

The Final False Prophet
Revelation 13:11-18
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INTRODUCTION

1. This morning we are continuing our look at Revelation 13.
2. We are looking at verses 11-18 where we will see *The Final False Prophet*.
3. Read Revelation 13:11-18.
4. Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”
5. And according to verse 16, Jesus said, “You will know them by their fruits” (v.16).
6. Peter identified their “fruits” by calling them “destructive heresies” (2 Pet.2:1), and “deceptive words” (v.3).
7. He said in 2 Peter 2:10 and verse 14 that they “walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries...[they have] eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.”
8. Jude adds: “These are murmurers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage” (v.16).

9. God's people have always been warned about the danger of false prophets.
10. In Deuteronomy 13, Moses paused in the midst of giving God's law to Israel to warn of those who would lead people astray from it:

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst” (vv.1-5)

11. Jeremiah also warned Israel not to listen to false prophets in Jeremiah 23:16:

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord” (v.16).

12. He said in verses 21-22:

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not

spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings” (vv.21-22).

13. False prophets have plagued God’s people from the beginning of history and they will proliferate even more as the return of Christ approaches.
14. Speaking of that time, Jesus said, “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (vv.4-5).
15. In verse 11 He said “then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.”
16. According to Mark’s gospel, they “will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Mk.13:22).
17. But none of these compare to what John sees next in Revelation 13.
18. We have already seen Satan who is called the Dragon (12:9), and the Antichrist, who is referred to as the Beast (13:1-10).
19. Now we are introduced to “another beast” in verse 11 who is identified later in Revelation as the false prophet.
20. Notice his origin in verse 11.

I. The Origin of the Second Beast (v.11)

A. It is of the Earth (v.11a)

1. John says, “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth.”
2. The first beast, the Antichrist, came “out of the sea” which was a reference to coming both from the Gentiles and the abyss (pit).
3. The second beast “coming out of the earth” is a reference to his appearance as a wolf in sheep’s clothing

“In the ancient world, the earth was less mysterious and foreboding than the sea.”

This therefore suggests “that he will be subtler, gentler, less overpowering and terrifying than the Antichrist. He will be winsome and persuasive, the epitome of the wolves in sheep's clothing Jesus warned of (Matt. 7:15)” (John MacArthur, Revelation 12-22).

Some say the phrase “out of the earth” could refer to the land of Palestine (McGee) and if so, then “this leader is almost surely a Jew.” But there is no evidence for this view.

Whatever the phrase means, the text seems to indicate that this second beast is “subtler and more winsome than Antichrist” (John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible).

B. It is of the Pit

1. Revelation 16:13-14 indicates that the false prophet also has his origins in the pit when verse 13 and 14 says:

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

2. Revelation 19:20 and 20:10 also refer to him with the title “false prophet”

II. The Description of the Second Beast (v.11b)

John continues in verse 11 now by describing the second beast. He says “he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.”

John MacArthur says, “The description of the first beast, with its ten horns, seven heads, ten crowns, and seven blasphemous names (13:1), was grotesque and frightening. In contrast, the second beast merely had two horns. That indicates that he is not characterized by the same massive might as Antichrist.” (Revelation 12-22).

A. He Had Two Horns Like a Lamb

1. This tells us about his deception
 - a) On the surface he will appear as a harmless lamb – mild and gentle

b) But his true identity is revealed when he speaks “like a dragon”

2. This also tells us that he is a religious leader whose role is to support the Antichrist – we will see that in verse 12 as he “causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.”

B. He Spoke Like a Dragon

1. This reveals his true identity – the dragon was a reference to Satan (12:9)
2. The false prophet is no less a child of hell than the Antichrist. He, like the Antichrist, will be Satan’s mouthpiece, speaking his own words.

Like the words of 2 Corinthians 13:13-15 where Paul was speaking of those who were bringing another gospel whom he called “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

So the false prophet does not “come as a conquering dictator, but on the surface appears as a subtle deceiver, with meekness and gentleness” (MacArthur). “he had the roar of a dragon with all the looks of a lamb” (Robertson).

III. The Authority of the Second Beast (vv.12-14)

Throughout the remainder of this passage there are terms that identify the *authority* of the false prophet.

Verse 12 begins by saying, “And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”

Verse 15 says “He was granted power...and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Verse 16, “And he causes all....”

Theses are words of authority that have been given, like the Antichrist, from Satan, and God.

Just as we saw in the first ten verses God’s sovereign authority in the activity of the Antichrist, here, we also see his control of the false prophet.

- A. He Will Have the Same Demonic Power and Authority as that of the First Beast (Antichrist) (v.12a)
 - 1. 16:13 again tell us that all three hellish individuals come from the same source – the pit
 - 2. That the false prophet “exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence” indicates that the Antichrist will have delegated that authority to him.

- B. He Will Lead the World to Worship the Beast (Antichrist) (vv.12b-14)

“The false prophet’s mission will be to use all the means available to him from the Antichrist to cause the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. He will lead the worldwide cult of Antichrist worship. The false prophet’s efforts to promote the worship of the Antichrist will receive a tremendous boost from a startling, spectacular event: the apparent healing of the first beast’s (Antchrist’s) fatal wound (cf. v.3; 17:8)” (MacArthur).

1. By performing great signs (vv.13-14a)

- a) He will mimic the signs performed by Jesus
 - (1) John 2:11 - “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”
 - (2) John 2:23 - “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.”
 - (3) John 6:2 - “Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.”
- b) He will mimic the signs performed by the two witnesses (11:5-6) by making “fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men” (v.13).

“Makes” Gr.poieo, the present tense suggests that he will repeatedly perform this

great sign in the presence of men to impress them with his power.

According to 2 Thess.2:9 this will be one of the “signs and lying wonders” that Satan will use to lure unbelievers to their doom.

- c) He will succeed in his efforts to deceive “those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he is granted to do in the sight of the beast” (v.14a).

The word “deceives” is from *planao*, and means, “to wander.” It forms the root of the English word *planet*, since the planets appear to wander through the heavens.

“The world will be utterly vulnerable to his deception during the Tribulation. There will be unparalleled disasters and unimaginable horrors, leaving people desperate for answers. Having rejected the true gospel and blasphemed the true God (cf. 16:9, 11), the unbelieving world will be eager to believe the deceiving lies propagated by the false prophet” (John MacArthur, Revelation 12-22, p.61).

- 2. By making an image to the beast (v.14b)

“As the power of Antichrist and the persuasiveness of the false prophet grow, Satan will escalate the false world religion of Antichrist worship” (MacArthur).

- a) He will be able to deceive “those who dwell on the earth”

“Those who dwell on the earth” is a technical phrase used throughout Revelation to refer to unbelievers (vv.8, 12; 3:10; 6:10)

God’s elect cannot be deceived. Mark 13:22 says, “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”

The elect will know the truth and be able to recognize the false prophets teaching and lies and they will not be swayed because of the signs the false prophet will be able to perform.

- b) He will be able to deceive the world by telling them to “make an image to the beast”
- (1) The unbelieving world will obey his command to “make an image to the beast.”
 - (2) They will engage in the most shocking, blatant idolatry ever seen
 - (3) Like Nebuchadnessar before him (Dan.3), but on a global scale, Antichrist, aided by the false prophet, will set up a statute of himself as a symbol of his deity and worldwide worship.
 - (4) It is possible that this image will be set

up on the temple grounds in Jerusalem and will be connected with the abomination of desolation (cf. 2 Thess.2:4)

IV. The Program of the Second Beast (vv.15-18)

A. He Will Make the Image of the Beast Come Alive (v.15)

“Breath” Gr.pneuma, not zoe or bios, the Greek words normally translated “life.”

1. He will animate the image so that it gives the *appearance of being alive* (v.15a)

With today’s special effects technology and robotics, that is not out of the realm of possibility.

2. He will cause the image to “speak” (v.15a)
 - a) The Bible denounces idols as having mouths, yet being unable to speak

Ps.115:4-8 - “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them.”

- b) The Bible also says that those who sacrifice to idols are worshipping demons

1 Cor.10:19-20 - “What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.”

3. He will “cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (v.15b)
- (1) As in the case of Nebuchadnessar’s image (Dan.3:6), the death sentence will be decreed for those who refuse to worship the image of the Antichrist
 - (2) Many of the martyrs mentioned earlier in Revelation (cf. 6:9-11; 7:13-14) are those who will be killed during this terrible time of persecution
 - (3) Though the death sentence may be decreed to all, not all believers will be killed. Some will survive until Christ returns and will enter His millennial kingdom as living people (Mat.25:31-46)
 - (4) Nor will the Antichrist and his false prophet be able to kill all the Jews (12:6, 14). Zech.13:8-9 says:

“And it shall come to pass in all the land,” says the Lord, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in

it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

B. He Will Cause Everyone to Receive the Mark of the Beast (vv.16-18)

1. All categories of unbelievers will be forced to receive the mark (v.16a)

John categorizes the "all" as "both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave"

2. The mark will be placed on "their right hand or on their foreheads" (v.16b)

"Mark" Charagma, from charasso, "I engrave."

This was "the term for images or names of the emperor on Roman coins. In the ancient world, such marks were commonly given to slaves, soldiers, and devotees of religious cults" (MacArthur).

Paul said in Galatians 6:17, "From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the *marks* of the Lord Jesus."

"God sealed, with a mark on the forehead, the 144,000 to preserve them from His wrath against the unbelieving world (7:2-3); the false prophet marks the unsaved to preserve them from Antichrist's wrath against God's people"

(MacArthur).

The Mark will signify that the person bearing it is a worshiper and loyal follower of the Antichrist.

3. No one will be able to “buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (v.17).

The Antichrist will maintain strict economic control over the world.

“The need to buy or sell such necessities as food and clothing would force each person in the entire world to decide whether to worship the beast or to bear the penalty. Apparently the great majority worshiped the beast” (John Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

W.A. Criswell, in his *Expository Sermons on Revelation* shares about a man who lived under Bulgaria’s communist regime as saying: “You cannot understand and you cannot know that the most terrible instrument of persecution ever devised is an innocent ration card. You cannot buy and you cannot sell except according to that little, innocent card. If they please, you can be starved to death, and if they please, you can be dispossessed of everything you have; for you cannot trade, and you cannot buy and you cannot sell, without permission.”

John refers to this “mark on their right hand or on their foreheads” as “the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (v.17).

The Antichrist will have a universal designation, his name within a numbering system. The exact identification of that phrase is unclear. What is clear is that everyone will be required to have the identifying mark or suffer the consequences.

4. Verse 18 calls for wisdom to those alive at the time to be wise and discerning
 - a) They will need to recognize what is happening and understand the significance of the number connected with Antichrist's name
 - b) Those with understanding will be able to "calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: his number is 666."
 - (1) There has been no number in human history that has intrigued people than this one
 - (2) There has been no end to the speculation as to its significance and how to calculate it
 - (3) Some have given it to historical individuals as Nero, Domitian, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and a host of others
 - (4) All speculation is futile because this is future and is tied to the coming Antichrist – in other words, the number 666 cannot be tied to the past but has reference whatever is the

“mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.”

- (5) The church father Irenaeus cautioned against speculating about the identity of the person associated with the number 666 until that person arrives.
- (6) The precise significance of the number 666 awaits the future time of the Antichrist, but it is noteworthy that this is the number “of a man.”

“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. That six is man's number is illustrated in many instances in the Bible, including the fact that man should work six days and rest the seventh. (For further discussion of the many views cf. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, pp. 263-65; Smith, *A Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pp. 206-7; and Walvoord, *Revelation*, pp. 209-12.)”

CONCLUSION

1. A false religion on a scale never before seen is coming, let by the most notorious of all false prophets.
2. This passage stands as a warning to all unbelievers!

