

# About the Antichrist

by David Guzik

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*The Antichrist is a world leader who will oppose Jesus Christ and rule over a world dominating empire, characterized by power, authority, and blasphemy.*

**Duration:** 1:10:39

**Scripture:** Revelation 13:1, Revelation 13:10

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the description of a beast in the book of Revelation. The beast is described as having the characteristics of a leopard, a bear, and a lion. This imagery is taken from Daniel's vision in Daniel Chapter 7, which represents the course of human government. The preacher explains that the first three world empires were symbolized by these animals, with the lion representing the Babylonian Empire and the bear representing the succeeding empire. The ultimate reign of Jesus Christ is also mentioned as the destroyer of all earthly rule.

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## Transcript

Tonight, we're going to be studying about this very important person, popularly known in the Bible as the Antichrist. And there are many different passages of scripture that we could go to. The Antichrist is spoken about in many, many passages.

First and second Thessalonians, Matthew chapter 24, Daniel chapter 9, many different passages speak about the Antichrist. But we're going to spend tonight focused on the most important, the central passage in the Bible that gives us the most detail about this very important world leader to come. And that's Revelation chapter 13.

So turn to Revelation 13 in your Bibles with me right now. Right here, when we come to Revelation chapter 13, we come to one of the most famous chapters in the book of the Bible, in any book of the Bible, because it describes for us a very well-known person that many people call today the Antichrist. Let's just jump right in it.

Revelation chapter 13, verse one. And I stood on the sand of the sea and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns and on his horns, ten crowns and on his head a blasphemous name. Now, continuing from the context of Revelation chapter 12, we understand that God is speaking to and through the apostle John through signs.

In other words, the earth will not see this terrible beast coming up with seven heads and ten horns. Now, this is a representation of something real on the earth, but God has expressed it to John in a sign to communicate some of it. Let's say if God were to just show John a mugshot of who this person is going to be.

And he looks at the fellow and there he is, you know, he's got his hair cut and his glasses or no glasses, whatever you want to say, whatever he looks like. That wouldn't tell him a whole lot. He might be able to pick him out of a police lineup, but John isn't concerned with picking him up out of a police lineup.

John wants to know something about this and God wants him to communicate something about this person. And so he expresses him in a way far more vivid than just an actual photograph. He expresses him in an image that shows the nature and the character of this person.

John stood on the sand of the sea and now as he sees this, he sees a beast rising up out of the sea. Many people today have a romantic love of the sea. When we think of the sea, we think of going to the beach and having fun or we think of a couple taking a romantic stroll down the seashore.

The ancient Israelites, the ancient Jewish people did not have this kind of view of the sea to them. The ocean was a foreign, hostile, turbulent, unpredictable place. The people of Israel in their ancient days were not a seagoing people.

I find it very interesting that about the only time we know that ancient Israel had a navy was under the time of Solomon. First Kings chapter nine describes the navy under Solomon, but it was staffed with sailors from Hiram, the king of Tyre. It wasn't staffed with Israeli sailors and because the Jewish people were just not an ocean going people now because ancient Israel was wary of the sea.

It was a figure of evil and chaos that seemed to resist God, even though the resistance is unsuccessful. There are several passages in the Old Testament that communicate this idea of the sea being hostile to God and his purposes and God subduing the sea. So it's very significant that this beast comes forth from the sea.

From this place identified with evil and chaos and resisting God, a beast comes forth. Now, this ancient Greek word translated beast here, it has the idea of a wild, dangerous animal. John does not call him a dragon, as he did the representation of Satan in Revelation chapter twelve.

This creature represents someone distinct from Satan who was represented by that dragon. But what's interesting about it is that if you look at the description again in verse one, it says, having seven heads and ten horns, though this beast is distinct from the dragon of Revelation chapter twelve, he's still closely identified with him. Look at Revelation chapter eleven, verse three.

Excuse me, I meant Revelation chapter twelve, verse three. Where it says, and another sign appeared in heaven, behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns. Isn't that interesting? The dragon has seven heads and ten horns, and so does this beast.

They're different creatures. They represent different people. But yet there's an obvious similarity between the two.

Now, any creature with seven heads would be pretty powerful. Again, think of it in the conception that somebody would think of it, especially in the ancient world. This would be a creature hard to kill because if

you wounded one head, six would still remain.

And in biblical imagery, horns represent strength and power. I mean, a bull that has two horns is a powerful creature, but a beast with ten horns has that much more power, just like the dragon of Revelation chapter twelve, verse three. Now, this likeness to Satan, we might almost say that this beast is the dragon junior.

And this likeness to Satan and the dragon is just one of the things that identifies this beast of Revelation 13, one with the one popularly known as the Antichrist. Now, the word Antichrist only appears in the Bible five times in four verses and every one of them in first John and then one mentioned in second John. First, John two eighteen is a good example of this.

And let me read this to you. John writes, Little children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard, the Antichrist is coming with this John refers to an individual who's really captured the imagination of a lot of people, even people who don't know anything more about the Antichrist than what they see on movies, right? The Omen or any such movies like that, where a very shadowy, mysterious, fearful man walks around and he has a funny tattoo somewhere, you know, with a six six six on it and all that kind of intrigue and all that kind of folder.

I think we've got a much better place for understanding the Antichrist, and that's the pages of Scripture. We can just begin with the name. The title Antichrist means something that prefix anti and then put together with Christ.

It can mean one of two things. It can mean the opposite Christ. That's the way most people think of it, the opposite Christ.

But actually, there's a better understanding of that term anti. It can also mean the instead of Jesus. Now, he is the opposite Jesus, but he's more importantly and more vividly the instead of Christ.

You see, many people have focused on the idea of the Antichrist being the opposite Jesus. That's how he looks in those movies that Hollywood likes to make. In other words, where they have an idea that the Antichrist will appear as a supremely evil person.

Just as much as Jesus went around doing good, the Antichrist is going to go around and do bad. Just as much as Jesus's character and personality was beautiful and attractive. The Antichrist personality will be ugly and repulsive.

I mean, just as much as Jesus went around and only spoke truth, the Antichrist is going to go around and only speak lies, right? Because he's the opposite of Jesus. No, that's not how it's going to be. Now, the emphasis instead should be on the idea that the Antichrist is the instead of Jesus.

He's going to look wonderful. He'll be charming and successful. He'll look like the ultimate winner, or as Paul describes it, one place in his description of Satan as an angel of light.

It's in this sense that the Antichrist will be a satanic messiah instead of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Friends, the Antichrist is going to look like a messiah, like a winner. I find it also very interesting that in 1 John, chapter two, verse 18, John also speaks of the Antichrist and many Antichrist in the plural.

You see, there's a spirit of Antichrist and the spirit of Antichrist will one day find its fulfillment in this man who will be raised up and he'll lead humanity in an end times rebellion against God. In other words, the world still awaits the ultimate revelation of this Antichrist. But we see little previews of him and his mission.

You might say those are Antichrist with a little a. And we commonly call this man the Antichrist, but I would say biblically speaking, it may not even be the best title for him because the Bible gives him many names, many titles. He's known as the little horn in Daniel, chapter seven, verse eight. Daniel 8:23 calls him the king of fierce countenance.

Daniel 9:26 calls him the prince that shall come. Daniel 11:36 calls him the willful king in John, chapter five. Jesus called him the one who comes in his own name, whom Israel will receive.

And then in second Thessalonians, chapter two, Paul calls him the son of perdition, the man of sin and the lawless one. This man has many different titles throughout the scriptures and Antichrist may not be the best title for him, but it's the one that is stuck in the popular imagination. If you notice the description here in verse one, John sees this beast rising up out of the sea and he says, I saw having seven heads and ten horns and on his horns, ten crowns.

Now, this is something different about the beast compared to the dragon of Revelation, chapter twelve, verse three. If you notice Revelation, chapter twelve, verse three, it says a fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns were on track there. Right.

But look at the next phrase and seven diadems on his head. The dragon has seven crowns, by the way, it's the same word for crowns there in the ancient Greek language between chapter twelve and chapter thirteen. The dragon has seven crowns.

The beast has ten crowns. Well, what's the difference there? I think we'd have to say that in Revelation, chapter twelve, the seven crowns of the dragon expresses strength and power because seven is a number in the Bible associated with strength and completeness. But the ten crowns of the beast in Revelation, chapter thirteen, express his rule over a group of ten nations.

We'll talk more about those ten nations as we make our way through the book of Revelation. Now, you can talk all day long about how these different crowns are distributed on the different ten heads, you know, and the horns and all that. But what's interesting is this has a lot of ties back to Daniel, chapter seven, verse seven.

In all of Daniel, chapter seven, he gives an amazingly majestic viewpoint of four successive world empires that will come. And the fourth empire that he describes is just like the beast that excuse me, that John describes right here. And in Daniel's vision, the ten horns on the beast that he sees specifically represent ten kingdoms that the final world dictator has authority over in John's vision.

The ten crowns emphasize the idea that the ten horns are ten kingdoms. See, the visions of Daniel, chapter seven and Daniel, chapter two, also connect the governments represented by the ten crowns with the ancient Roman Empire. These are two amazing visions.

I'm strongly tempted to say, let's take a break right now and go back to Daniel, chapter two and Daniel, chapter seven, because you know how it is when you're dealing with these subjects of prophecy. It's fascinating to go from one connection to another connection to another connection and sort of make a beautiful trail through the scriptures. We're going to try to discipline ourselves and stick to Revelation,

chapter 13.

But let me give you just sort of the idea here of the visions in Daniel, chapter seven and in Daniel, chapter two. In those visions, Daniel saw three successive world empires and each one of the three. The third was always succeeded by a fourth.

And in the context, the fourth empire is always plainly the Roman Empire. Well, in the days of the fourth empire, it says that the Messiah will come, destroy all earthly rule and reign over the earth. Now, friends, here's the difficulty with this.

We don't see Jesus reigning on the earth the way it says that he would in Daniel. And since we do not see the reign of Jesus on the earth in the way that Daniel prophesied, we can see that the Roman Empire will resume or be revived in some way expressed by this collection of ten crowns. There will be a new Roman Empire and friends that may exist on the earth right now, because many people, myself included, believe that the European community, the European Union, is a strong candidate to be this exact successor.

European community has amazing potential. Right now, it's just sort of sorting itself out and putting itself together. But the unity expressed in that European Union is fascinating, especially the monetary union that they have with the introduction of the euro, or they call it sometimes the euro dollar, the euro for short.

Many people thought that when the euro was introduced a short while ago, that it would totally dominate the world markets and the dollar, the American dollar, would just shift down and down and down and promise. It hasn't happened yet. The euro has not done that well.

Just wait. When the time is right, that will consolidate a strength that will dwarf the United States. When you combine the economic capacities and the social and the cultural capacities of the European Union, it dwarfs the United States.

It has the potential to be an absolutely world dominating federation of nations. And some people want to say, well, wait a minute, the problem here is that there are more than 10 nations in the European Union. You know, it's fascinating if you're like me and have been a Christian for a while through the years, you've seen how these things have tracked.

And for many years, there were fewer than 10 nations in the European Union. And with great anticipation, well, when will it reach 10? And when it reaches 10, that's when you really got to watch out for it. Well, now not only has it reached 10, it surpassed it.

And so people ask, well, how are you going to get the 10 nations? And the answer is, I don't know, it'll work out. Who knows? Maybe some will consolidate. Maybe some will be absorbed into others.

Maybe some will drop out. Maybe some will come in. I don't know.

It'll happen. But this heir to the Roman Empire, this this European based, I should say, world dominating confederation of nations is predicted for us in the book of Revelation and Daniel and several other places. And it will be that world dominating confederation of nations through the Antichrist, through which the Antichrist expresses his power.

Not only that, we notice also in verse one of Revelation 13, we saw the beast rising up out of the sea, the seven heads, the 10 horns and on his horns, 10 crowns. We've got all that. But then it also says and on his

head, a blasphemous name.

In other words, everything about this beast is blasphemous against God. It speaks more about than just the beast message. It speaks of his character.

He's a blasphemer. He speaks against God. Let's see more about this beast.

Verse two. Now, the beast which I saw was like a leopard. His feet were like the feet of a bear and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.

And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority. You know, as we're just sharing this, it occurs to me that as you read this, you can't help but try to picture this. Right.

And might I suggest to you, this is one of the places in the Bible where I would recommend don't try to picture it. Now, many times in the Bible, I would say, hey, picture what's going on. Try to get a vision.

Try to get an idea of what's happening. Set the scene up in your mind. It'll help you understand how things happen.

But I would say not here, because when you try to construct this beast in your mind with an image, I think you can only get hung up on the wrong things. Once you think about something, Ramon, it would have been possible for God, difficult, but possible if he wanted to. He could have told John to sketch this out and just have manuscript scribes sketch it out for us through history.

It's where we have a drawing of this beast. Friends, the verbal communication of the image in words is quite enough for us. And that's what's emphasized here.

Now, what's the verbal communication? Tell us. First of all, the beast that he saw is like a leopard. His feet were like the feet of a bear and the mouth like the mouth of a lion.

We see these three animals somehow combined in the fearsome characteristics of this beast. What, again, is fascinating about this is God is using the exact images from Daniel's vision in Daniel chapter seven to communicate the identity and the nature of this beast to John and to us. You see, the vision that Daniel had in Daniel chapter seven used four animals, four beasts to describe the course of human government from Daniel's day until the ultimate reign of Jesus Christ on this earth.

Now, the first three world empires were represented by three animals. First, the lion. The lion was an emblem or a picture of the Babylonian empire.

Then that was succeeded by a bear. A bear was a representation of the Medo-Persian empire. And then there was a leopard, which was a picture or representation of the Greek empire.

But then in Daniel chapter seven, especially verses seven and eight, he describes the fourth animal and the fourth animal was a dreadful, indescribable beast that shared the most terrifying characteristics of the previous beast. Yet he represented the final world empire under the leadership of a satanic dictator. Now, John presents this beast as the extension of the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven.

He connects this empire with the characteristics of the great empires of the past. So this final world empire will have the catlike vigilance of the leopard. It'll have the slow and crushing power of a bear.

You'll have the authority and the ferociousness of a lion. Now, I think this is very interesting here in Daniel chapter seven. Those beasts represented empires, not a specific man.

Therefore, some people have said, and this is not an uncommon approach to this, some people say that the beast that John describes here in Revelation chapter 13 is not a person. Rather, they see him as a government or an empire, as a cultural system. Many people believe that the beast is a broad picture of totalitarian governments in the 20th century.

For example, one commentator named Mounts, he writes and he says that the beast has always been and always will be in a final, intensified manifestation, the deification of secular authority. He means a government that demands worship. But other people see the beast as a person, specifically the Antichrist and friends, I believe that's very definitely teaching here and we'll get into it in a little bit later for the exact reasons why I think there's something that we have to understand here.

Though this beast in Revelation chapter 13 is a person, he's closely identified with the totalitarian government. He's closely identified with a world dominating empire. Matter of fact, he's the only leader this world dominating empire ever has because this world dominating empire lasts a whole of seven years or so.

That's about it. It may begin a little bit earlier than the Daniel 70th week, but not much. So it only lasts about seven years.

He's the only leader it ever has. Now, I want you to think in terms of, for example, the ancient Roman Empire compared to the Third Reich of Germany. OK, when you think of the ancient Roman Empire, you've got 20, 30, 40 different emperors that you could come forth.

It's hard to identify the ancient Roman Empire with one man because it went over thousands of years and there were many, many different emperors. However, when you talk about the Third Reich of Germany in the 20th century, when you talk about Nazi Germany, you think of one man, the only leader it ever had, Adolf Hitler. And so in that sense, when we think of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the figures of Hitler as an individual and Nazi Germany as a state, they're virtually the same.

It's going to be the same kind of dynamic. Yes, there will be a totalitarian state. But yet for many good reasons, and we'll show you them shortly in Revelation chapter 13, I think it's very clear that this beast is an individual.

Well, let's discuss some of the reasons why. Well, first of all, the beast is going to be worshipped as a god. Now, this is very common throughout all human history.

At one time or another, you've had kings or leaders or potentates that have demanded worship from the people. But nations or empires, they don't demand worship. They center it upon a man.

Another indication from this chapter is that an image is set up, a set up of the beast and the whole world is commanded to worship it. Now, how do you set up an image of an empire or government and have the whole world worship it? It just doesn't work. I mean, you could say you have a national image, like the Eiffel Tower is the national image of France.

Well, friends, you're not going to get the whole world to bow down and worship the Eiffel Tower. But people will bow down and worship before a statue of a man, of a representation improving time and time

again. The beast also has a proper name, a name that expresses a particular number, as we're going to see this.

And Revelation chapter 13 tells us specifically that it's the number of a man, not the number of an empire. We also know perhaps this is most conclusive. Revelation chapter 17, Revelation chapter 20 tells us that the beast is finally damned.

He goes to perdition into the lake of fire where he continues to exist and suffer. And after that, or after he has passed from the earthly scene, God isn't going to do that to a system of government, but he'll do it to an individual. You go on again, the Antichrist is also called the son of perdition.

Now, there was one other individual in the Bible known as the son of perdition. Do you know who that was? Judas. Judas was not a system.

Judas was not a government. And so it follows that the Antichrist will also be a man, not a system or a government. So, friends, I think we're making a big mistake from the scriptures when we say that the beast is an empire or a government.

No, it's a man who's closely associated with an empire or a government. But notice this, the connection that he has, verse two. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and his great authority.

This world leader is really empowered and supported by Satan. Through this man, Satan will express his own desire and his own authority in this, the beast will take the offer that Jesus refused. Remember the temptation of Jesus, how Jesus was offered all the kingdoms of the world and all the governments and all their glory and authority, if he would only bow down and worship Satan.

Jesus refused. It may be that Satan strikes a similar deal with this man and he accepts. And he becomes an emissary, a representative of Satan, his power, his throne, his great authority comes from the dragon.

Friends, we need to understand this, that the beast is not an ordinary man. Revelation chapter 11 and Revelation chapter 17 calls him the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit. Ordinary men do not come from there.

Anybody who comes from that place of the dead, they must be either. Well, some commentators say either a dead man brought up again from the dead. That was a very common understanding, I should say, in the early church, I don't agree with it.

But one of the most common understanding in the early church is that the Antichrist would be Nero resurrected. That Caesar Nero, one of the most terrible persecutors of the early church, that he would come back in a resurrected form and he would be the Antichrist. I think instead of him being a man back from the dead, I think that, again, he is a man uniquely possessed by Satan, not by a demon, but by Satan himself.

By the way, we have another example of this. Judas, according to John chapter 13, was specifically possessed by Satan, not by a junior demon, not by somebody under Satan, but by Satan himself. And I believe it will be the same case with this Antichrist.

Look at it continues here in verse three, it says, And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded and his deadly wound was healed and all the world marveled and followed the beast. You got

the picture here, right? You've got this world dominating leader, fearsome and mighty. He has his authority and his power from Satan himself.

And then one of his head is wounded. It's a mortal wound. It's not a superficial injury.

Look at it says in verse three, he's mortally wounded and it's a deadly wound. This man is seriously injured. Perhaps he was injured in some expression of God's judgment against the beast.

But the bottom line is that his deadly wound was healed. And the recovery of the beast only increases his fame and authority. It says there in verse three that all the world marveled and followed the beast.

I find it fascinating that twice later in Revelation chapter 13, the recovery is mentioned in connection to the world's worship and devotion to the beast. Let me show you what I mean. Look at verse 12 in this chapter.

And he exercises all the authority of the first business presence and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. See, isn't that interesting phrase to throw in there? And then look at verse 14 of this chapter. It says at the end of the verse, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

And it's very possible that this world leader will have a dramatic assassination attempt against him. And he will miraculously recover, might I say, as if he is risen from the dead. Wouldn't that be amazing? A world leader.

Everybody has their eyes and it is the hope of the world, a dashing, amazingly competent, good, wonderful man. Cut down by an assassin's attack and then experiencing a miraculous recovery, a miraculous that people say he's been raised from the dead. He would have all that much more authority, all that much more say and power in the affairs of the earth.

So, friends, do you see this? Do you see how he'd be wounded and then healed and the world will believe it and will submit to his power? Look at it here, verse four. So they worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast and they worship the beast saying who was like the beast and who was able to make war with him. You see, as people worship this beast and bow down before the government, they are really bowing down to who? Look at it there in verse four.

They worship the dragon who gave authority to the beast. They may not know that they're actually bowing down to Satan himself, but it's worship of Satan nonetheless. They clearly worship both the beast and the dragon, but their worship of the dragon may be unknowing.

You know, we find so many opposite parallels between the relationship between Jesus and his father and the relationship between the beast and the dragon that it's striking. Remember when Jesus said, if you honor me, you honor my father. What's the same way when you express your devotion to this beast, to this political leader? You're really honoring his father.

Who is who? Satan himself. Now, many people doubt this. How can come up with the whole world worshipping Satan? Look what it says there in verse four.

So they worship the dragon. Yes, the whole world worshipping Satan. Yeah, right.

Friends, let's face it. There are not many open Satan worshipers in the world today. Though Satan worship becomes more and more popular each year, it's still only a tiny fraction of people on this earth who openly

worship Satan.

But this is because most people expect Satan to appear with ugliness and horror. They think of a grotesque figure, the beet red face and the beady eyes and the horns coming forth and the angry, grotesque mouth and all of that. That's wrong, isn't it? Remember what Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians chapter 11, he said, Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

Therefore, Paul wrote, it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness whose end will be according to their works. There's something, if anything, I could communicate to you about this beast, about this antichrist, is that he will appear as the ultimate winner. He will be the absolute picture of success.

When people look at him, they won't think evil. They'll think success. Matter of fact, so successful, look at it here in verse four, they worship to be saying, look at it here, verse four, Americans could be saying this, who is like the beast, who's able to make war with him? He's number one.

That's why we worship him. Who can challenge him? He's so mighty that he cannot be conquered. And so when he blasphemes Jesus, when he persecutes God's people, they will appear to be the complete losers for a short time.

They worship the beast and the dragon behind the beast simply because the beast is so mighty, he's so successful, he appears to be such a winner. Friends, I trust that every one of us have given our lives to Jesus Christ. That you're born again by the spirit of God, that you're abiding in Jesus and that you won't be here on this earth to see the rise of this antichrist, that you'll be watching it from a stadium seat in heaven.

Might I say for those who are left behind on this earth or for those who say I'll wait until another time to get right with Jesus Christ, because I'll just wait until after the rapture and when I see the antichrist come up and then I'll know and then I'll be careful and I'll change my ways. Then you don't understand what it will be like during the Great Tribulation. The antichrist will look like such a complete winner, like such a complete success, and Christians will seem like such a despised, a downtrodden, absolutely worthless minority that it's going to be very likely that you're not going to want to join with the losers.

You're going to want to join with the winners. When you do that, you'll take the mark of the beast. We'll see more about that in this chapter.

And check this out, what it says in verse five, he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies and was given authority to continue for forty two months. Then he opened his mouth and blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name, his tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven. And again, I think it's fascinating that he gives this authority to continue for forty two months.

The beast continues without restraint by God for a period of forty two months. That's that familiar time frame of three and a half years again. And the time frame referred to here is the first three and a half years of that period.

Then in the second three and a half years, God starts wailing on the beast and on his empire and on the world. Friends here is speaking these great blasphemies and seeming no trouble for nothing but success. Look at who he blasphemes against in verse six.

Did you notice that he blasphemes against God? We can understand that blasphemy, his name, his tabernacle. Interesting. You wonder if that isn't a reference to a rebuilt temple upon earth.

Although it seems that at least in the first three and a half years, the Antichrist would be friendly towards the temple. So it may mean something else. It may mean the tabernacle of God in heaven, the true worship of God represented by that.

I think it's very interesting at the end of verse six, it says that the beast also blasphemes those who dwell in heaven. And what's that a reference to? I think it's nothing else than those who were taken up in the rapture. He castigates them, his public proclamations, yes, we've gotten rid of those troublemakers, isn't it good that they've been taken away? Is that alien abduction came and eliminated them or our world program to eliminate the troublemakers in this world? We got rid of them.

And he blasphemes those who dwell in heaven. Though he does that against those who dwell in heaven, look at what he does against those who come to Christ on the earth, verse seven, and it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation.

And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation, chapter 12, described the broad phenomenon of satanic persecution during the tribulation period, and here the main instrument of that persecution is revealed. The main instrument of persecution during the Great Tribulation will be the government of the Antichrist.

He will persecute and kill all those who do not bow down and worship to the beast, and he will seemingly look at it there, overcome them, as it says in verse seven, it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. I don't think that this means that the beast can overcome the faith of the saints, but that he can destroy their physical lives. And by all appearances, he'll defeat the cause of God's people on this earth.

Friends, there will be martyrdoms by the thousands, by the tens of thousands, perhaps by the hundreds of thousands as the Antichrist continues this amazing campaign of persecution against God's people. It's not really overcoming. Let's remember that Jesus said that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church.

And if this group of saints is overcome by Satan. And perhaps they're not the same New Testament church that Jesus spoke of. No, rather, the group here during the Great Tribulation, not completely overcome, beat up on pretty bad during this terrible time of persecution.

But did you notice what it says there in verse eight? And all who dwell on the earth will worship him. This final world dictator will demand and receive worship from the whole earth. But those who worship him will pay the price.

You see, those who worship the beast are also those look in verse nine, verse eight, those who have not been written in the book of life of the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Again, many people scratch their head while they're incredulous when it says the whole earth will worship a man. Haven't we gone beyond that? Well, no, we really haven't.

See, friends, it'll probably be after the pattern of the worship demanded by the Roman emperors in the days of the early church. There were times in the early church when all residents of the Roman Empire were required to burn a pinch of incense before a Roman government official. There was a whole ceremony behind it.

You went to the government office. There was a little statue of Caesar. You walked up to it.

There's a little fire burning on a little altar before the statue of Caesar. You took a pinch of incense. You burned it.

The smoke went up and you said, Caesar is Lord. The government official was standing there. He said, OK, you said it.

They wrote your name on a certificate. They gave you a certificate and you went your way. Christians wouldn't do it.

Christians would not say Caesar is Lord. The Christians would not burn a pinch of incense, which really was a form of sacrifice. They would not sacrifice them to Caesar.

And so for this, Christians were persecuted and Christians were martyred. I want you to know this. The Romans did not see this as a religious matter.

To the Romans, it was a political matter. What they thought you did when you did this was you expressed your allegiance to the Roman state. You were making, if you could say, a pledge of allegiance to Caesar, but in that pledge of allegiance, you specifically said that Caesar was Lord and you sacrificed to him.

Christians wouldn't do it to the Romans. It was a political matter, but the Christians rightly saw it as a religious matter. The Romans said, listen, we don't care if you worship Jesus.

Burn your pinch of incense, say Caesar is Lord, sacrifice to Caesar and then go and worship whoever you want. We don't care. The Christians said, no, my Jesus is the only Lord and I will not say Caesar is Lord.

Friends, it'll probably be much the same way with the Antichrist. The Antichrist will present this and the world will see it. Oh, well, this is just an act of political allegiance.

I want to show my political support for the Antichrist and for his government. And so here I'll do whatever it takes. You want me to take I'll take the mark.

Friends, those who are perceptive, those who are touched by the spirit of God, who have the sensitivity to know it, will know that it is not just a political or economic act, that you are worshipping the Antichrist, you're worshipping Satan when you do it. And so you won't do it or at least you won't do it if you're wise. You see, after the great and terrible totalitarian rulers of the 20th century, when you talk about the Lenins and the Stalins and the Hitlers and the Mao's, it's not hard to imagine a world dominating leader demanding this kind of declaration of allegiance that's really tantamount to worship.

So if you do it, you take the mark, if you express your worship of Satan, of the beast and his government, then what's the result here? Verse eight, your name isn't written in the book of life. The book of life contains the names of all of God's redeemed. And having your name in the book of life and worshipping the beast and his government, they're mutually exclusive.

The two don't go together. You worship the beast, you take the mark. Your name isn't in the book of life, that's all there is to it.

This interesting phrase here, where it says in verse eight. Whose names have not been written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I find the phrase itself interesting and I find its placement in the context interesting.

In the phrase, John says that Jesus, he's the lamb, right? We understand that he was slain from the foundation of the world. They say, well, no, wait a minute. He was slain thousands of years into history on a hill called Calvary, right outside of the walls of Jerusalem.

No, John says he was slain from the foundation of the world. This deeply meaningful title for Jesus reminds us that God's plan of redemption was set in place even before he created the beings who would be redeemed. Friends, God wasn't surprised by the fall of Adam or any other evidence of the fallen nature of man.

Does anybody think that God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? God said, well, let's give this a try. And then they messed up and go, oh, what am I going to do now? Oh, well, they're saying, well, Jesus, are you willing to help me out here? Let's see if we can fix this whole mess. No, God is not making it up as he goes along.

It's all going according to plan. Friends, might I say that's why I think the placement of it in this context is don't you think that John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is trying to remind you and I that as we read this and it seems like this beast, this Antichrist has so much power, so much authority. He's whispering to us a little phrase at the end of verse eight.

Jesus is in control. God's running this whole thing. You don't have to worry about it.

It's going to be terrible, but God knows what he's doing with it. Look at the warning here in verse nine. If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity. He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints.

This introduces a very solemn, very sober word of warning meant to capture the attention of everybody who hears. When he says he who leads into captivity shall go into captivity, I think what he's expressing there is that the workers, the officers, the functionaries of the beast, they're not without guilt. Even those things were prophesied and they're part of God's predetermined plan.

It doesn't lessen in the slightest way man's personal responsibility. If you work for the beast and if you lead others into captivity, you shall certainly go into captivity yourself. God will measure unto you how you've measured to others.

And if you try to say, I was just following orders, God won't accept it. And if you try to say, well, Lord, you prophesied this. Look around.

I read Revelation 13. God won't accept it. You're still personally responsible for what you've done.

Might I say it also may have a secondary and additional meaning. God may be trying to communicate through verse 10. To people who are on the earth during the Great Tribulation, I imagine a small cadre of

people have come to Christ after the tribulation, excuse me, after the rapture, during the Great Tribulation.

And there they are. They're wondering what they should do about this world dominating confederation of nations and the Antichrist and the persecution that they're facing. And I think God may speak to them through a verse like verse 10 and say, don't try to take up a sword against them.

You try to lead them into captivity. You'll be led into captivity. You try to kill them.

They're going to kill you. No, the only victory is steadfast faith and endurance in Jesus Christ. There is no hope in fighting militarily against the Antichrist.

No, no chance of that. But rather, it's the patience and the faith of the saints that's going to win the victory in the end. In verses one through 10 of Revelation, chapter 13, described for us that the beast that rose up from the sea, the Antichrist, now in verse 11, he starts talking about a different beast.

Take a look. He says, then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. Now, this creature represents someone like the beast rising up from the sea because the same word beast is used to describe both of them.

At the same time, this beast is different from the beast of Revelation, chapter 13, verse one. Well, they're different because of their origin. One comes out of the sea, one comes out of the earth.

They're different in rank because the second is subordinate to the first. The second beast will lead the world in worship, not unto himself, but unto the first beast. And they're also different in appearance.

The first beast had that seven head, 10 horn things going on, right? This beast, look at him, verse 11, had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And through history, many people have sought to say, well, what does it mean, these two horns that the second beast has? And when I say, well, he has his authority in two realms. He has religious authority and political authority.

That may be the case. I think certainly it shows in proportion. He has less power, less force than the first beast, right? He had 10 horns.

He only has two. It also means something that that's how many horns lambs have, too. And he looks like a lamb.

But even though he looks like a lamb, he speaks like a dragon. His message is the same as the first beast. Now, what's fascinating about this is this second beast is called the false prophet.

Revelation chapter 16, verse 13, chapter 19, verse 20 and chapter 20, verse 10, very specifically referred to the second piece beast, giving him the title of the false prophet. He's someone distinct from the first beast and he's distinct from the dragon. I want you to pause and see something here.

You really have an unholy trinity here, don't you? You have the dragon, you have the first beast and now you have the second beast. The dragon is the anti father. The beast rising from the sea is the anti Christ and the beast rising from the land is the anti Holy Spirit.

Let's look at his job description here, beginning at verse 12. 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. And he performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from

heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and causes many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. This beast rising from the earth is essentially a satanic prophet who leads the world to worship the beast and the dragon.

Now, again, it may seem fantastic to some that the world be led into worship of a man and of the devil. Many people, when they look at the world today, they say, look, the world is getting more and more secular. People are getting more and more irreligious.

They're moving away from a religion. And so how can you say that there's going to be this worldwide revival of religion around the beast and the dragon in the end times? Well, friends, I want you to notice something that by nature, by deep human nature, men have an undeniable religious impulse. You know what else they have? An undeniable rebellion against God.

You know what men want most? Fallen man. He doesn't want no religion. He wants religion, but without God.

You see, what men want most is not the elimination of religion, but their own religion. They say they want the kingdom, but they don't want God in it. They want to be their own God or make their own God.

And so, to promote this, this beast that rises from the land performs great signs. You see, the beast rising from the land has great signs and wonders to back up his false teaching, and a specific miracle of the false prophet is described here in verse 13. He performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth and the sight of men.

Friends, it's important that John highlights this miracle, and I don't think this is the only miracle in the false prophet's bag of tricks, but this is the one John saw, and this is the one he highlights. Why? Well, because in the eyes of the deceived world, it answers the miracle of the two witnesses. In Revelation chapter 11, describing the two witnesses who minister during this same period, it says that they have the power to send fire out of their mouth to devour any of their enemies.

Well, what does Satan want to show us? Hey, I've got the same power. And so the false prophet has the same power to bring out fire from on the earth in the sight of men. I think also to the deceived world, this will put this false prophet in the class of Elijah.

You remember Elijah on Mount Carmel, challenging the prophets of Baal? Hey, guys, let's do it. Let's choose between our two gods. You know, if the Lord be God, let's serve him.

If Baal be God, let's choose him. Let the God who answers by fire be the true God. So the prophets of Baal set up their sacrifice and they danced around the thing and they cut themselves and they screamed and they cried and they wailed and that was their worship.

Right. You got to wake the Baal up, right? You don't have to pray to God that way, friends. And sometimes people pray to God as if they got to wake him up.

You don't have to wake him up, friends. No fire came when the prophets of Baal did their thing. But when Elijah prayed, fire came down from heaven and devoured his sacrifice.

But friends, won't it be amazing to see this false prophet rise up and say, let the true God answer with fire and he will bring down fire from heaven on the earth and perform this deceptive wonder. See, friends, we've got to understand that there's supernatural power against God and the truth, as well as supernatural power for God and the truth, a miracle, a wonder a sign. It's not necessarily of God.

There's always been a satanic supernaturalism in the world. We've got to be aware of it. I could list the example and the after example in the scriptures in the days of the Exodus, right? When Moses was there in the court of the Egyptians, he performed miracles.

The magicians of Pharaoh by the power of Satan performed similar miracles. Jesus said that some of his followers would work miracles even in his name, but they would be false followers and they would perish in hell. Jesus also said that in the end times, false prophets would emerge and show great signs and wonders to deceive.

And the apostle Paul himself said that the Antichrist will come with all power, signs and lying wonders. Friends, knowing all this. The emphasis upon signs and wonders among some Christians is just flat out frightening.

Some Christians say, or at least they think this, even if they don't say it, they say you can know where God really is and where his power really is by signs and wonders. Thinking this way leads you wide open to deception, because there are satanic signs and wonders and they'll be on the earth stronger than ever in the days of the Great Tribulation. Years ago I saw on television a large, multi-denominational conference of people who thought that way.

And their slogan, it was on a huge banner over the conference platform. This is what their slogan for the conference was on the banner. Unity under signs and wonders.

I saw that slogan and I said, you know what? That's a unity that Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet could join right into. They'll love unity under signs and wonders. Friends, signs and wonders will be present among Christians, but the real marks of God's work are love and truth.

That's it. You can be deceived if you put too great an emphasis on signs and wonders. If you notice, it's fascinating how it says that he was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast.

That's in verse 15. That the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. The beast rising from the earth will use a deceptive, animated image as the focus point of worship of the beast.

Now, again, it may seem strange to us that the whole world given over to this kind of worship to the image of a man. But friends, don't forget that the personality cults of the totalitarian governments in the 20th century, they're perfect examples of this kind of worship. Think of the communist states of the Soviet Union or communist China.

And what would there be in every classroom, in every house, in every public building? There would be the omnipresent picture of the leader everywhere. Statues, pictures, representations of the leader all the time. That's a pattern that will ultimately be fulfilled by the Antichrist.

But this image, this image will be different. Look at it here in verse 15. It says that the image will be able to breathe and speak.

And whether the image is animated supernaturally or technologically, the result is going to be impressive. You know, Psalm 135 says this, Psalm 135, verses 15 and 16. He says, the idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes they have, but they see not. This idol is going to speak. This idol is going to deceive many people.

It's going to be a different kind of idol. And friends, let me tell you something. It will be very deceptive and very enthralling to the world.

This isn't going to be some hokey thing like you see at Disneyland and great moments with Mr. Lincoln. Though I love that attraction, I go to it every time I go to Disneyland. But it's not going to be some robot, you know, creaking around like that.

No, not at all. Whatever this image is, it's going to be persuasive. This idolatrous image is what Jesus, Daniel and the Apostle Paul spoke of as the abomination of desolation.

It's an idolatrous image set up in the holy place of a rebuilt temple. It's an abomination in the sense that it's a supreme idolatry and it's desolation in the sense that it brings the judgment described by the seals, the trumpets and the bowls. This is the summation of the power of the Antichrist, whose authority ends after these forty two months.

This marks the halfway point of the seven years of man's rule on this planet. I think it's fascinating that when this image is erected and all the world is commanded to worship it and so much of the world does, except for those faithful few who resist it. At that point, the Antichrist power has peaked and then it's over because at that point God starts pouring out his judgment.

There's also an economic strategy at work here. Look at verse 60. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Under the government of the Antichrist and his associates, all will be given a mark and without the mark, no one will be able to participate in the economy. You won't be able to buy. You won't be able to sell.

I think that this will be a literal mark. I think the technology to give people a mark that enables them to buy and sell in the electronic technology of today, in the electronic economy, it's available. It's out there right now.

There's a lot of different ways it could happen. And I think as Christians, we should never latch on to one thing we see in the news and say, well, this is going to be it. Because, you know, there's countless different ways it could happen.

Let me tell you about one that's very interesting. I'm not saying it's going to be the one, but it's the kind of technology that will certainly make up a part of this. It comes from a company called Applied Digital Solutions.

It's developing a product called, fascinatingly, Digital Angel. And Digital Angel is a microchip implanted in the body, powered by the body's own biomechanical electricity. With that microchip, it can send out a signal that communicates with satellites.

This is from a real, legitimate company whose stock is exchanged on major stock exchanges. This isn't some guy working out of his garage doing this. In a press release, Dr. Peter Zhao of Digital Angel said this, I'm particularly excited about Digital Angel's ability to save lives by remotely monitoring the medical conditions of at-risk patients and providing emergency rescue units with the person's exact location.

Now, listen to this. I also see great potential for Digital Angel in the area of location-aware e-commerce. This is a whole new wireless and web-enabled frontier in which a purchaser's actual location is integral to making a successful sale or providing a valuable location-critical service.

In other words, that mark, communicating with a satellite, computer interface, accessing your accounts, this and that, the transactions can be made just with a mark that's on your hand or on your forehead. It isn't hard to see how this kind of mark can become commonplace simply as a logical step in the course of the electronic economy. You know what I really find fascinating? Digital Angel's slogan.

Here it is. Digital Angel, technology that cares. That doesn't sound just like the kind of slogan they'd use to get something like this over.

So it would be a mark. A mark, as verse 16 says, on their right hand or on their foreheads. I think this is interesting because if you go back to Revelation chapter 7, it says that God identified his people with a mark on their forehead.

Satan is not a creative being at all. He's never created anything original. Never.

All he can do is rip off God. All he can do is take what God has done and distort it and change it and alter it and bring it down. He's never created anything new.

He's never come up with a new idea. Once the satanic parody of something God will do. Then it says there in verse 17, no one may buy or sell except the one with the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name.

Verse 18. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast for it is the number of a man.

His number is 666. Now, the idea of a number of a name was common in the ancient world in most ancient languages, including ancient Greek and ancient Hebrew, letters were assigned a numerical value. For example, if you translated the idea into our alphabet, A would equal one, B would equal two, and you just go down the alphabet like that.

And this was a common way of thinking and expressing. For example, there's a graffiti in the ancient remains of the city of Pompeii and a guy wrote on a wall, I love her, whose number is 545. The numerical value of this girl's name added up to 545, and so it was his way of referring to it, just a code word, a sweet thing that he would say.

But here we find in verse 18, there's nothing sweet about this. This Antichrist, his name or his number is 666. Now, does this tell us who the beast is by figuring out the numerical value of a name and seeing if it

adds up to 666? You know, using this method, there's been a lot of candidates for the Antichrist suggested through the years.

A lot of people see the Pope or the papacy in this or John Knox or Martin Luther or Napoleon or Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin. Henry Kissinger is one that I remember even in my own lifetime. Say, ah, it added up the numbers.

You can make Kissinger's name add up to 666. But friends, the schemes for unlocking the number of the beast, they're as confusing as they are endless. Can I read you a couple of totally confusing examples from commentaries? Poole, excellent commentator, but not on this point.

He says that as 12, the square root of 144 is God's number. So 25 is the square root of the Antichrist number 666. And by this enigmatic expression, we are taught that the Antichrist should be a political body that should as much affect the number 15 or 25 as God seems to have his church affected the number 12.

What? I didn't catch the square root thing there in the book of Revelation or another commentator, John Trapp. He says the rear of Rome's ruin is held to be by some of the year 1666. It's plain, says one.

Satan shall be tied up a thousand years. 666 is the number of the beast. Antichrist shall show long reign.

And these two together make just the number. So he just adds together a thousand and 666 and comes up with some other number. How about this? Here's the solution of the mystery.

Let him who has a mind for investigation of this kind find out a kingdom which contains precisely the number 666, for this must be infallibly the name of the beast. The Latin kingdom has exclusively this number. That's from Adam Clark and other commentators observed that there's six Roman numerals, right? I, V, X, L, C and D. You add them all up.

You get 666. Some take this to say that the Antichrist would be a Roman or they point out that all the numbers from one to thirty six add up to 666 and beast in an evil sense appears in the Bible. How many times? Thirty six times.

I don't think that means anything. But you see commentators talking about it. They say it's the number of a man.

One persistent opinion, especially in the early church, was that 666 is a code way of referring to Caesar Nero. And based on this, that's why many people thought that the Antichrist would actually be Nero back from the dead. But, you know, you have to do to the name Caesar Nero to make it fit into 666.

Oh, it'll work if you do a little work on the name. First, you have to take an alternative spelling of a Greek form of the Latin name transliterated into Hebrew characters. And then it'll add up to 666.

Friends, you're working it when you're doing that. Other people know that the letters of the word Jesus in the ancient Greek alphabet, they add up to eight hundred and eighty eight. 666 may be a satanic counterpart to the name of Jesus, or 666 may be God's evaluation of that counterpart where it falls short three times.

You see, as compared to the number 888, the number 666 may signify an unholy trinity. It may be a human or demonic imitation of God inherently falling short of the perfect and the true. Seven is the number of perfection and completeness.

It doesn't quite make it three times over. Friends, if there's any place that I would say you want to get some insight on 666. It's not with your adding machine.

It's with your Bible. Go back to First Kings, Chapter 10, the book of First Kings, Chapter 10. We're told something very fascinating about the wages of Solomon.

First Kings, Chapter 10, verse 14. The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold. I want you to know that that's the only other place in the Bible where the exact number 666 appears.

In Revelation, Chapter 13. And it's here. You see, I think this perhaps suggests that the Antichrist, like Solomon, is a good man that became corrupted.

If I had to give you my best guess, I think that's what the number 666 identifies more than anything. And then if there's more to it than that, it'll only be understood after the fact. You see, friends, modern interpretations of the idea of Antichrist, they're full of the idea of some demon child, right? Marked by obvious evil from his birth.

You know, he's walking down the street and he's killing his little playmates and he's doing all sorts of little evil things for his very, very little days. That's like it is in the Omen movies. Friends, I think the Antichrist will probably be someone whose evil is only seen after his rise to power.

He'll be a good man gone bad. And who knows if it won't have something to do with that assassination attempt. And his recovery of life, maybe he'll reach out to some supernatural power for healing at that assassination attempt.

However, it happens, he'll be a man possessed and completely dominated by Satan himself. Friends, Christians don't need to fear the number 666 in a superstitious way. Every once while you hear the story of some sweet old lady with 666 on her license plate and she brings it back to the DMV, you know, because she doesn't want that number.

Friends, that number has to do with the worship of the beast, not the number in itself. So friends, you see where we're left here at the end of Revelation chapter 13. We've got an imitation Jesus and an imitation Holy Spirit.

Now, it's all very interesting to talk about what we talked about tonight in Revelation 13. Amen. But it's kind of depressing.

And I think that the last thing in the world Christians should have is an obsession with the Antichrist. I'm here to tell you that I'm not looking for the Antichrist, I'm looking for Jesus Christ. And I believe that we're going to see Jesus Christ way before we'll ever see the Antichrist.

It's important for us to know what the Bible says in Revelation chapter 13, that the bottom line is this instead of obsessing with fear and interest about the imitation, about the Antichrist, how much more appropriate it is for Christians to be interested in the genuine, that is, Jesus Christ. He's our salvation and he's going to work it out despite the best shot that the Antichrist gets. So let's pray and ask the Lord to cleanse ourselves a little bit after spending all this time with the Antichrist and put our hearts and minds on Jesus.

Lord God. You just feel like we need a cleansing before you, not because anything we said or talked about tonight is impure or unholy. Lord, after a whole chapter that describes the infamous career of the Antichrist and his false prophet.

Lord, more than ever, do we want to run back to Jesus and say you're our Lord, you're our master. We're going to bow down and worship you. We're going to receive your mark and let you be the Lord of our life.

Father, I pray that you'd help us to walk true and right with Jesus Christ that will never be troubled or tempted by the Antichrist, but Lord, rather will be counted worthy to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of Man. Help us to that end, Lord, we give it to you tonight in Jesus name. Amen.

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