

Rise of the False Prophet (Rev 13)

Revelation

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Well, good morning to you. You know, we are in the pretty hot chapters in the book of Revelation, chapter 12 and 13. This is usually what people want to study the most when we get to the book of Revelation, these particular chapters. There's a lot of juicy information, a lot of scary things, for sure. I find them frightening and so I'd like to open up today with just reminding us all that the very fact that we have this in our Bible, the fact that this was written 2,000 years ago shows us who's in charge. I mean, God has told us what's going to happen in the future; he spelled it out in great detail right down to the people, what they do, where they come from. He knows because he has put this in his will. It's supposed to unfold and be fulfilled to fulfill God's perfect plan.

You might think, okay, if God can predict this, if he can tell us all these horrible things that are happening, he could stop it from happening. Well, why would he stop something that he wants to happen? He wants it to happen. Mankind needs it to happen. What God has foreordained will come to pass. You and I could very well be living in the days just that immediately precede that time. Most generations believed that, any generation that studied the book of Revelation would say, "It looks like we're knocking on the door of this." And maybe that's the way God wants it to be, where we all think that God could come at any moment because he could.

So when we look at this, we see two men in chapter 13 that are evil and you think, I mean, if you're a preacher like me, you go through it and you say, "Lord, how am I going to draw out any encouragement from this?" And the answer is simple: God has given this information to his people so that we will preach repentance in Christ, so that we who believe in Christ can rejoice that the days that God has told us about, we will not experience this. This is not for us. This is for a yet future generation and even if it should happen in our generation, the church of Jesus Christ is raptured, taken from this earth before any of these events unfold. There might be, however, some people in the crowd today, some people within the distance of my voice or other preachers who have preached and are preaching this, that are hearing it, though they're not believers but they're getting information that will help them when they, themselves, are left behind, when they will see they scoff today but when it happens they'll say, "I know exactly what happened. I know why I'm not there and I know now what to do." These passages in preaching these passage are very important.

Let's get a quick overview of what we saw last week, chapter 13, the dragon we know as Satan. Chapter 12:9 we're told that the dragon is Satan. He stands on the seashore. John sees a beast in 13:1 coming up out of the, note there, the sea. This word for "beast" is used for a mauling type animal, a harsh, violent animal, and this is one coming up out of the sea. It had 10 horns, seven heads, and on the heads were, on the horns I should say, were 10 diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. It doesn't look like a very nice creature. It's not. This is what we know to be the Antichrist. He will blaspheme God which means to slander God. On his seven heads are names that slander God. It's like a leopard, it's like a bear, it's got the mouth of a lion, and it has the power of all the nations that precede it, the sum total of their power, this man driven by the dragon himself, Satan, will rule, literally rule the world for a time, specifically 3 ½ years he will rule with this great authority. One of those heads John saw of the seven had been slain in verse 3, but the fatal wound, it wasn't just that it had been hurt, it was fatal, a life had been taken and yet the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast because it was made to live again. Is it an empire or is it a human? I think it's both. I think the human represents the raised empire, the empire represents the human, the empire is attached to the human ruler here. What empire has been revived? Ancient Rome of sorts?

We don't know, whatever it is, it's headed by a man who was once dead and has come to life and the whole world is amazed which I find ironic because we preach about Jesus Christ dead, risen from the dead and people scoff at us, "That's ridiculous. We don't believe that. We would need to see it to believe." Well, they will see with their own eyes what was dead and what comes to life and they will be amazed and they will worship, verse 4, the dragon that gives the beast his power and they will worship the beast saying, "Who is like the beast?" This beast in verse 5 was given a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, authority to act was given to him for 42 months, that's 3 ½ years. Note it was given to him. It was given. We see that over and over, was given. Who gave it to him? Well, the context tells us that it's the dragon that gives him his power and authority yet we know ultimately it's all given by God. God is giving this power, this authority for this wicked, violent ruler to rule the world. Why? Because he is, the whole overarching theme of Revelation is the chastisement of the nation of Israel.

They have been chastised, according to the prophecy given by Daniel in chapter 9:24-27, 70 sevens, often called 70 weeks, but it's 70 sevens of years, 490 years, 483 of which can be seen in history as having unfolded. In fact, we're told in the Daniel 9:24-27 prophecy in verse 26 that the 483 of the 490 years stops at the birth of the Messiah. Well, we know he was born. I shouldn't say the birth, at the day that the Messiah is cut off. We know when he was born. We know when he was killed. When does the next or the last seven years transpire? Well, Daniel 9:27 says it begins to transpire when a covenant is made with Israel. In Israel the last seven years. So we believe the last seven years of the 490 years that were decreed for Israel will begin when a ruler of the world rises up, signs a peace treaty with Israel, and there will be peace in the Middle East. Oh, there have been peace treaties, ceasefires in our day and age but no peace treaty, none where this great world ruler. We've seen Yasser Arafat, now deceased, sign something. He's not a world ruler. He was the leader of the PLO, Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the head of

Hamas, which means "violence; kill Israel." He's not the world ruler. He wasn't. We've not seen that guy rise up. We await that particular man to sign that treaty. Israel will rebuild the temple because they'll have peace and they can now worship in their temple again. That day hasn't happened. This is that man that we read about in chapter 13 and he will break this covenant that he writes, that he signs, I should say, at the beginning of the seven years. He breaks it in the middle which is exactly what Daniel 9:27 says, and this authority to act for 42 months, that's what that 3 ½ years is, the last 3 ½ years of the seven when he breaks that.

Verse 6, "he opened his mouth," he slanders God and his heavenly throne, "It was given to him," in verse 7, "to make war with the saints." People will come to know Christ during that seven years. The church will have been raptured and taken from the earth and yet we read about in Revelation 7 there's 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes that are sealed with the name of God on their forehead. They live, they preach, people come to know Christ. They die for coming to know Christ but they are saints. And it was given to this beast to have power over them and authority over them.

Verse 8 and, "All who dwell on the earth," by the way, that phrase, as I've said in the past, those who dwell on the earth, always in the book of Revelation depicts the unbelievers on the earth. It's not all-inclusive to include even the believers, it's those who dwell on the earth, they are those who will worship the beast. And they are, we see the caveat there at the end of verse 8, they are those "whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." That book of life God wrote before Genesis 1:1, writing down the names of his people who would come to know Christ.

He tells them in verse 9, "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." Then he says in verse 10 if you're destined for captivity, you go into captivity, if you're destined to be arrested, that is you're going to be arrested. And who arrests Christians? Is it your neighbor? Who is in charge of arresting people who are not living up to the standards? That's the government, of course. The government is the enemy. It's not yet the enemy in our country. It's getting close but it will be the enemy. It has been the enemy of Christians since Christianity began. They will be arrested, captivated, or I should say, taken into captivity with the sword. If it's your destiny to be arrested, you'll be arrested. If it's your destiny to be killed, you'll be killed. There's no point fighting it. God has ordained that this man rule the world and dominate it in the last 3 ½ years. The good news is that the 3 ½ years or 42 months, that's when Jesus returns so he has a very small, very limited time God has ordained for him.

John sees another beast in verse 11, this one comes out of the earth. He says, "I saw another beast." That word in Greek is "allos," means "of the same kind. It's not something completely different, it's another beast, another ferocious beast, it's of the same kind. It's coming up out of the earth. What's the difference? Why the earth and why the sea? Well, if we were to look, in fact, I'd like for you to if you'd like to, go over there if you know where it is, the book of Daniel. Daniel is the Old Testament counterpart of the book of Revelation, Daniel 7 where Daniel sees four kingdoms. Four kingdoms. He's reigning or I

should say Daniel is reigning actually, he was a Jewish boy around the age of 13 to 15 years of age who was taken captive out of his native Israel by Nebuchadnezzar the Great to Babylon. He was taken over to the city of Babylon and he was given their education, a new name. He stood strong and he stood tall among his fellow captives and Nebuchadnezzar loved him. He learned to love him because Daniel could tell him what he dreamt at night and what it meant, and so he put Daniel as his right-hand man and his three friends.

Well, around 553 BC, Daniel had a vision while living in Babylon. In chapter 7, it's the first year of Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, that's 553 BC. He sees there in verse 2, "Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.'" Well, the great sea is typically the Mediterranean. "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another." The four beasts are later interpreted here as the nation of Babylon, the nation that came after Babylon and that was the Medes and the Persians, the Medo-Persian empire, the third kingdom being the Grecian empire under Alexander the Great who left his four generals after that, hence the four-headed animal that he saw, and then he saw this fourth beast, one that was really strange, he didn't really know how to describe it. The other one was like a bear or like a lion or like here he says they were like a leopard and a bear and a lion, as I said, but this last one was made of iron with sharp teeth. It ruled the world. It ruled the world and stepped on everything with its iron feet.

But note here these four winds are coming up out of the sea. Out of the sea. Does that mean that Daniel saw a group of people and nations rising up out of the Mediterranean? No, really he means out of the sea of peoples, the sea of humanity. You see, there's only two kinds of people in the Bible: there are those who are Jewish or Israelite, Hebrew, that's all one, by the way; and then there's everyone else and they're called Gentiles. So out of the nations would be out of the sea of peoples would be out of the Gentile nations: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, that's who that last fourth empire was. Note when we go down to chapter 7, verse 17, of Daniel, it says, "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise," note that phrase, "from the earth." So although they're from the sea, they rule on the earth. In other words, they come from the sea of humanity and they are earthly empires.

Now let's go back to the book of Revelation so when we see that the first beast comes out of the sea there in chapter 13, verse 1, he would come out of, at least in my estimation, out of the sea of peoples, the sea of humanity. We don't know where he comes from per se but he's not a Jew. He's not from the nation of Israel. He's from the nations and he's probably a very unknown, a completely unknown person who comes up out of nowhere, as it were.

When we get to this next beast, he comes up out of the earth. Well, it is interesting to note, I did some reading on this in the past and kind of brought myself up to speed, is that the ancients believed because they did not rule over the sea as people do in our day where we go underneath the sea and scuba dive and have submersibles and we see things under the sea, huge and large creatures, it was a little bit more mysterious to the ancients and

the ancients saw any sea creature coming up out of the sea as far superior to anything terrestrial. So it could be that John is seeing the first beast out of the sea as far more powerful than the beast he sees coming up out of the earth and that's the case. In fact, you take your bulletin there, I've just compare them to in the first two bullet points in number 1 and A and B, the beast from the sea is the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist. He has seven heads, 10 crowns, seven diadems. Authority is given to him from the dragon. He's worshiped by the world due to the dragon. He blasphemes God for 42 months. He makes war with saints and overcomes them, false Christ with political aspirations. Compared to the one that we're going to look at today, he's inferior but he's the right-hand man to the first beast.

This one has one head and two horns like a lamb. I believe that coming up out of the earth, is it possible that this guy is a Jew? Or as the other one comes out of the sea of humanity and this guy comes up out of the nation of Israel? Perhaps. I don't know. I think it's certainly possible. It could also be whereas the first guy comes up out of the sea, no one knows where he came from, I think this guy because he's a religious leader, I'll show you as it flows, I think he's already known. He's already going to be known to the world. He's going to be like one of the false teachers of the day that we already know today, that draws the world to him with their 30,000 member churches who say nothing by way of feeding God's people. He'll be known. The other guy is unknown from the sea, this guy from the earth. I don't know for sure and no one does but that's my best guess.

John sees this one coming up out of the earth, another of the same kind, and note this, he had two horns. The other one had seven. He's like a lamb. Well, what do you think of when you think of a lamb? What's the first thing that comes to mind? Gentleness. A lamb is a gentle creature. It has no self-defense mechanism. It has nothing offensive about it. It's not a ram, it's a lamb. It's gentle. So he's going to have two horns like a lamb but the two horns are not going to be the ram, you know, it's going to be two little bumps. Oh, we look at those creatures and we say, "Aw." I don't but my wife and my daughter like the word "aw." It drives me crazy but, "Aw, isn't he cute?" That's what he's going to look like. You're going to look at this creature and say, "Aw, isn't he nice?"

He will be a nice man. Now if you've been here for any length of time, you know how I feel about nice versus kind. Nice is deception. Perverts are nice. People that would like to kill you are going to pose as being nice before they hurt you. Nice. Nice is never listed in the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit. Kindness is. Kindness comes from the heart. Niceness is how you manipulate your way. Cheryl and I were in Fredericksburg last year, I told you the story, and we were buying something in one of the stores and the lady was just so nice. She's checking us out and I just said, "Let me just thank you for your very kind demeanor." And I said, "You're a very kind person. Thank you." She said, "I know." And I thought, it just went out the window there. What do you mean you know? You're not supposed to know and if you do, you feign like, "Oh, what a nice thing to say. No one ever says that to me." "I know. I am a sweetheart. I have a really big heart and everyone likes me." That's the phony niceness and you go away thinking, "I really am a nice person and everyone loves me. Thank you, God, for making me so nice." This is the way this guy will be because niceness draws people, doesn't it? We say that about people, "Aw,

he's nice. She was nice." Get to know a person and move beyond nice and find out if it's actually kindness. If it's motivated to somehow manipulate you or if it's motivated by the love of Christ, big difference, isn't it?

Anyway that's what this guy's going to be, two horns like a lamb, "Aw, he's so cute." And he spoke as a dragon. Although his demeanor is that of gentleness and niceness, his words reveal his true character. That's what words do, don't they, what they say? The words of a dragon throughout these contexts in chapter 12 and chapter 13, the dragon is Satan. It's the devil himself. He speaks as the devil. He looks like a lamb.

He exercises all the authority of the first beast. Well, the first beast had authority over mankind, over all of humankind. By the way, this man here is called the false prophet from here on out. The false prophet. We see that in chapter 13, 16:13, chapter 19, chapter 20:10. He is called the false prophet so I'm going to call him throughout the false prophet. Also, the first guy, as you know, I've called him the Antichrist. We note throughout the rest of the New Testament which is all the pages that precede the book of Revelation, is we are warned about false prophets. Watch out for false teachers. Beware of them. There are false teachers and false prophets and there is one false prophet. There are antichrists, the letter that John writes, 1 John 2:18. There are many antichrists John says, but watch out for the Antichrist. There are many that are against Christ. There are many false teachers but there's one Antichrist with a "the" in front of it, that articular "the, the Antichrist and the false prophet." We are talking about not a false prophet here but the false prophet.

So we have a political ruler in the end-time, the Antichrist, the man of sin or the man of lawlessness Paul calls him in 2 Thessalonians 2, and he is the Antichrist, he is a right-hand man, a henchman, as it were. The false prophet, he exercises all the authority of the first beast in verse 12, which is I think what makes him his henchman, "I'll do your bidding." In his presence, he does this in the presence of the first beast, that is, the Antichrist. They're always together. They're this dynamic duo and when you add them to the dragon, you've got this unholy trinity.

He does this in his presence and note this second beast, he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. Remember I told you a minute ago those who dwell in it, he makes it. There are believers living in the last seven years of the tribulation. The church has been raptured but people immediately come to know Christ, some as I said at the outset realize, "Hey, what that preacher was saying must have been right because I showed up at the church Sunday and 90% of the congregation was gone. And I watched on the news today there's some kind of a peace thing going on in Israel and the Jews are celebrating. Maybe what the preacher was saying or what I read in 'Left Behind' was actually accurate." Perhaps, but this guy rises up, those who dwell on the earth is going to separate, it's going to be distinct from the Christians on the earth, but he makes the earth and those who dwell on it to worship the first beast. That means that this second beast, the false prophet, is a religious leader. He makes people do what is demanded of him by the Antichrist. It doesn't take much to make people worship things. You just have to

dazzle them a little bit and people take it like a fish latching on to some bait that's thrown into the water.

"Those who dwell in it to worship the first beast," note this, "whose fatal wound was healed." Well, there it is, there's the bait. "Hey, that guy was dead. We saw him come back to life. That's pretty good. That's the guy I'm going to follow." Well, again, we've been preaching that for 2,000 years about taking a man who was dead, except our Lord went willingly, and before he went to the cross, he showed and revealed to the world not only his powers but his ability to fulfill prophecies. He showed that he is God in the flesh and now all of a sudden people are going to see this charlatan and say, "Wow, he was dead and he came back to life. We're going to worship him."

Verse 13, "He performs great signs," that is the second beast. Great signs, that means miracles. He performs great signs. So the man that he is pushing, he's the religious leader, the Antichrist is the political ruler, so think about that, you've got a political ruler and his religious guy next to him; the religious guy is bringing all worship to him because he was dead and came back to life. So when he says here that they bow down or he performs great signs, I should say, the great signs are going to be him with the ability to perform even other miracles. Great signs in the Bible, Jesus performed them, the apostles performed them. 2 Corinthians 12:12 speaks of the signs of an apostle, of a true apostle. They're able to perform signs and miracles, something you and I wish we could do, right? Let me just comfort you by saying if you had the power to do great signs and heal the sick, raise the dead, no one would listen. That doesn't mean that everyone who hears what you do is going to somehow listen. They saw Jesus raised from the dead and they pressed on even harder to lie about it and make sure that people thought that he was stolen, not raised from the dead.

But this guy will perform great signs, so I think about the great signs in the Bible. They're not always done just by God or his apostles. If you go back, to say, Exodus 7 and chapter 8, Moses threw the rod down that God gave him and what happened to that rod? It became a snake. Well, the magicians who were there in the presence of Pharaoh threw theirs down, "Ours can become snakes too." That would have been an interesting show except that Moses' snake ate their snakes. So Moses turns the Nile to blood. Their guys rise up, the magicians in Egypt at Pharaoh's right-hand, and they show him how, "We can do that too." Later Moses brings frogs on the land as another plague and the magicians show Pharaoh, "We can do that too." Interestingly, on the third one with gnats, they couldn't reproduce the gnats. I don't know what it is about gnats and frogs. In other words, they're charlatans. If you've ever seen a good magic show, if you've ever seen David Blaine. We went to, yes, we went to Sin City once to see the Blue Man, of course, and we met a wonderful magician, he's name was Armando Vera, and we sat at a table, he brought us a table, we watched this guy do magic so anything he's doing is right there in front of us. I have no idea how he did it. I mean, how do you sign \$100 bill with my name on it and he peels an orange that's never been opened and there's that \$100 bill with my signature on it. How did that happen? That's just magic. Dazzling. Amazing.

The next magic show that we went to, that was the precursor to the big magic show, I got to share the gospel in the next magic show in Las Vegas, how about that? The guy was asking, he was before the show and this was a big theater too, I had to tell you this was not even in my notes to say or anything, but he was asking why people were there, you know? "Anyone here for an anniversary?" My wife threw her hand up. "Ah, how many years?" I don't remember what it was, 20 something. Hey, that's okay, you get beyond 20 and don't have to remember anymore. And he said, "20 years," or whatever it was. He said in front of everybody, 2,000 people, "What's the secret?" And I went, "Oh, ah, Jesus Christ our Lord?" How many times do you get to hear that in Las Vegas, right, in a magic show? Well, needless to say that shut down the talking to the audience time. It was time for magic after that. So that justifies me being in Vegas right, that I got to share the gospel.

But the signs in the past have been, people have seen them through the magicians and Pharaoh, we meet a magician in Acts 8 called Simon Magus. He is...in fact, turn over there. I'll show you a couple of places where you see great signs. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts. Acts 8 we read about this guy Simon. He was pretty well-known in this town in Samaria. Acts 8. I'm going to flip around a little bit here. I just want to show you this. These are good things to know where these are in your Bible. If you have a Bible with pages, flip there and find it. Acts 8. If you're in Romans, you haven't gone far enough to the left. If you're still in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, you haven't gone far enough to the right. Acts 8 where we meet this guy named Simon. Acts 8:9 says, "there was a man named Simon." By the way, Peter and John are preaching the gospel, I should say Philip is preaching the gospel, Peter and John will later join them. But Philip is preaching the gospel and he comes across this man named Simon the magician, verse 9, "who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria," people are astonished by magic, "claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, 'This man is what is called the Great Power of God.'" The end of verse 11, he "astonished them with his magic arts." Well, the good news is that Simon came to know Christ that day and was baptized, got into a little confrontation with Peter but I think Simon was the real deal. He came to know Christ. He repented from the magic so note here that he was astonishing people.

Look over in Acts 13, a few pages to the right. Paul and Barnabas go on a first missionary journey and they meet up in Paphos, on this island of Crete, actually they've gone beyond Crete here at this point. They meet on this island, the whole island as far as Paphos. Verse 6, "When they had gone through the whole island," that's Crete, "as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus," that would be "son of Jesus," Jesus being a common name because it was more Joshua than anything. He "was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them." So while Paul and Barnabas are preaching the gospel to this man of great authority, Sergius Paulus, this magician comes along. He doesn't like the gospel being shared on his island and it says he was "seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith," at the end of verse 8. "But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, 'You who are full of all

deceit and fraud, you son of the devil." Have you ever wanted to call somebody that? There's your biblical passage to do it. "You who are full of deceit person, and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

Magicians. Let's go back to the book of Revelation. We also see in Acts 16 there was a young girl who while Paul and Silas at this point were in Philippi, this young girl comes up to them and she's doing what would seemingly be a nice thing, she's telling everyone in Philippi, "These guys are preaching about the Most High God." The problem is she was possessed by a devil, by a demon, and there were men using this woman, who were using the demon inside of her to bring fortune telling, bring money through fortune telling to them. So Paul looks at her and casts out the demon, made the men mad who were using her for money but they were deceiving people as people are deceived today by magic, going to fortune tellers, crystal ball readers, palm readers. All of that is to say biblically and otherwise there are false signs. Beware, my friends, of what you see, how you interpret what you see. They've always been there.

This guy in the end-times comes down out of the earth and he has great signs. He performs great signs in verse 13, "so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men." Now what that tells me is that this isn't a sleight of hand guy. This is not a magician. This man really has miraculous powers. I believe that. I believe God has given him the ability to perform miraculous signs. Not all preachers do. I do. I think that the guy, man, the man really was dead and really came back to life because the devil has the power to raise to life because God gave him the power to come back to life. Remember God is pulling the strings here.

Fire is coming down out of heaven. By the way, this is the time when the two witnesses are in Jerusalem as well, the last 42 months, and they're breathing out fire to anybody who gets in their way. Some fire-breathers in those days, it's going to be an interesting day of which if you know Christ, you won't be there to witness it. But he makes fire come down out of heaven, much like Elijah, to the earth in the presence of men.

Verse 14, "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth." Again, those who dwell on the earth is a phrase for the unbelievers there. He deceives those who dwell on the earth "because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast." So you've got people, you know people today, it's amazing what people will listen to, the false prophecies they'll listen to, the false preachers and teachers they hear. Aren't you amazed at that? Some of the teachers that you see out there, you'll see videos of them and you go, "These are seemingly normal people," and you're listening to clearly a man who is hamming it up at best, who's telling you things that, I mean, could Joel Osteen take his message to Africa? Could he take it to Haiti and tell them, "Have your best life now"? I mean, if it doesn't fit everywhere, it's false. Could it be that Joel Osteen is that gentle looking lamb with the voice of a dragon that is the false prophet? Absolutely. The world already knows him, trusts him. It's people like that that if you are not privy to, aware of in the here and now, you will fall prey to them. This is not me bashing another human being and being rude, this is me warning you like I would warn my children, don't go play in

the middle of the street. There are cars out there that will run over you. "Dad, you don't love us. You will not permit us to play in the street." Don't do illegal drugs. "Dad, you don't love us. You don't want us to have fun or feel the effects of getting high on cocaine." No, I love you and so I'm warning you sternly don't mess with that, don't listen to these people. I wouldn't be a preacher worth my salt if I wasn't warning you about these fools that are all over our society and always have been, I might add.

"He deceives," don't be deceived, "those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast," he's doing this in the presence of the beast, "telling those," which is tantamount to commanding those, "who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast," that is, "the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life." Make an image to him. It doesn't necessarily say make an image of him but make an image to him. This image could be anything from a coin which Jesus even showed the image of Caesar on the coin when people were asking, "Should we give to Caesar?" Show me an image of Caesar. Or it could be a statue of sorts. You remember in Daniel 3, Nebuchadnezzar after Daniel gave him the prophecies, the interpretation in Daniel 2, he said, "Nebuchadnezzar, you are the head of gold." So Nebuchadnezzar, it went straight to his head. "Well, if I'm the head of gold, I should have a statue in my honor that's made of pure gold." So he makes this statue and he tells everyone, "Every time you hear a musical instrument, bow down in honor and obeisance to the statue." Well, at this point Daniel's three friends are the ones who are highlighted, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and they said, "We're not gonna do it." So people reported them, turned them in. They faced Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadnezzar says, "Is it true you won't bow down?" Yup, we're not doing it. "I'll give you one more chance." We're not doing it. "I will throw you into the fire and you will burn." Our God, Neb, is able to save us from such a fire. In fact, they even open up, they say, "O king, we don't need to say anything to you." I love their coy nature. "We don't need to say anything to you on this. Our God is able to save us, and even if He doesn't, we still ain't bowing."

Well, he gets all mad, heats up the furnace and those men, they don't burn, you know the story. Comes out and Nebuchadnezzar is once again impressed with Israel's God. Perhaps at the end this image that the Antichrist will tell the world to make to the beast will be something like that. Maybe it's a coin, maybe it's a statue. I'm guessing it's a statue. It will be, this statue, note this, in the rebuilt temple of Jerusalem. This is what's called the abomination of desolation. An abomination is something very offensive, desolation is that which is destroyed. So what is so offensive will destroy. It will be set up in the Jerusalem temple. Jesus says in Matthew 24:15, he's warning about this day and time and he's saying, "When you see the abomination of desolation where it ought not be, head to the hills. Get out of town immediately. Don't stay back. Don't even go get your coat, just go. You're in trouble if you linger." That's what this is, this image will be made.

Now I got to thinking this week more than I ever have about what it might be and I just surmise, I found myself in this daze often this past week because how many of you have Alexa in your home? I know it, it's okay, I think. I mean, I do. Just because I do doesn't mean it's okay. Or if you have a phone, your phone is listening to you, by the way. All you've got to do is say something you don't normally talk about and find an advertisement

on Google the next day. It heard you. It's listening. Or if you have a Macintosh computer, what is the symbol of Macintosh? It's an apple. So I started thinking, okay, this image, he says, he tells the people there it was given to him to give breath...no, I'm not there yet. He's telling those in verse 14 on the earth to make an image to the beast. Is it all who dwell on the earth or is it the unbelievers, all the unbelievers to make an image, or is he taking some unbelievers and they're making this image in Jerusalem? That's what I started thinking about. Does he mean everyone on the planet has to make an image? Is there the main image in Jerusalem and the rest of us have a little Apple or an Alexa of sorts? Again, I'm not saying Alexa is that, I'm not, it's just an indicator of what we might do. Maybe when the image talks and he makes it talk in verse 15, the little Apple in your house lights up, or maybe Alexa starts talking to you. Maybe you have to wire something together or make an actual image. Whatever it might be, he tells the people on earth to make an image, it's "to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life."

Note this, verse 15, "And it was given to him," that is the second beast, the false prophet, "to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed." So it speaks, it has breath, and it kills. Commentators have noted here that it says it gives breath, not life, which may mean that it's a robot or there's a computer. It's like the Wizard of Oz guy behind the scenes tapping into the computer and making the image speak perhaps. But the two witnesses got up, having been dead in chapter 11, verse 11, and they were simply given breath. My guess is that the breath here is also indicative of life. This image has life and it was given to this second beast, the false prophet, to give it that. It at least has this breath. I just think life is enraptured with the breath.

This is strange. This is a strange day coming but when people have already, they're already believing in the Antichrist, now it's just easy. Once you've been hooked, you go with it. "And it was given to him," verse 15, "to give breath to the image of the beast," note this, "so that the image of the beast would even speak." So as this image speaks, a statue, that's different than Nebuchadnezzar's. Nebuchadnezzar had an image, "Bow down to it or I'll kill you." But it's Nebuchadnezzar passing the judgment, not the image he made. Here it's the image itself that kills.

"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 as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed." So I started thinking about that. Okay, if there's one image, the one image of the beast and it's in Jerusalem, the abomination of desolation, you're going to have to be there to be killed by that image. What might that look like? Well, I don't know. I'm just guessing but my best guess is that once you have been on the earth and you have not taken the mark of the beast, by the way, which we'll read in the next few passages, because I believe you'll have to go up to the image and scan your tattoo, your brand mark or your chip or whatever it may be either on your right wrist or on your forehead, and if it doesn't scan, this image kills you. Does it gas you? Is there an electronic arm that axes you? I don't know. It says that it kills you. Your final judge when you will not fall in obedience to this beast will be death. By the way, we looked at that at the beginning here, or I should say, in chapter 13 when we looked at it last week where he says in verse 10,

"If your destiny is to be arrested in captivity, you're going to be arrested. If it's your destiny to be killed by the sword, you're going to be killed by the sword." You see, if you choose to be a Christian and maintain faithfulness to your calling, this is your fate. There is nothing you can do about it. God has ordained this. But, hey, let it be, right? If you're arrested at the beginning of the 3 ½ year time period, well, then you only have 3 ½ years. You might have been given a life sentence but you've only got 3 ½ years before the return of Christ. If you're killed, great. Death is good. It relieves us of this life of death and puts us into the presence of life eternal. I don't know why people hold onto this life so much. "Oh, I might die." Yeah, you might, you will, I promise you. I'm not a real prophet but I can tell you this, you're going to die and one caveat is if you're here for the rapture, so now I've covered myself here.

So this image causes the beast and the image of the beast to be killed if you don't bow down to it, and by the way, if you don't have the mark, you have not bowed down to it. Verse 16, "And he causes all," once again he's caused everyone up to this point, he has this power, "he causes all," note this, "the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves," that's going to be civil rank, you know, every class of people. Civil rank is going to be the small and the great, every class, rich and poor. If you have a lot of money, you're not going to be exempt. Free men and their slaves, every cultural human being, everyone, he causes them, no one has the ability to keep this from happening, he causes them "to be given a mark," the Greek is charagma, "a mark on their right hand or on their forehead," a mark, "and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark." So if you can't buy or sell, imagine that. There's no more cash. There's no more credit cards. No more traveler's checks. The only way you can go to the grocery store and buy your food is if you have this mark, whatever it might be. Maybe it's that code. Maybe it's a QR code of some sort. We use them now just to get a menu now, right? Put your camera up and get that and the technology is there. It's a piece of cake. In fact, they've been putting chips in animals, little tiny rice-sized chips in animals for years to locate them. It's a pretty good piece of technology, don't you think? If everyone had that chip in their right hand, we would never have another lost child. Every child, scan it. This child has been reported missing. This child was stolen at the hospital 20 years ago, whatever it may be. It's good technology, the problem is to take it means that you are giving your allegiance to the beast. Good technology or not, good technology will take you or that particular good technology will take you to a one-way trip to hell.

This man causes all people to be given a mark. You can't buy or sell, that means you can't do business. You can't eat. If you can't eat, what are you going to do? How long can you survive? How long will you go without eating? I can make it.... Have you ever been hungry? I mean, every morning I get up and say, "I'll skip breakfast." Every morning I'm lying to myself because I may not eat it at 6:30, I eat at like 9:30 when I can't go on. "I'm going to miss lunch today too. I'm going to do the fast." I mean, I guess I mean well but once I get hungry, things happen. I'm a pretty nice guy. Yes, I said nice guy, until I get hungry. I need my food. I've got to have my food. If I've been on a diet, I have fasted, I'll do the 16/8, you know, where you do 16 hours and then you give yourself eight hours. I have been successful with that but when it's time to eat at the eighth, when you get those

eight hours, oh, you'd better have planned out some lean fish or chicken because your eyes are not going, "I need some lean fish or chicken," as if there's anything other than lean fish. But the point being is chips and salsa is what looks good, fried chicken is what looks good. In other words, if you're anything like me, when you're hungry you do things you wouldn't otherwise do and if that hunger is prolonged, where are you going to go? To somebody with the mark of the beast, "Hey, will you give me some food?" Well, that scan is coming out of their bank account. Why should I take the number of the beast so that you can have food from my bank account when you won't take it? Why should I do that to you, do that for you? It will be a horrible way to die and he will have cornered the market on getting people to do what he wants because without it, you can't go do business and you can't eat.

"He provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark," now the mark is "either the name of the beast or the number of his name." Now let me stop there and say when do I think this happens? I think this happens at the midpoint of the tribulation. I think the Antichrist rises up at the beginning and he signs that treaty, the problem is the world is not going to know who he is necessarily. Those who have come to church and maybe not given their lives to Christ but have heard these messages will know. "Hey, wait a minute. I remember that crazy Lance talked about that, about some peace treaty."

He's the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:1 and 2, that comes in on this horse in this peaceful takeover. People think he's great and he signs this peace treaty and in the middle he breaks it, but at the beginning, we're going to see as this unfolds in verse 18, that God gives us a way or tells John, "Here's how to calculate that number," which I asked, why do you need to know the number? If you know who signed the peace treaty, you don't need to know the number of the beast, he's the beast. So here's the Lance Waldie interpretation: I believe the rapture of the church could happen at any moment. At any moment, there are no signs preceding it, it just happens. All of God's people who believe in Jesus Christ are suddenly gone. After that, we don't know the time period that comes between that time of the rapture and the signing of the peace treaty. It probably won't be long. It could be upwards of 3 ½ to 4 years. I believe it could be. If you're following our study in the book of Ezekiel on Wednesday nights, I'm going to get to why I believe that. It doesn't mean that I'm right but there's going to be a rapture and there's going to be a time before the signing of this peace treaty and I believe that once the church is gone, there's going to be a group of people during that time going, "I know what's happening," and they're going to thumb their way over through the book of Revelation and they're going to see things. Here's what the deal is: they know what's coming so they're going to be able to stockpile after they come to Christ, they're going to be able to stockpile their own food and maybe be able to survive because at the end of the tribulation there are believers who are alive and you wonder how did they live for 3 ½ years without food? They stockpiled it. They knew what was coming and they prepared themselves. Now by the way, during that time period, if you're one of those people stockpiling food, you can't keep it for yourself because when Jesus returns, Matthew 25:31 and following, he chastises all those who didn't share their provisions with those in need and says, "Because you didn't help those in need, you are the goats, and what you

didn't do for others, you didn't do for Me. Cast them into outer darkness." So whatever you're stockpiling will be for you, it must also be shared with others. This is just for those who are going to be here during that time.

So I believe this happens at the midpoint and those who have prepared themselves, who have come to know Christ and figured out, "Yeah, we know who signed that peace treaty. We know who he is. We know what he's going to do in the latter half of this seven year peace treaty. We're going to be ready." And so they are. I think that's how they survive it. So while everyone's is taking the mark, these people are not. Many of them will die before the tribulation is over.

So this mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name. So the number is associated with the name of the beast. Whatever the man's name is, that's his number. We don't know what this means necessarily. Verse 18 he says, "Here is wisdom." Now wisdom means you can't just figure out with common sense. "Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate," I want you to underline that word, "calculate." It means "to count." "Let him who has understanding calculate," count, "the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six." Here is the 666. How is the number of man 666? Well, if we weren't calculating we could just say, well, God's number we believe is perfect. Seven in the Bible if you do numerology which is a bit arbitrary to me, numerology seven on the seventh day, God rested, there's the seventh day sabbath, there's the seventh year of sabbath, there's the Jubilee sabbath every seven or 50th year after 49 years. Seven seems like a really godly number, right? Craig Bizzio(ph) number and that was, you know, great, or was it Bagwell? One of them. One of those guys. But that's arbitrary as I said. A number, is there a passage in the Bible that says God's favorite number is seven? No. Some could say God's favorite number is three, he exists as three, as one but three. That's arbitrary.

So people have surmised, well, man falls short of God's perfection. God is deity and he would be 777, man is 666. Okay, it's cute but no one had to calculate it to get there. This is a number by calculation. Others have suggested the Gematria. If you've heard of the Gematria, the Gematria is, I learned Hebrew and Greek when I was in seminary and when you learn Hebrew and Greek, if you survive it you know something of how to translate the Bible in Hebrew and Greek, but I never learned from anything Hebrew or anything Greek that numbers are attached to the letters. That's not the way God designed Hebrew. It's not the way Greek was designed per se, but those numbers or there are numbers that have been attached to particular letters of the alphabet. And we know it well, in fact, with Latin there are Roman numerals. Roman numerals. You see L's, X's, C's, M's, little i's. That's Roman numerals so we know from our own day that numbers can be converted to letters, letters can be converted to numbers.

Well, in Hebrew there was a system that was developed where the first nine letters of the Hebrew alphabet had the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Beginning with the 10th letter, it started with 10 and the 11th letter was 20, and the next one and on. So it goes 1-9, 10, 20, 30, 40, and then up to 100, 200, 300. If you arbitrarily attach these numbers to the letters of the alphabet in Hebrew or Greek or Latin, you can come up with the number of

someone's name. I found out that the numbers of my name are 247. So contrary to what some of you might think, I'm not the Antichrist according to the Gematria.

Well, this is what's been done for years. In fact, it was known in that day that the Caesar, although he was dead in John's day, John is writing under the Caesar named Domitian who reigned from 81-96. That's when Revelation was written. Nero, that maniacal Roman emperor who reigned from 54 to 68 was thought to be the Antichrist. Well, if you put his name together, if you call him Caesar Nero and change Nero from Nero to Neron which is a Hebrew word ending, you get 666. So you've got to do some manipulation to find 666 in that. None of that matters. It has nothing to do with past rulers. John, or I should say better yet, Jesus is talking about the future ruler of the world. Those who have any wherewithal in the beginning of the tribulation are going to know something. They will have missed the rapture and they'll know something about what's happening and the way they'll figure out that the Antichrist is actually the Antichrist is by calculating the number of his name and I don't know how they're going to do it. It takes wisdom. It takes understanding that will fit the context of that day.

They will know then. They will be able to spread it around. They will be able to prepare for the last half of that tribulation when they know they will not be able to buy or sell, when they know that they will be killed for not having this mark. We know from the end of chapter 12 that God hides the remnant of Israel for the last 3 ½ years. They're in hiding. God hides them himself. We know at the very end of chapter 12 where when the devil can't make war against God's people Israel, he goes out to make war with the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Those who are coming to know Christ, who are roaming on the earth preaching the gospel, who will not take the mark, they will be arrested and killed. And for those who escape, who will be there when Christ returns, they will be separated as sheep from the goats as Pastor Biff(ph) preached to us a couple of weeks ago from Matthew 25:31-46.

Well, what do you do with that? You go back and try to find numbers. You remember Ronald Reagan, a great President of the United States? Do you know what his middle name was? Wilson. Ronald Wilson Reagan, 666. Well, he wasn't, was he? Be careful. Be careful about attaching numbers to people from the past because it doesn't matter. There are lots of antichrists, John says, lots of people who oppose the laws and the grace of Christ, but there's one man in the end. That time has not come. That treaty hasn't been signed. If you're here when the treaty is signed, either we pretribulation rapturists are wrong about the timing of the tribulation or you just missed it but we will have wisdom to know who he is and what he is up to, and know then that we cannot rise up with our guns and start a redneck revolution like we would in South Texas. Those days are going to be gone when that guy comes on the earth. Our freedoms, folks, as much as we are loathing the day when they're gone, the United States is part of this planet. The United States will be part of the 10 nation confederacy. We will lose all our freedoms. It's going. You see that happening. It's okay to be angry at it but we have to sit back and say we will rise above this. We will rise above the political nature of our day because God has told us this is going to happen.

So if we're watching the precursors to it unfold, to God be the glory, amen? No redneck revolution when it happens. There will be no more guns. We'll be like Australia. And when they say, when it says here he will make people bow down, there will be no defense against it. That's why our founding fathers gave us the Second Amendment, by the way, to protect us from the government. That protection will be gone. We will do what the government says because the government, as always, has been the enemy of Christ and his people. Here we see it in plain terms.

What should we go away with today? The Antichrist, the beast, number, the false prophet. Go away knowing this: God is in control. He is the sovereign God over the universe. He wrote this before it's ever transpired. He knows what's going to happen. It's ordained in his perfect will to happen for his glory. We can be rescued from all of this because it's the wrath of God and God's people are not destined for his wrath by doing what? Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ who took our wrath on a cross. He took God's wrath on himself for you, for me. For everyone? Well, for everyone who professes to know and love him. He didn't just die so that everybody would be saved, he died so that we who receive him would be saved. Folks, don't miss that. Jesus did not die on that cross so that everyone would be saved, he died on that cross so that everyone who receives him as Lord, God and Savior would be saved, repenting of their sins, bowing to the Lord Jesus Christ who is in charge of the whole shebang. Ain't that beautiful?

Let's pray.

Lord God, may we give all glory and honor to You, withholding none for ourselves or anyone else. The world will rise up and call His people heroes as they do athletes or rock stars today. It won't be difficult at all, we can see, for people to follow these. But may Your people, may those who hear Your word educated with the truth, may we have that extra layer of protection not only knowing what's going to happen but praying that it would happen, praying as You told us to pray, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth just as it is in heaven. This we pray in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

As you go, may God bless you today.

You've been listening to a sermon by Dr. Lance Waldie, Senior Pastor of Harvest Bible Church in Cypress, Texas.



The Rise of the False Prophet

Revelation 13:11-18

- 1) There will be two men who rule the world at the end of days
 - a) Beast from the sea (aka, *the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist*)
 - i) Seven heads, ten crowns, seven diadems (13:1, 3)
 - ii) Authority from the dragon (13:2)
 - iii) Worshiped by world due to the dragon (13:3-4)
 - iv) Blasphemes God for 42 months (13:5-6)
 - v) Makes war w/ saints & overcomes (13:7)
 - vi) False Christ w/ political aspirations
 - b) Beast from the earth (aka, *the false prophet, 16:13; 19:20; 20:10*)
 - i) One head, two horns like a lamb (13:11)
 - ii) Authority from Antichrist (13:12)
 - iii) Causes folks to worship Antichrist (13:12)
 - iv) Performs miracles to deceive (13:13-15)
 - v) Forces world to take the beast's mark (13:16-17)
 - vi) False Holy Spirit w/ religious aspirations
- 2) The False Prophet will oversee worldwide worship of Antichrist
 - a) Demeanor of a lamb, mouth of the dragon
 - b) Will perform signs to deceive
 - c) Will order an image of the beast for temple worship (cf. Matt. 24:15)
 - d) Image will have breath of life, condemn to death (cf. 2 Thess. 2:9-12)
 - e) Will demand a mark for buying/selling