

Revelation 13:11-18

"Deceived And Received"

Ch 13 is all about the unveiling of the A.C. His rise to power, his worldwide acceptance, his subservience to Satan, his agenda to be recognized and worshiped as God.

In Vs 1-10 we see Satan call him out of the sea of humanity, give to him his power, his throne & great authority. He receives a mortal wound yet he's healed so that the entire world marvels, rallies *around* him & gives allegiance *to* him. They begin to honor him & exalt him saying, "Who is like this guy! Who can stand *against* him or make war *w/him*?"

Riding on the waves of the esteem of man he begins to blaspheme the God of heaven openly & w/out restraint. He blasphemes His name, where He dwells & everyone who's there with Him. To add insult to injury he begins to openly persecute & kill believers. He blasphemes the God in whom they believe & then kills them to make open mockery of His seeming inability to save them or rescue them. **For all intents & appearances it will seem as though the Christians are all a bunch of losers, pathetic & weak. But this guy's the bomb; he's all that & a bag of chips, no one can stop him & the world bows before him. Look at Vs 8**

Or to understand that another way, to take a knee for this guy is a mutually exclusive position to being saved. Nonetheless people by the 100's of millions (if not more) will be bowing down before this world ruler in some form or another...

Some people think this kind of talk is awfully fanciful... "One world ruler, people worshiping him as God...C'mon..." 3 things w/that. #1 It's undeniable that mankind has what we might consider to be a "religious impulse" or a "spiritual side". There's a reason there are so many "religions" in the world. There is a spiritual thirst embedded w/in the human DNA. Of course when it's properly calibrated it leads us to Christ. That's why Jesus said, **"If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink" John 7:37**, God placed that impulse in man so that we might seek Him out, & God has promised **"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."**¹

Which leads me to the 2nd point. #1 People have a natural religious impulse, they're seeking fulfillment & satisfaction. (I was watching a program about David Geffen the other night & listening to his interview blew my mind. It was class "A" quest for fulfillment only to be left unsatisfied. They placed a quote from him on the screen. It said, "I believe we all die unhealed."

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 [Je 29:13]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He was talking about having \$10 million in the 70s saying that he always believed that when he had that kind of money he would be happy, but he was unhappy. Simultaneously he was trying to come to grips w/the fact that he was gay so he talked to Warren Beatty about a therapist & he was pointed to the therapist that all the therapists went to. He said he wanted to confront all his demons (he was looking for peace, for happiness). He asked his therapist, "How can I make all these voices in my head go away?" To which the therapist said, "They'll never go away, it's your job not to listen to them." ... I thought, "Wow, this is the guy that everyone is looking to for solutions in life." He was searching for peace, he was thirsting for more than what this world could give him & the answer he was given was, "Don't listen to the voices in your head.")

There is a natural impulse embedded w/in people that seeks out true rest, true satisfaction. But there's a roadblock in the way because people also have (#2) a natural rebellion against God. There's a natural religious impulse mingled w/a natural rebellion against God. **People want satisfaction, but still want sin in their lives, they want a kingdom w/out Christ, they don't mind religion, they want to feel like their lives count, they just don't want to repent of their sin & submit to J.C.**

& #3 People want to live. Satan's assessment of man back in the book of Job was accurate (especially man who has no hope of eternal life). He said, **"Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life."**² "You want my money, take it, just let me live." We spend millions of dollars, give all that we have to beat cancer or whatever (& that's not a bad thing) because we have a survival instinct, we want to live.

Yet as we'll see in a few minutes whoever won't worship the beast will be executed. It's a crime of capital proportions. So when you combine a natural religious impulse & quest for fulfillment w/a natural rebellion against God & it will cost you your life to rebel, it's not too far fetched to see totalitarian worship of this man whom the bible refers to as the A.C. No different from totalitarian governments of the past be they Stalin, Lenin, Mao or Hitler or whoever.

The A.C. will also have a campaign manager, a P.R. man (if you will), the bible calls him the "false prophet". I've given this portion of scripture only 2 reference words. **Vs 11-14 "Deceived"** & **Vs 15-18 "Received"**. The earth is deceived & the mark of the beast is received. Notice.

Vs11-14

² The New King James Version. 1982 (Job 2:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The earth deceived. John saw another beast coming up out of the earth. It had 2 horns like a lamb & spoke like a dragon. **Now don't over complicate this image. John saw another beast, the word "beast" is the same word used to describe the 1st beast, wild & untamed, yet it's distinguishably different than the 1st in that it rises from the earth as opposed to the sea (perhaps Israel proper) has 2 horns like a lamb & spoke like a dragon.**

What's this telling us? It's telling us that this "beast" (whom the book of Rev refers to in Ch 16, Ch 19 & Ch 20 as the "false prophet") has the same core nature as the 1st beast. Which is to say he's satanically charged. **Others will point out the 2 horns as opposed to the 10, and that his horns have no crowns, meaning there's no political power involved here (per-say) & he has the appearance of a "lamb" but he speaks like a dragon. Which is to say that outwardly he will *appear* to be a good (dare I say "righteous") figure. He is one whom the bible would identify as coming to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly he's a ravenous wolf.**

John tells us here that the clue will be *not* how he appears outwardly, but rather in his *message* specifically. He speaks like a dragon. Now Jesus said, **"...those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man,³"** This guy will look like a lamb, but he will speak like a dragon. He appears mild, but his message is the same as the beast who comes before him. Or to understand all that another way he will be incredibly, remarkably, convincingly deceitful.

Jesus was very careful to warn us of not falling prey to outward appearances but rather exercising patience & wisdom in discerning people's lives. He said, **"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.⁴"** "Therefore", Jesus went on to say, "By their fruits you will know them."

Which is to say that we need to be able to discern & take an honest assessment of the kinds of things that come out of a person's life. Fruit doesn't pop up/out overnight, it takes time for fruit to develop. One of the developments of *this* man's life will be to cause people to worship this world dictator & those who don't he will cause to be put to death.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 15:18-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Mt 7:15-17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Does that sound to you like the earmarks of J.C.? The One who has loved you & given *His life* for you, so that *you might live*? One *gives* you life, the other *takes* your life...

He serves as a public relations kinda guy for the A.C., he has all the same authority as the 1st beast & he uses it to point people *to him* causing them to *worship* him (notice) who's deadly wound was healed (Vs 12).

We spoke last week about this "Satanic Trinity". You have Satan in this "God the Father" kind of position. The A.C. in this "God the Son" kind of position & finally this false prophet in this "God the Spirit" kind of position. **He has all the same authority, but he points people to the A.C. the one who's deadly wound was healed, even as the Holy Spirit (being fully God) points people to J.C. who died for our sins & rose again the 3rd day.** Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "**He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.⁵**" & Even as the Holy Spirit seeks to glorify & magnify J.C., this false prophet will seek to magnify & draw worship to the A.C.

Vs 13 tells us that he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven in the sight of men. The word "performs" here is in the "perfect tense" meaning that he's constantly seeking to validate his position through signs & wonders, miracles & supernatural phenomena. Now Jesus performed signs all the time, but never to prove to anybody who He was. The Jews were constantly seeking to get Him to perform some kind of sign so that they might really be convinced (even though he'd healed lepers, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk & raised the dead etc). They'd always say, "What sign will You perform that we might believe that You are the Christ?" **To which Jesus would never comply, He wasn't a sideshow, had nothing to prove. However this guy will show sign after sign, even calling fire down from heaven at will to answer the 2 witnesses.**

Remember those guys (Ch 11) they would spew fire at will devouring those who sought to come against the message of the truth. Here Satan (through this false prophet) will answer that through imitation & duplication. *They* were raised from the dead, *the A.C.* will be raised (for all appearances) from the dead. **They commanded fire miraculously, this guy will command fire miraculously. You see he's a deceiver, always seeking to counterfeit the genuine article. Just like when Moses went to Pharaoh & he would perform a miracle & then Pharaoh's magicians would duplicate the miracle.**

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 [In 16:14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Satan has limited miraculous powers & he's not afraid to use them in order to deceive the nations. Even as Elijah called fire down from heaven in order to validate the true God. Remember that? 1 Kings 18? He took on 450 prophets of Baal & said, "Hey, let's do this, let's prepare 2 sacrifices, you call on your gods & when you're finished I will call on the name of the Lord; & the God who answers by fire, "He is God." Long story short, they tried all day w/no result & when it was Elijah's turn he said, "Lord, let these people know that You are God in Israel & turn their hearts back to You again." Fire fell from heaven consuming both the sacrifice & all the water that was in the trench around it.

Now here's this guy (amongst other things) calling fire down from heaven in order to validate his position. Jesus said, *"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand."*⁶ Do me a favor, leave Rev 13 & turn to 2 Thess 2:9-12

We talked about this a week or 2 ago, that if you don't want to believe the truth (Remember Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth & the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me") if you don't want to believe the truth God will give you over to the lie. And there's no limit to the absurd things people will believe & do once they've rejected the truth. In *this* context Paul says that God will send them strong delusion that they might believe (notice) "the" lie. What lie? The lie of the A.C. If you won't believe in J.C. then you *will* believe in & worship A.C. If unrighteousness is what you want... you've heard the expression "Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it..."

But it was at this point as I was studying Ch 13 that I really began to get irritated (to put it mildly). There is nothing original about Satan at all, he mimics God. There are innovators & there are imitators & the best that Satan has is to imitate God so as to deceive the masses. "...he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs..."

I mentioned in our introduction that Ch 13 is all about the unveiling of the A.C. & that's true. But it's underscored in his ability to deceive mankind; that's really Satan's only play & he's a master craftsman at deceit. If you boil it down & say it in a sentence the enemy's agenda is to deceive mankind. Now listen, knowing that it should stir your heart to know the truth... Because the only defense we really have against a lie is to know the truth, & that my friends is found in the word of God. This is why it's absolutely imperative that you know your bible, know the truth, because the enemy's agenda is all about deception.

⁶ The New King James Version. 1982 (Mt 24:24-25). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

That's one reason we choose to go through the scriptures expositionally; so that you might know the word of God in it's context, that you might be equipped to wage wise warfare & fight the good fight.

If you were going into a war, yet you were only given a Kevlar vest, maybe a helmet, perhaps a knife, you would be ill prepared. Where's my automatic weapon, my pistol, my grenades, where is my flashlight, my communication radio or headset, I'd like a smoke grenade or 2, maybe a flash bang, plenty of water, some rations of food. And here's the deal, it's your C.O.'s responsibility, your drill sergeant or whatever to make sure you're equipped for the war, to teach you the tactics, what the full arsenal of your weaponry will be & to make sure you're efficient & effective w/each piece of that arsenal & he won't release you to war until he's ready to sign off on your training.

Yet so many pastors in this world aren't teaching their people, they don't teach the bible, they may make sure you understand the shield of faith, or the helmet of salvation. They may speak on grace or all kinds of interesting things that you want to hear, keep you coming back, make you feel good. But when they're finished, you do well to ask yourself, "Do I really have a greater working knowledge of the word of God? Has my understanding been opened that I might comprehend the scriptures more accurately, contextually?"

If it's a show you want, you can find those all over the place; we're more like school. We want to learn Christ. Hey, I'm all for being entertained, I love good entertainment. But entertainment is not always the appropriate environment. That's not to say the bible should be boring, God forbid (it's the word of Life)! But we should be able to buckle down for 35-45 minutes, open the bible & get serious about absorbing God's word. All of it, we want the belt of truth, the preparedness of sharing the gospel, (I have a feeling it would devastate us to realize the amount of people who are Christians who could not articulate the gospel or have the confidence to lead someone to Christ). Yet it's my job to equip you for the work of the ministry.

It's not to say that a good topical study, or series on this or that isn't any good. It all depends on your end goal, it's our goal to feed the sheep in obedience to the command of the Lord & to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. We want to learn of Christ; what it means to decrease that He might increase in our lives, what it means to walk in the Spirit, edify the body & crucify the flesh. We welcome the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon our lives because the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...

That's what grace is all about you guys, it's not a passive covering for sin, its a progressive teacher of righteousness. Man shall not live by bread alone but by what? "Every Word" that proceeds from the mouth of God.

If we know that the enemies agenda is to steal, to kill & to destroy & that the way he's going to do that primarily if not exclusively (ultimately) is through deception than why would we not spend our time seeking to devour as much truth as taught by the word of God as we possibly can? The way you recognize the lie is how? By knowing the truth...

The false prophet goes on a campaign, has an image (or likeness) made of the beast (again emphasizing the mortal wound that was unable to keep him down).

Vs 15-17

The earth deceived, the mark received... Now people have sought to figure out exactly what kind of "image" the false prophet will have constructed, will it be a clone? What kind of animated figure will this thing be? The truth is we have no idea but what we do know is that it will be impressive. If it's not a clone (which it doesn't appear to be according to the way this reads) it will be embedded w/some sort of artificial intelligence (which isn't too far reaching considering the kind of AI that goes into a common video game these days, I can't imagine what could be pulled off if the most cutting edge & leading scientists on the planet were put to this specific task) that will command the worship of the beast & call for the execution of all who won't.

But it doesn't stop there, not only will he apply pressure on the spiritual/religious side, he will place sanctions on the economic side as well. Social status won't help you, the rich won't be exempt & the poor won't be excluded. All will be caused to receive a mark, be it on their right-hand or on their forehead. Without it you won't be able to buy anything or sell anything, total economic control.

Btw this technology is available right now today. Time forbids us, you might look it up online its called "Verichip" it was created by "Applied Digital Solutions" & approved by the FDA this year as RFID (radio frequency identification). You can see an interview on YouTube w/NBC & the CEO (Scott Silverman) of Applied digital solutions in March of this year.

Currently they're billing it as helping w/medical records, treating patience w/Alzheimer's incase they get lost or confused. You show up in the E.R. & they can scan this chip (currently placed in the right arm) & have instant awareness of any medical conditions you have, insurance information (he mentioned financial applications), the whole thing.

The CEO went on to say, “When people accept it for it’s applications and it’s ability it will work its way into society, it won’t be today, it won’t be tomorrow, but 2-3,5 yrs from now it will slowly work it’s way into the mainstream.”

Now I’m not saying that “VeriChip” is the Mark of the Beast, I’m saying that society is being groomed to accept this kind of technology; it’s simply more efficient, more convenient.

Vs 18

I find it interesting that John says, “Here is wisdom” then he goes on to make a statement that has made baffled man for 2,000 yrs & from which some of the most ridiculous efforts have been made to solve this riddle.

Because in the Greek & Hebrew the alphabet also has numeric value, A=1, B=2 etc. & people have made almost every name you can think of add up to 666. People have come up w/all kinds of things trying to put this puzzle together. One commentator says this, “That as 12, the square root of 144, is God’s number, so 25 is the square root of antichrist’s number 666; and by this enigmatical expression we are taught that antichrist should be a political body, that should as much affect the number 15, as God seemeth to have his church affected the number 12.” (Poole)

To which I say, “What in the WORLD are you talking about!” Square root of what!? The truth is we don’t know what this means but I suspect that the people who are on the planet when this comes down will know *exactly* what it means. I can tell you it’s not a superstitious # to be afraid of.

It’s the # of a man. 6 is the # of man, created on the 6th day, allowed to work 6 days & on the 7th he was to rest.

It’s interesting that 8 is the # of Christ, it’s the # of new beginnings (7 notes in a scale, 8 starts over, 7 days in a week, 8 starts over) if any man be in Christ he’s a what? “New creation, old things pass away behold all things are made new.” If you add up the numerical value of the name Jesus in the Greek it comes to 888. & Every name for Christ is either adds up to or is divisible by 8. He’s the new beginning.

7 is completeness or perfection, 6 is man’s #. So perhaps John is simply communicating for as much as this guy does to try & convince humanity that he’s God. He’s just a man, his # is the # of an imperfect, fallen man, don’t fear him, fear God. Don’t trust in man, trust in the Lord.

Don't buy the lie, don't be deceived, know the truth; get into God's word.
Abide in Christ, & let His word abide in you. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

Father we want to be a people who believe, who have received a love for the truth as found in Your word. Increase our appetite for your word. Give us proper priorities so that what we're longing for isn't entertainment but to be equipped, that we might be effective & fruitful in our walk & relationship w/You. Pour Your Spirit out fresh upon this fellowship & use us God, unite us & give us 1 heart, 1 mind, the mind of Christ. Create fresh fire in us & increase *Your* work in *our* midst.

Abide in Christ, before you can "abide" in Christ, you have to be "in" Christ. Don't set your interest & fascination upon the A.C. Seek after & look for fulfillment in J.C. Everyone is looking for rest, only Jesus offers it. Other things promise it, but come up lacking. Jesus said, "Come to Me all you who labor & are heavy laden & I will give you rest" rest for your soul. There is a solution for you, it's found in turning from your sin & trusting in J.C. who shed His blood, died upon the cross & rose from the dead so that by faith in Him you could find forgiveness & everlasting life.