read in 2 Thessalonians 2:10 why God allows Satan to perform these **“wonders.”** He tells us that He allowed Satan to do these miracles **“because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”**

Many people profess to love God, but in reality, they love His miracles so that their hunger for the sensational can be satisfied. It is a hunger widely present in our world today. The prevalence of this hunger is easily seen in the crowds which are drawn to the illusionary images of religious figures often found on various objects such as sheets, walls and even cooking pans. When someone claims to have found such an image, crowds flock to the location hoping to receive some blessing from God. This same hunger is also be appealed to by churches that advertise healing and miracle-working services.

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Because of this hunger, it will be easy for the False Prophet to deceive them into worshipping **“an image”** which will be no more than an mirage or illusion appearing to have breath and life. Of course this **“image”** cannot be given life and breath, for neither Satan nor his representatives have the power to produce life in anything.

God wants people to love Him, not His power or His miracles. People with this same desire for the sensational were present in Jesus' day and He confronted this misguided hunger and refused to accommodate it. He knew that people wanted to use Him to satisfy their own sensual appetites and He will not be used by anybody. In John 2:23-25 we read about Jesus' response to those who hungered for His miracles instead of Him.

“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.”

Refusing to be used to satisfy such sinful desires, Jesus described the true nature of such people when He said, **“But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas”** (Matthew 12:39). Jesus clearly describes such a hunger as being evil and will not manipulate people with His supernatural powers by appealing to such appetites, but Satan gladly gives them what they want in order to manipulate them into serving him.

The joining of the secular ruler with the apostate and evil, religious wonder-worker forms a powerful team. Satan had given all of his power to the **“first beast,”** often called the Anti-Christ, and he allowed the **False Prophet** to exercise all of that power, which is inferior only to the power of God. The secular or political Anti-Christ provides the power and authority of a world-wide government while the False Prophet uses the power delegated to him to cause all those living on the earth to worship and serve the Anti-Christ. It is the fullest and most evil expression of what can happen when religion is joined to government that has ever been witnessed on this earth and is totally Satanic in nature.

The illusionary **“image”** seems to speak. Of course, this too is some form of illusion. With the technological advances we have already seen in our day, this is not a complicated illusion at all. It is not a far-fetched idea at all for Satan, with his powers and the technology now available, to enable this **“image”** to appear to be alive and speak.

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THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Much has been written about this **“mark”** of the beast with a lot of it totally specious and intentionally designed to sell books and frighten people. It has attracted attention like a magnet. Many people, who know nothing else about the Revelation of Jesus Christ, know of **“the mark of the beast,”** even though what they “know” is often incorrect and misguided.

The first, and most important thing that true followers of Christ today need to remember is that we will not be here on this earth when the events described in these verses take place. We will have been raptured and will be with Jesus in heaven, thus **“the mark of the beast”** will have no affect upon us at all. There is no need for the true follower of Jesus Christ to have any anxiety at all about this **“mark of the beast.”** We study it because we are studying what God tells us in this passage.

Revelation 13:16 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:

Revelation 13:17 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.

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The word that grabs our attention in verse sixteen is **“mark,”** thus making it necessary for us to understand both this word and its uses the best that we can.

First, it is a translation of the Greek word **charagma** (5480) and means **“an engraving, a scratching, or something stamped”** and is distinguished from its source word, **charakter** (5481) in that **charakter** signifies that the image corresponds to the original pattern (Hebrews 1:3) whereas **charagma** has a narrower sense indicating simply that something has been stamped or engraved.

Second, the word **“mark”** is used six other times in Revelation following this chapter.

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark** in his forehead, or in his hand,

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, **who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark** of his name.

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Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten **the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark**, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Revelation 16:2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and **there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark** of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, **with which he deceived them that had received the mark** of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and **which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads**, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

As we consider these six verses we immediately notice that, with exception of 15:2, each use of the word **“mark”** is to indicate the association with the Anti-Christ and the resulting consequences of that identification.

The reference in 15:2 is to those who have **“victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark;”** these are those who are in heaven celebrating after having been killed by the beast. Their deaths signify victory, not defeat. All that the **“beast”** could do was kill their physical bodies because of Jesus' victory over death, **“death has been swallowed up in victory,”** and consequently they have now left behind their mortality, that is all. The next time they appear, they are before the throne of God in heaven celebrating their victory over death.

The sole benefit of receiving the **“mark,”** if it may be called a benefit, is found in 13:17 in that, while the whole world is under that control of Anti-Christ, those who receive the **“mark”** are allowed to **“buy and sell,”** i.e., engage in normal commerce as determined by Anti-Christ. Those refusing the **“mark”** will not be allowed to buy or sell anything, even food. The extreme hardships falling upon the courageous believers who have been converted to Christ during the Great Tribulation and the ones who have pity and mercy upon them is the situation which Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25:35-40.

When the **“image”** **“speaks,”** it commands **“...all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.”**

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Those who have yielded the submission of their lives to Anti-Christ and Satan, to worship and serve him and gain whatever temporary, earthly benefits he has to offer, readily obey his commands spoken through the mouth of the "image." Their choice to receive his benefits also brings with it the curses of God. They will face a horrible future for God's Word tells us:

"...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and 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 ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:9-11).

According to Revelation 19:20 they receive such judgment from God because they allowed themselves to be deceived by the pseudo miracles of Anti-Christ which was made possible, as we have seen, because of their lust for those things offered by Satan and his followers.

Now, we come to verse 18, which gives us God's conclusion of this chapter and description of Anti-Christ. In this verse God tells us, we who have **"understanding,"** i.e., the ability to see things from God's viewpoint, that the Anti-Christ is a man. He is characterized by a number, **"Six hundred threescore and six."** Though God does not give us the identity of this person, which means that we should not speculate on what God has chosen not to reveal to us, God does give us this description which means that this individual presents the ultimate picture of one whose own self-efforts at self-righteousness fall short of what God requires.

Perhaps the message to be found in this is that the more one tries to succeed without submitting to God, the more one fails. It is similar to what God said through Paul in Romans 4:5: ***"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."***

The basic truth is simple. To be right with God, one must totally submit to God through Jesus Christ as Lord, Master, and King and make oneself totally dependent upon Him. Then, and only then, is God's grace made available to the sinner.

Self-effort, self-opinions and self-righteousness can lead only to self-damnation for their product is always rebellion against God. The more the ego is involved (Isaiah 14:13-14) the more evil one becomes and the harsher the damnation administered by God.