

The False Prophet, Part 2

📖 Revelation 13:11-18

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Turn to Revelation 13:11-18. We had to slow down in this section because there are so many prophetic passages all coming together here. What we've been seeing is that Rev 12 and 13 are very important passages in Bible prophecy. They introduce the three major players during the 70th week of Daniel. Satan in Rev 12. The anti-Christ in Rev 13:1-10. And the false Prophet in Rev 13:11-18. These three make up the counterfeit Trinity. Satan is the counterfeit of the Father. The anti-Christ is the counterfeit of the Son. The false prophet is the counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. And, as I mentioned last week, if there were no such thing as the real Trinity, then why does Satan counterfeit it? So obviously there is a true Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit.

Now the counterfeit Trinity gets more interesting because the Father loves Israel, but Satan, the anti-Father, hates Israel. The Son came to rescue Israel, but the anti-Christ tries to destroy Israel. And the Spirit points to the Son, but the false prophet, the anti-Spirit, points to the anti-Christ. And what is going to happen in the future 70th week of Daniel at the midpoint, is Satan will be cast out of heaven to earth. The anti-Christ will receive some kind of death wound. Satan will rescue him from dying (listen to last week's lesson). The anti-Christ will kill the two witnesses. He will take over the Temple and commit the abomination of desolation. That is the sign for the believing Jews in Judea to flee to Petra. The anti-Christ will try to destroy them but will be unsuccessful. Then he will set out to destroy other Jews and believers on the earth. He is the center of the one world government. That's 13:7, "It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." He has a sidekick in 13:11, the anti-Spirit, who is also known as the false prophet. The false prophet is his propaganda machine. He is like the anti-Christ but he's not as powerful as the anti-Christ because he has only two horns, whereas the anti-Christ had ten horns. Those ten horns are ten kings who he will govern or rule over, that's the one world government. The false prophet has two horns and one represents power over one world religion and the other power over one world economy. As far as one world religion, he's the one who is going to point the world to worship the anti-Christ. 13:12, "And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast." As far as one world economy, he's the one who is going to force the world to take the mark in order to buy and sell. 13:16, "he causes the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on

their right hand, or on their forehead, and that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark." So he's over the one world economy and the one world religion while the anti-Christ is over the one world government, and behind all of it is Satan, the counterfeit Father.

Now there was so much here I couldn't get it all before you in one sitting, so let's finish it today. In verse 11, this other beast has two horns **like a lamb**, and some think that because Jesus is the Lamb of God, that this individual is the Messiah. But it's clear that he is not the Messiah because he will not point to himself as the object of worship, but to the anti-Christ. The reason he is compared to a **lamb** is because a **lamb** has two horns. And so obviously in view is a male lamb, which is a ram, and the two shofar horns, representing his power over the economy and religion. As far as his voice we are told that **he spoke as a dragon**. The dragon is Satan and he spoke as Satan, that's the point. And how does Satan speak? Read Gen 3:1. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." The word "crafty" means "cunning," "clever." He's a smooth talker, very seductive in speech, and he led the first woman to ruin. 2 Cor 11:14 says, "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light." Some think the serpent in Genesis was clothed in light, that he appeared to be a good angel, but he used cunning and deceptive speech. And the main idea in this section is that the false prophet is very cunning in word and deed. Verse 14 tells us **he deceives those who dwell on the earth**. And we're going to see his deceptions today. These are very real and very strong deceptions.

In 13:12 **He exercises all the authority of the anti-Christ in his presence**. He has to be in the presence of the anti-Christ to exercise the authority of the anti-Christ. And where did the anti-Christ get his authority? 13:4 tells us, from the dragon, who is Satan. So Satan is really exercising his authority through the anti-Christ, whom he personally indwells, and for him to exercise his authority through the false prophet, he has to be in the same vicinity as the false prophet. So we'd say that if the anti-Christ leaves the area then the false prophet loses his power, and that's because Satan is limited.

Now what he does first is in the religious sphere. He's the prophet of the one world religion. **And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed**. He directs them to worship the anti-Christ. And the mention of the **earth** is what leads us to think this is global in scope, although the word could be translated "land" and refer to the land of Israel. And upon reflection I think both are good, but the whole earth is better, because 13:7 mentioned "every tribe and people and tongue and nation" and then stated in verse 8, "all who dwell on the earth will worship him." So it seems that this is global in scope, though the focal point of world events will be the land of Israel and Jerusalem. Now in 13:12, how he makes or persuades the whole earth to worship the anti-Christ is clarified in verse 13.

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. Now he can only do this in the presence of the anti-Christ. But look what he can do, **great signs**, not just signs, **great signs**. These are powerful **signs**. The word **signs** is the same word used of Jesus' miracles, it's *σημεια*, so these are genuine signs, and they are meant to authenticate the false prophet as the true Christ,

whom he will claim is the anti-Christ. I would like to see some of these **great signs**, and we have a description of some of them here, one of them in this verse is **that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth**. Now who did this before? It was an event at Mt Carmel when the Baal prophets were flooding the northern kingdom and God sent Elijah to have a contest with them. So the false prophet will duplicate the miracles done through Elijah. And I find this very interesting because Satan always duplicates God. Satan is the one doing this through the false prophet, but Satan is never original. God comes up with all the good ideas and Satan just duplicates them. He's a copycat. There's nothing to him. But he will do what Elijah did in order to convince men to worship the anti-Christ. That is a **great sign** because it is something that a true prophet of God once did, but he is not a true prophet of God. His words are what will give him a way. He speaks as a dragon. The people living in that time will need to listen to what he says, not watch what he does. If they just watch what he does they'll be deceived into worshipping the anti-Christ.

So let's take a moment to see the test of a prophet in Deut 13. Jesus said in Matt 24:11 and 24 that the 70th week of Daniel would be characterized by false prophets who would show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. There will be many, not just one false prophet. And Zech 13 agrees. But this one will rise to the top of the heap and he will do things that are so astounding that the believing remnant of Israel will look at this and say, is this the Messiah, or is this the one who points to Messiah? Now I state emphatically that signs, miracles and wonders don't prove anything. I can do a sign and turn water into wine and that proves nothing. I can walk on water and that proves nothing. I can make fire come down out of heaven and it proves nothing. You say, that's wrong. Jesus did those things and they prove something. No, they don't. Now here's why. Deut 13:1. "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you." So is this a true sign or wonder? Absolutely. But what does the rest of the verse say? "saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³you 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." Is he a true prophet? Do signs, miracles and wonders prove anything? Not by themselves. What do they have to be joined with to prove something? Truth. Without truth they don't prove anything. So in Rev 13:13 you have an individual doing **great signs**, but the issue isn't the **great signs**, is it? It's what he's telling them to do. He's telling them to worship the anti-Christ. So why is he a false prophet? Because he's a liar. He's telling them to go after another god.

Now 13:14 is where he is telling them to worship the beast. And this is one of the most interesting verses, because it mentions another **great sign** he will do. **And 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**. The world sees the **signs** and it's enough for them. They buy into it. They're deceived. This is all satanic. And look what he tells them to do. **Telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life**. Now this is an **image** of the anti-Christ, because while it says here **to the beast**, it says in verse 15

of the beast. So it is to him or for him, but it is also of him. And you should know that where it says of the anti-Christ that he **had the wound of the sword and has come to life**, that the verb **has come** is not in the Greek text. It simply says, **who had the wound of the sword and has lived**. That supports what I've contended, that he received a death wound, but he did not die, somehow Satan intervened and kept him from dying. So the false prophet tells them to make this **image of the beast** and this is the abomination of desolation. This is what Jesus said that Daniel said would be placed in the holy place in the Temple at the midpoint of the 70th week. So, obviously, the two witnesses are not there. Their function is in the temple of God and around the altar and they control that area during the first half of the 70th week. They're killed by the anti-Christ at the midpoint. And here the false prophet is instructing the world to **make an image** of the anti-Christ to place in the holy place. Now who in the OT told the people to make an image? It was right at the base of Mt Sinai while Moses was up on the mount receiving the ten commandments on stone. Aaron. Aaron told the people to bring all the gold and silver and they fashioned a calf. Then he said, worship this god who brought you up from the land of Egypt. So it's a very interesting similarity to what Aaron did and who was Aaron? Moses' prophet. Moses was a messiah, a deliverer, and his prophet was Aaron. The anti-Christ is a false Christ, and his prophet will be this false prophet. But Satan is following this same pattern. He's counterfeiting. So looking at these verses we see that during the first half of the 70th week there is a tribulation temple, there is a tribulation altar, there are tribulation sacrifices, all under the supervision of the two witnesses; then the anti-Christ puts a stop to that at the midpoint, and in place of that the false prophet has them make this image or idol of the anti-Christ to put in the holy place.

Now that's all interesting, but 13:15 is even more interesting. **And it was given to him**, given to 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**. When they build this **image**, which is the word *εικων*, from which we get 'icon,' it's inanimate, because it's just made out of wood, stone, gold or silver, whatever it's made out of, it's like all idols of the past, not alive, but dead. That's why the Bible, in idolatrous contexts, always refers to God as "the living God." It's a contrast with the idols, which are dead, vain imagination. So here is this dead idol they build, but then it is **given breath**. The Greek word for **breath** is *πνευμα*, which is "spirit." We would say this is a **great sign**. A dead, inanimate object coming to life. This is something the world has never seen. The thing is able to **even speak** and somehow kill people who **do not worship** it. I don't know how Satan does this, but it does seem that Satan is the source because verse 12 said that the false prophet can do great signs when in the presence of the anti-Christ, and the anti-Christ is indwelt by Satan. Now some explain this as just sleight of hand, magic tricks, but killing people is not magic tricks. Something real will happen here. Others explain it by ventriloquism connected with demons. There are examples in Scripture of ventriloquist demons speaking through people. But something more is going on here because this is a dead idol that came to life. Still others explain that it's some kind of robot. Not only does that not agree with the description in verse 15, but that kind of technology has been around for over 50 years and would not be shocking if that method was employed. Others use one of these explanations and add a comparison with the statue that Nebuchadnezzar

had built in Dan 3:5-6. They argue that if one does not worship this image of the anti-Christ then they will be sentenced to death. But that's not what the text says. And we must conclude that the signs described here are the ultimate signs ever done by Satan through a human. It's therefore, probably best to simply say that we don't understand exactly how Satan can do this, but in some way he allowed to do it.

Turn to 2 Thess 2:8. This is another passage that discusses the anti-Christ and the signs and wonders that will take place during this time. Interestingly it doesn't discuss the false prophet. As far as I can see, he's only mentioned in Revelation. So the lawless one here is the anti-Christ. Verse 8, "Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false..." It seems then, that God will send upon those who do not love the truth so as to be saved, a deluding influence, so that they will believe these false signs and wonders done by the false prophet in the presence of the anti-Christ, and that they are all accomplished by Satan. So the image of the beast that the world constructs does not just appear to have **breath**, and it does not just appear to **speak** and it does not just appear to **kill as many as do not worship it**; it actually has **breath**, does **speak** and does **kill**, but it's not true because it directs the world to worship an idol, someone that is not God. And no matter how great the sign, if the prophet performing it does not point people to worship the one true God, that prophet is a false prophet.

Now all of that, from 13:12-15 is discussing the one world religion, headed by the false prophet. It is a religious system that will begin at the midpoint of the 70th week. It has its worship center in Jerusalem in the tribulation temple. It is based on the counterfeit death and resurrection of the anti-Christ. It's object of worship is an image of the anti-Christ set up in the holy place of that temple. It is animated by Satan who gives it the ability to speak and to kill those who do not worship it. And all of this will be real, but it is a deception that they will believe because they did not love the truth so as to be saved and God is sending upon them a deluding influence that will set them for judgment. That's the one world religious system.

In 13:16 we come to the one world economic system that will be added to the one world religious system and the one world government. And the world is presently racing toward this one world situation very quickly and it will become a reality at the midpoint of the 70th week. In 13:16 we're told that the false prophet **causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name.** The point of verse 16, **the small and the great, rich and poor, free and slaves** is to say every class of men will be required by the false prophet to take this **mark**. It will be a universal requirement. The point of verse 17 is to show that the mark will be required **to be able to buy or sell**, that is, engage in commerce. You won't be able to buy anything without it. That's why

during the second half of Daniel's 70th week, life will become very difficult for those who do not take the mark. They will literally be cut off from society because society is based on economy and if you can't buy or sell anything then you are ostracized from society.

As far as the scenario, verse 15 indicates that the situation will be that you must be taken before this image and given the opportunity to worship and if you do not worship then the image kills you immediately, and if you do worship then you receive the mark of the anti-Christ. So there will be a lot of pressure to worship. And people who do not want to take the mark will have to go underground, because if they are seen in the open without the mark they will be arrested and sentenced to go before the image. So in order to survive a complex underground system will develop and the anti-Christ and his cronies will have their armies searching for them.

Now what the **mark** is exactly, is difficult to tell, and speculations abound. The Greek word is *χαραγμα* and refers to "a mark that is engraved, etched, branded, cut, imprinted." It was used in the ancient world of a brand that was put on horses, for stamps that were placed on documents and for impressions on coins. Apparently, it will be some kind of emblem that will be worn by the religious followers of the anti-Christ.

The location of the emblem in verse 16 is **their right hand or on their forehead**. This shows it is not an invisible emblem. Both locations are highly visible locations and the purpose is for the emblem to be readily visible. In the past it has been common for soldiers, slaves and religious people to take some kind of mark or branding that signified they belonged to their owners. The mark of the beast, therefore, signifies that they belong to their owner, the beast, and they are loyal to him.

Now without that mark, verse 17 says **that no one will be able to buy or to sell**. So that mark, which is highly visible, will be required to engage in commerce. It's not anything like a credit card or a debit card or anything that is implanted in the hand or forehead that contains all of your medical records or can keep up with your whereabouts. It is simply a mark, probably branded or etched on the **right hand or forehead**, that qualifies you to make a purchase. And without it you will simply be sent away to the authorities to go and stand before the image of the beast.

Now what will this emblem be? It's very difficult to tell. When you read the Greek text it looks like this, "the one having the mark the name of the beast or the number of his name." Some have translated it like the KJV, as if it is one of three things; 1) the mark, 2) the name of the beast or 3) the number of his name. Others have translated it like this, "The one having the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of his name, as if it is one of two things; 1) the name of the beast or 2) the number of his name. I think it's best to see it as the latter, as either the name of the beast or the number of his name, but I wouldn't dogmatically exclude the idea of some kind of emblem. It's easy to understand what **the name of the beast** is, that's just his name written on your right hand or forehead, but it's more difficult to understand **the number of his name**. What's **the number of his name**?

Fortunately, verse 18 gives us some help. **Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.** But even here we are riddled with difficulty. Stedman says, in the original Greek it does not say **the number is that of a man**, but **the number of man**. He says, "The clue is in the line, "for it is man's number." It doesn't say, "for it is a man's number." It is *man's* number. There's a big difference. The number of the beast is not a number associated with a particular individual. This number is a symbol that reveals the *character* of the beast. It reflects the claims and actions and lifestyle of the beast." In this view, the man who has understanding would not be doing a numerical calculation, but a character evaluation. This is possible grammatically, but not necessary. The Greek language doesn't have an indefinite article. So to argue on the basis of an English translations absence of it is a very weak argument. But if it is right, what the view would be saying is that the anti-Christ will be identified by one who recognizes his character as that of the anti-Christ. This would require a good understanding of the character of his forerunner, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, as well as all the biblical texts that describe the character of the anti-Christ. This is an interesting view, and it could be correct. If it is **the name of the beast** is something like a nickname, or a name he is known by, and not necessarily his personal name. The number of his name would be **666**, that much is plain. In this case 6 is viewed as the number of man, falling short of the divine number of 7. Three times is thrice failed to meet the perfect 777. This was also Walvoord's view, who said, "Probably the best interpretation is that the number six is one less than the perfect number seven, and the threefold repetition of the six would indicate that for all their pretensions to deity, Satan and the two beasts were just creatures and not the Creator.¹ I'm not totally convinced, but it is a possibility.

Another view is that the number 666 is a result of adding up the number of his name. In this view adherents point out that the Greek language had no Arabic numerals, so the letters of the Greek alphabet had numerical equivalents. The first nine letters in the Greek signified numbers one 1-9. Letters 10-19 signified the numbers 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, etc... Letters 20-24 signified 200, 300, 400, and 500. Knowing one's name in Greek you would simply add up the numerical equivalent of each letter to see if it added up to 666. When this method has been employed a number of individuals and computer systems have been identified as the anti-Christ. In the 20th century alone: Kaiser Wilhelm, Benito Mussolini, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, John F. Kennedy, Henry Kissinger, Juan Carlos, Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, Saddam Hussein and MS DOS 1.1. Some, seeing the widespread disagreement, have argued that this method is obviously wrongheaded.

Because of this many have argued that the meaning of this number will not be evident until the anti-Christ arrives on the scene after the Church is gone. Newell said, "As to the man whom the number 'Six hundred and sixty and six' represents, God will give full 'understanding' when it is needed, in those three and a half...years of horror and danger." I agree with Constable who said, "I think that neither the identity of the Antichrist nor the number of his name will be evident until he appears and fulfills prophecy. Then wise believers will be able to calculate his number as well as identify his person. Until then both aspects of Antichrist's identity will remain a mystery."² This means that I agree with J Vernon McGee's advice, "I would suggest that we not waste our time

trying to identify a person by this number. Instead, we need to present Jesus Christ that we might reduce the population of those who have to go through the Great Tribulation Period and who will therefore know what the number of the Beast is.”³

¹ John F. Walvoord, “Revelation,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 963.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 13:18.

³ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Re 13:18.