

Revelation 13:11-18 | The Second Beast

Introduction

The first beast in verses 1-10 was the Antichrist. Now we are introduced to the “second” beast, the *false prophet*. This passage demonstrates the central role deception will play in the end-times.

Verse-By-Verse Notes

Verse 11

- The first beast rose from the “abyss” while the second beast rises from the “earth.” This could indicate the calmer, more persuasive nature of the false prophet who will be the Antichrist’s “minister of propaganda.”
- John MacArthur: “This companion beast will be the chief, most persuasive proponent of satanic religion. Antichrist will be primarily a political and military leader, but the false prophet will be a religious leader. Politics and religion will unite in a worldwide religion of worshiping the Antichrist.”
- The false prophet will appear gentle (“like a lamb”) but it will speak the words of Satan (“It spoke like a dragon”). Not all things are what they seem. This is a lesson Christians should remind themselves often.
- Jim Hamilton: “Just because someone uses they language of Christianity does not mean he or she is promoting Christianity. We must know what Christianity really is from the Bible so that we can see past the surface level of Christianity to discern whether what we see is the real thing or a satanic deception. Watch out for lambs who talk like dragons.”

Verse 12

- Just as true prophets point to the crucified and risen Christ, the false prophet points to the wounded and healed Antichrist.
- Danny Akin: “Here is the establishment of false religion on a worldwide scale. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Animists, etc.—all persons of faith will join hands and heart in worship, praise, and adoration of the antichrist. No doubt each faith will retain certain particular emphases that characterize their faith, but they will— they must—unite in their devotion and dedication to the beast.”

Verses 13-15

- True Prophets and Apostles were frequently given “sign-gifts” and performed miracles that confirmed their authority as messengers of God & Christ as well as the authenticity of their message (Hebrews 2:3-4; Acts 2:22, 43; Mark 16:20). The false prophet will perform similar signs through the power of Satan.

- For the massive role deception will play in the end times, see Mark 13:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.
- The “image of the beast” will be the height of idolatry, and possibly set up in a rebuilt Jerusalem temple. “Christians” will fall for this deception. One need only observe the present (and historical) idolatry of the Roman Catholic church as evidence. The RCC is the largest branch of Christianity – close to 50% of global professing Christians are RC.
- Those who will not worship the image of the beast will be killed. The false prophet will oversee this persecution.

Verses 16-18

- The “mark of the beast” has generated much speculation over the centuries, but whatever it’s precise nature, it will be required for anyone in the world to buy or sell. This is economic persecution. Obviously, the recent vaccine requirements of the COVID era illustrate how the mark of the beast could work.
- “666” is the number of the Antichrist’s name. 6 is the number of man, one short of 7, the number of perfection/completeness. The threefold repetition indicates a “trinity of imperfection” (Mounce). In spite of man’s repetitious attempts to be God, he will always come up short.
- Gematria was the ancient practice of assigning numerical values to letters. The Hebrew consonants in “Nero” calculate to 666, leading some Christians to identify the Roman Emperor Nero as the Antichrist. The problem is that, as Robert Mounce writes, “This solution asks us to calculate a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, and that with a defective spelling. A shift to Hebrew letters is unlikely in that Revelation is written in Greek and there is no indication that the riddle is to be solved by transposing it into another language.”
- This demonstrates the questionable practice of using any kind of “numerology” to identify the beast/Antichrist. When he is revealed, his name (and number) will be clearly known.

BIG IDEA: “SATAN SENDS FALSE PROPHETS TO DECEIVE AND COERCE WORSHIP FOR HIMSELF, BUT AT BEST HE CAN ONLY IMITATE THE GLORY OF THE TRUE SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.” – Danny Akin