

The Book Of Revelation Study 69

Revelation 13:11-18 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.*

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.*

¹³ *He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.*

¹⁴ *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.*

¹⁵ *He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, 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.*

¹⁶ *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,*

¹⁷ *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.*

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.*

We talked about this second beast a bit the last time we were studying together. And we found that Johns vision of the false prophet reveals three key elements;

His person,
His power,
His program.

HIS PERSON

Revelation 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.*

Having seen the terrifying vision of the first beast (Antichrist) in chapter 13:1-10, John then **saw another beast**.

Some view this second **beast** as an institution, a form of government, or an ideology.

But the use of *allos* which means another of the same kind indicates that he , like the first beast, will be a person.

Further proof of that comes from chapter 19:20;

Revelation 19:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

Obviously it is people, not ideologies, institutions, or governments, that God will cast into hell.

Now in contrast to the first beast, who will come up out of the sea (*13:1*), the second **beast** will come **up out of the earth**.

Like Antichrist the false prophet will be indwelt by a demon out of the abyss.

But the fact that it says that he will come **up out of the earth has meaning**. In the ancient world, the **earth** was less mysterious and foreboding than the sea.

That the false prophet arises from the earth 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 in *Matt 7:15*.

In the description of the first beast, with its ten horns, seven heads, ten crowns and seven blasphemous names (*13:1*), he was portrayed as grotesque and frightening.

In contrast the second **beast** we see he has only **two horns**.

That indicates that he is not characterized by the same massive might as Antichrist. And unlike the savage, ferocious, fierce, and deadly Antichrist, who is likened to a leopard, bear and lion (*13:2*), the false prophet seems as harmless as a **lamb**.

He does not come as a conquering dictator, but on the surface appears as subtle deceiver, with meekness and gentleness, though not without great authority.

Despite his deceptively mild appearance the false prophet is no less a child of hell than the Antichrist.

That is evident because **he spoke as a dragon**, as strange voice indeed for a lamb.

The false prophet, like Antichrist (*13:2,5*), will be the **dragon** Satan's mouthpiece, speaking his words.

Now he will not echo the blasphemous tirades against God that will pour from the lips of Antichrist, instead, he will speak winsome, deceiving words of praise about the Antichrist, luring the world to worship that vile, satanic dictator.

False prophets often appear meek, mild, and harmless. They offer hope and solutions to the problems troubling men and women.

Yet they are ever the voices of hell, and when they open their mouths, Satan speaks. So it will be amid the unspeakable horrors of the Tribulation.

The false prophet will come like a lamb, speaking false, deceptive words of comfort.

He will promise the suffering, tormented people of the world that all will be well if only they will worship Antichrist.

But those who fall for his subtle lies will face the terrifying judgment of God;

Revelation 14:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ *Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,*

¹⁰ *he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in*

the presence of the Lamb.

¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

Revelation 16:2 (NKJV)

² So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Now what about:

HIS POWER

Revelation 13:12-14 (NKJV)

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.

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

¹⁴ 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.

Though primarily a subtle deceiver, the false prophet will not be impotent.

John notes that **he exercises all the authority of the first beast** (Antichrist).

There are those who believe that the false prophet will replace Antichrist and rule alone during the Great Tribulation.

That is impossible however, since the text explicitly says that the false prophet **exercises his authority** in the **presence** of Antichrist ;

Revelation 13:14a (NKJV)

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast,

Revelation 19:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Right up to the end we see them together. They are both alive when Christ returns.

What is being said here is that the false prophet will exercise the same kind of demonic power and authority as the Antichrist does since both are empowered by the same hellish source.

That he **exercises his authority** in Antichrist's **presence** implies that Antichrist will have delegated that authority to him.

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.

He will have not only the seeming miracle of the Antichrist's death and resurrection, but also signs and wonders that he will perform by the power of Satan. These false wonders will be extremely persuasive;

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,*

¹⁰ *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

Those who reject the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will eagerly accept the damning false gospel preached by the false prophet, a gospel seemingly verified by spectacular super-natural signs

Now John defines the people who will be deceived as **those who dwell on the earth**. It is a technical phrase used throughout Revelation to refer to unbelievers.

Also the second beast will succeed because:

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ *And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,*

¹² *that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

As the power of Antichrist and the persuasiveness of the false prophet grow, Satan will escalate the false world religion of Antichrist worship.

Humanity will eventually come to be so completely under the influence of the false prophet that people will obey his command **to make an image to the beast**.

The world will engage in the most shocking, blatant idolatry ever seen.

Like Nebuchadnezzar before him, but on a global scale, Antichrist, aided by the false prophet, will set up a statue of himself as a symbol of his deity and worldwide worship.

This image will be set up on the temple grounds in Jerusalem;

2 Thessalonians 2:4b (NKJV)

⁴ *so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

This will be a tribute to the awesome power of Antichrist, "*who had the wound of the sword and has come to life*", to seemingly conquer death.

Then there is;

HIS PROGRAM

Revelation 13:15-18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, 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.*

¹⁶ *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,*

¹⁷ *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.*

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.*

The idolatrous image of the Antichrist will be different from any other idol in human history. The Bible scornfully denounces idols as having mouths, yet being unable to speak

Psalm 115:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ *Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.*

⁵ *They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see;*

Isaiah 46:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ *They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.*

⁷ *They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it And set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer Nor save him out of his trouble.*

Habakkuk 2:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *"What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols?"*

¹⁹ *Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!' To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!' Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, Yet in it there is no breath at all.*

In another display of his power to deceive, the false prophet will **give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak.**

Breath translates *pneuma*, not *zoe* or *bios*, the Greek words normally translated *life*.

The false prophet will animate the image of Antichrist so that it gives the appearance of being alive.

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

Add to that the world's desperate need, amid the carnage of the Tribulation, to believe in a death conqueror, and the ruse becomes very believable.

After his immense worldwide success and after dropping his façade of gentleness, the false prophet will **cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

As in the case of Nebuchadnezzar's image, the death sentence will be decreed from those who refuse to worship the image of Antichrist.

Many of the martyrs seen earlier in Revelation

Revelation 6:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

¹⁰ *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

¹¹ *Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

Many of these martyrs are those who will be killed during this terrible time of persecution.

Though the death sentence will be decreed on all, not all believers will be killed.

Some will survive until Christ returns and will enter His millennial kingdom as living people.

Matthew 25:31-40 (NKJV)

³¹ *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

³² *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

³³ *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

³⁴ *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

³⁵ *for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*

³⁶ *I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

³⁷ *Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?*

³⁸ *When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*

³⁹ *Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'*

⁴⁰ *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

Nor will Antichrist and his henchmen kill all the Jews, remember two thirds of them will perish, but the rest will be protected.

Zechariah 13:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ *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:*

⁹ *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.' "*

Part of his plan to enforce the worship of Antichrist, the false prophet will require **all** categories of unbelievers, summarized as **the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.**

Mark (*charagma*; from *charasso*, "I engrave") this was the term used for images, or the name of the emperor engraved on Roman coins.

In the ancient world, such marks (tattoos or brands) were commonly given to slaves, soldiers, and devotees of religious cults;

Galatians 6:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

You remember God sealed, with a mark on the forehead, the 144,000 to preserve them from His wrath against the unbelieving world

Revelation 7:2-4 (NKJV)

² *Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,*

³ *saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

⁴ *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:*

The false prophet here seals the unbelievers to preserve them from Antichrist's wrath against God's people.

Besides the constant threat of death, refusing to take the mark of the beast will have dire practical consequences in daily living:

No one will be able to buy or sell, except the one who has the mark.

Antichrist's empire will maintain strict economic control over the world.

Food, clothing, medical supplies, and the other necessities of life potentially in demand in the devastated earth, which has felt the judgment of God will be unobtainable for those without the **mark**.

Currency will probably vanish, to be replaced by controlled credit.

Instead of a credit card, which can be lost, people will have a **mark** in their forehead or hands that would identify them to a central computer system.

Life under totalitarian governments in our time provides a faint glimpse of what is to come.

A man who had lived under Bulgaria's communist regime remarked;

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.

(Cited in W. A. Criswell, Expository Sermons on Revelation [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969], 4:120-21)

Further describing the mark, John notes that it will consist of **either the name of the beast or the number of his name**.

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.

The exclamation, **here is wisdom, or understand**, is a warning to those alive at that time to be wise and discerning.

They will need to recognize what is happening and understand the significance of the number connected with Antichrist's name.

To those **understanding** will be able to **calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty six**.

Perhaps no detail in Revelation has intrigued people more than this **number**.

The precise significance of the number 666 awaits the future time of the Antichrist, but it is noteworthy that the **number is that of a man**.

In God's Word

Seven, the number of perfection, is God's number.

Since man fall short of perfection, his number is six.

Man was created on the sixth day, slaves were freed after six years of service, fields were to be sown for only six consecutive years.

Repeating the number three times emphasizes that this is man's number, just as the thrice repeated statement "holy, holy, holy" stresses God's absolute holiness.

A false religion on a scale never before seen is coming, led by the most notorious of all false prophets.

Most people will follow the seeming safe and prudent course, worshiping the Antichrist, and receiving his mark.

But that is a tragic mistake with disastrous consequences, for those who persist in worshiping the beast will face the wrath of God.

In a sobering passage, Revelation warns of their fate:

Revelation 14:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,

¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

And what about the false prophet, who will usher uncounted millions on to the broadest and most dangerous of all the roads leading to destruction?

He will suffer an equally appalling and terrifying fate:

Revelation 19:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Now listen, this passage is not intended to be the source of fruitless speculation about its details.

Rather it stands as a warning to the unbelieving world. It also challenges believers to lead careful, watchful, godly lives

1 Peter 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

2 Peter 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,