

12.06.20

Revelation

Chapter 13 - Revealing the Beast Deified by the World

The Deception & Worship of the Beast (vs. 11-15)

Revelation 13:11-15: Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

I spoke with somebody this last week about Revelation, and they told me, “You know, I really don't like Revelation. I don't want to get into that particular book. I like these other books, and it really reveals the love of God.” And I said, “Well, Revelation reveals the love of God, too.” And they said, “Well, you know, I just feel queasy about it. I don't want to talk about it.” So, we didn't talk about it. But what's sad to say is that, as I told him, I said, “All Scripture is inspired by God, all Scripture. And all Scripture, therefore, is profitable for you, for correction, for reproof, for training in righteousness. So, that actually means Revelation as well.” There are passages that are difficult to read because I think that often times the difficulty in reading them, the person is not coming from the Spirit of the Lord. If, in fact, the Spirit of Christ is beginning to reveal these things to you, you begin to understand them and begin to realize how wonderful they are. The fundamental point of the Book of Revelation is to encourage and strengthen the church for the purpose of causing them to long for the coming of

their Savior. So, the whole book is about and written for the church. It's for us. It's not for those that are left behind and they have directions on what to do while these things are going on. It's for us. And what He's revealing to us is what sin looks like when it's allowed to go to its extent. So, if you go to the extremity of sin, what does it look like? And what does this world look like when God says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"? Why is He telling you to do that? Well, you wouldn't know unless He unveiled or took off the mask of the world. And, you know, once He starts taking off the mask, you go, "Well, that's a beast." And God goes, "That's what I've been telling you." But you've been holding hands with the devil, and you didn't even know it because it looks so attractive. And so, the world will glitter itself up and make itself look extremely attractive to people, but the bottom line is, it's still just a beast. And God is going to be revealing that. So, the pictures that you have in the Book of Revelation specifically are pictures that are given to reveal the true nature of things. What's the true nature of God? Well, it's a Lamb as if slain. God loves you and longs to give His life for you and would do it

without even thinking, like a lamb that was slain. Lambs don't think about going in and getting slain, but it is the love of God that would do this for us. So, what a marvelous picture that is given in the Book of Revelation. What is the world like? It's a beast. It's a ravenous beast. God has created all things that we might have visual pictures of what things that are spiritual look like. And so, He begins to paint those pictures for us so that we understand who we're dealing with and what is behind. I mean, difficult things come up in the world, and we go, "I'm shocked." And I go, "I'm not. It's a beast." And if you realize who is the god of this world and what he is doing, then things become a little bit clearer.

So, as we talk in this particular passage about the beast and the pictures that are given to us, understand that they are clearly representative. And here again, the debate is, how do I know if something's figurative or metaphorical, or how do I know that it's just a representation of something? Well, the reason you know is that it says within the text, "these things are this." And

so, within the passage, He'll go on and actually define what they are.

If you look in Revelation 17, just to reiterate, and you know, sometimes it's good to go to the back and so you get to read what the descriptions are. But if you look in Revelation 17, when it says the beast is coming out of the sea, He tells us what the sea is; He tells us what the waters are.

(Revelation 17:15) “And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.””

And once again, the seas, the restless seas, the tumultuous seas are a perfect description of the masses. It's a perfect description of them. So, He gives that picture. How does God see the masses of the world? Well, He sees them as very volatile, very capricious; they have no sense of stability in them, and they're carried away and tossed by every wind that comes along. So, people are generally, what? Fickle, one would say. Yeah. That's a perfect description of them. When He talks about this beast, and He talks about the horns, of course, we know

that horns are a symbol of power, but He doesn't just leave it there.

If you look in Revelation 17:12, He says, if you read with me,

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...”

So, yes, there is imagery in Scripture. Where there's a description of what the imagery means, then you know it's metaphorical and figurative. If there's not a description, then you know it's literal. That's pretty easy, isn't it? So, within the text, He'll describe certain things.

The wonderful thing about Revelation is, it's not just jumping into this. If you go all the way back to Daniel, we see that these patterns have already been formed through prophecy. And if you look specifically with me in Daniel 7, you'll see a prophecy that is given, and a prophecy that is given describing beasts that come out.

(Daniel 7:3) “And four great beasts were coming up from the sea...”

It almost sounds exactly like what we were reading at the beginning of Revelation 13. And so, He goes on and says,

(Daniel 7:4) “The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, ...”

And he goes on to describe that.

Then he goes on and he says,

(Daniel 7:5) “And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear...”

And then he goes on and he said,

“... another one, like a leopard...”

And then he goes on with the 4th beast.

So, if you go on in that chapter, Daniel 7:17, he tells you what the great beasts are.

(Daniel 7:17) “These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth.”

So, he's not leaving it up for you to guess, you know, this isn't Pastor's idea, some wild idea. Well, I'll tell you, these are kingdoms. He says it. These are kingdoms. So, when he refers to “kings,” it's not referring to the kings, but the kingdoms as well. The fact that they're coming out of the sea, they are coming out of masses of people. People have their kings that they establish, their leaders that

they establish, that represent them. You go, “Well, the people voted for them, they must be wonderful kings.” Well, I don't know. It might have been a good day for them, and the waves were calm. It may have been a volatile year, and the waves were going all over the place, and they choose somebody that is horrible. But in every case, the interesting description is they're beasts. And the point is that they're not coming to save you like a Lamb. They're coming to devour you like a beast. So, regardless of who the kingdom or what the kingdom is, and of course, the list goes on.

In fact, in Chapter 8, he does a similar thing with giving beasts, a goat with horns and a ram and stuff like this.

And if you look in Daniel 8, if you drop on down to verse 20, it says,

(Daniel 8:20) “

“The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.

(Daniel 8:21) The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece...”

So, before, he was talking about the kingdom of Babylon, the kingdom of Medes and the Persians, the kingdom of Greece, the kingdom of Rome. But here specifically he's emphasizing. But he actually tells you within the text who he's talking about, so there's not a question.

That was an introduction. When we come to Chapter 13, and you look at the beginning of Chapter 13, if you look at the description, very similar to Daniel,

(Revelation 13:1) “And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea...”

Well, that's familiar, isn't it?

“... having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

(Revelation 13:2) And the beast which I saw was like a leopard...”

Well, that was like the beast that represented Greece.

“... and his feet were like those of a bear, ...”

Well, that was like the Medes and the Persians.

“... and his mouth like the mouth of a lion...”

Well, that was like Babylon. What is He saying? Well, what He's saying is this final beast is a conglomerate of nations. That's exactly what He's saying. So, what are the nations in the end day going to be like? Well, they're going to be like their forefathers, the beasts, and their desire is to devour. But they'll have a little bit of hostility and hatred and ferociousness of their forefathers, a tad here of the Assyrians, a tad here of the Babylonians, a tad of the Medes and the Persians, a little bit of Greece in them, perhaps some Rome in them, and they're all going to come together in that final day. So, once again, the picture that is painted, and as we read in Revelation 17, the horns that you saw, these are kings, the authority that comes into play is what we're talking about. And it's the authority on the world. Now, here again, the point is that this authority comes out of a sea that is tumultuous. So, it comes out of a people that, I'll say this as nice as I can, don't think good. So, here you have the world coming together and they say, “We're all together. We're going to save the world.” Or whatever they're going to do. But the

fact of the matter is that they're beasts and they're going to devour the world. Things are not going to get better when we come together as one world. Things are going to get worse. Maybe you've seen that. But this beast comes out and the one thing that this beast will have in common, strangely enough, is that he's going to hate God. That's pretty interesting. So, it actually says he's going to have blasphemous words in his mouth, and he's going to say terrible and horrible things. So, the passage reads that way.

The emphasis of the text is that you have a people that have made this power, that has brought this people together. And at the end of Chapter 13, he says, "I just want to remind you that the number of the beasts is the number of us. It's the number of man." So, that's us. We're the beasts. We're the ones that have conjured us. And people read Revelation, they go, "Oh, this horrible beast is going to come." Yeah, it's you. And look, there's no beast more horrible than man. Beasts aren't by nature vindictive. They don't hold on to grudges and bitterness for years and years and years. And they don't plan to do

evil. They just eat you and it's nothing personal. But the beast of man, he plans on doing it. And he'll kill for no reason. So, it's beginning to demonstrate to us what the world is like. And that's the point of the imagery. The point of the imagery is to help you understand what has been, because the perception is that God is hostile to us and God says, "No, you're hostile to Me and you're hostile to one another." And of course, the warning to Paul is don't devour one another with your freedoms. So, as you go down this passage, those are the descriptions.

It is with that in the background that we pick up, and we're going to see another beast beyond the beast. And here again, I don't want to re-go over the things that we've already gone over in the first 10 verses. But if you pick up with me in verse 11, there's another beast that comes up. Now, the first one is that which comes up out of the sea, and so you sense this tumultuousness of humanity that brings forth this government, this kingdom that begins to rule. And it doesn't seem like there's just one person ruling, so to say, but there are 10, and then there are 7 heads. So, there are 10 rulers in 7 kingdoms,

and it's a conglomerate. They've come together. And that's obvious by the nature of the different beasts that come in. What's interesting about this beast is it is specifically representative of peoples, the peoples of the world. Now, this is what makes it interesting, because what the beast is going to do, and the ravenous beast, and what Scripture is ultimately going to show us, is that there's a demonic force behind all this; but what the beast is going to do is it's going to exalt itself. Now, this might at first sound a little strange until you begin to think that, quite frankly, most people are narcissistic. And it's very easy for them to exalt themselves. Get on the internet. So, you understand that the world loves any way in which they can pat themselves on the back and declare themselves as wonderful. But that's the beast of it all. Because man, when he is elevated, only becomes more ferocious.

But as we look at the passage, we pick up, and now there's another beast, but he's not coming out of the sea. He's coming out of the earth. So, you want to take note of these little nuances.

So, it picks up in verse 11,

(Revelation 13:11) “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; ...”

Now, with the differentiation of the sea and the earth, the emphasis of this particular description is going to be the things that the earth contains.

And more specifically, earth is oftentimes mentioned, whether it's... I'll give you an example, Philippians 3. Just take a moment and look with me.

(Philippians 3:17) “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

(Philippians 3:18) For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

(Philippians 3:19) whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”

The same thing is going to be seen in Colossians 3:2. But the emphasis is, of course, the things of the world. And

the text is describing a beast that is going to be using the things of the world to allure. That makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

So, the passage reads this way,

(Revelation 13:11) “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon (*drakōn*).”

The word that is used there that we transliterate into “dragon,” is an interesting description of something that is so fascinating and so powerful that you can't take your eyes off it. And of course, it's the “*drakōn*” that we've been seeing in the first part that is really behind all of the things. Of course, Chapter 12 tells us, “I tell you the *drakōn* is the serpent of old, Satan, the devil.” So, he's already described in Chapter 12.

What's interesting here is the way the beast looks. Now, on the onset, Scripture's telling you, it's a beast. But it's in sheep's clothing of sorts, because it has two horns like a little lamb. They say that there are breeds of sheep that actually have horns, and even the female as well will have horns. But when a lamb has horns, guess what? They're

not real big. It's like little nubs. And the text is in the diminutive, which means that it's a little lamb. So, the horns that he has are like a little lamb. Now, the picture is that this force, we'll just describe it as that for now, has a desire to wield power, horns. When you see the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, there's really no mention of horns, because the desire is to sacrifice. But in this text, there is a taking on of an appearance, nevertheless a desire for power. So, the passage is kind of putting those things together. Now, once again, it starts off, it's a beast. It's not a lamb. But in some areas, it's like a lamb. But when it speaks, it speaks like a dragon. So, the picture has given us something that is deceitful in appearance. And what it's demonstrating is that there's going to be deception, obviously, in the last days.

Jesus will make an interesting statement in Matthew 7, and His statement is, "Beware of false prophets, because they dress with sheep garments, but inwardly they're ravenous wolves." Right. So, there's a beast that is wearing sheep garments, and he's trying to look like a shepherd, but we know that he's a ravenous wolf. His

desire is to take over. So, in many respects, it's kind of the same picture. And really throughout, this is what God is warning the church of. There are people that say and do things that, look, on the onset, you might say, "Well, I think they like me because they want to give me something, or they want to do something for me," or "Wow, the compliments that are thrown to me." I oftentimes tell people, don't sum up a person based on what they do for you. You know, I oftentimes watch, and here's a person that's really nice to these people over here, and then I find out, well, he beats his wife, he beats his kids, and I'm going, "Okay..." People over here are telling me what a nice person they are. I'm going, "That's not a nice person." You think he's a nice person because he's nice to you. You're summing him up because of that, what they can do for you. But that doesn't make him a nice person.

So, the warning to the church, just to give you a couple of passages, if you look with me in 2 Thessalonians, there are these warnings that are given not only through Christ, but to the church as Paul writes to them in the epistles. In

2 Thessalonians 2, it says, “Brethren, I don't want you to be quickly shaken by false teachers that are coming into your midst.”

It says in verse 2,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2) “that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3) Let no one in any way deceive you...”

Delude you; seduce you; beguile you.

“... for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first...”

That is to say, the defection from the truth.

“... and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.”

Now, if you drop on down, he begins to describe,

(2 Thessalonians 2:9) “That is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan...”

Actually, the Greek word makes reference to the energy of Satan. Let me put it another way. He's going to be controlled by the spirit of Satan. Not unlike Judas, when he was getting ready to betray Christ, it says the spirit of Satan entered into him. So, his energy is coming from a demonic force. He had been inviting that. People often wonder, how does somebody get possessed? They invite it. It says from the very beginning, Judas loved money, and that he was greedy. So, he kept inviting all these things.

But anyway, it goes on to say,

(2 Thessalonians 2:10) “and with all the deception of wickedness...”

That's kind of a forensic word, anything immoral, illegal, unjust, or unrighteous. So, probably the best word to put in there would be, “with all deception of unrighteousness.”

“... for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

(2 Thessalonians 2:11) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

(2 Thessalonians 2:12) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

In other words, they had their own agenda. They decided not to listen to what was true, and so they rejected that.

What it's saying is that obviously, this is a letter to a church, and people in a church were being deceived by people that were preaching from the pulpit. So, just a good reminder of that. And of course, he warns of this.

If you look with me in 2 Peter, you see the same thing, but a bit more descriptive.

In 2 Peter 2, it starts off,

(2 Peter 2:1) “But false prophets also arose among the people...”

“The people” meaning God's people.

“... just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive...”

I like the way King James puts it in this, “damnable”.

“... destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

(2 Peter 2:2) Many will follow their sensuality...”

Now, that description is very general, but what it's talking about is anything that is destructive. Actually, the word that is used is a derivative of hell, destructive ways. But the emphasis of this particular word is anything that is wasteful in its pursuits or destructive. We'll just stop here and just think, have you ever been wasteful in your day? Okay, so the passage reads that many will follow their wasteful ways. Let's put it that way.

“... and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned.”

You understand what we're saying? The way of the truth is, I mean, we proclaim, “I love Christ more than anything. He died for me. I love Him. I want to serve Him. He's #1. He's first place in my life.” Well, the way you're living doesn't look like it. And because of the way you're living, the truth is maligned, spoken against.

It goes on to say,

(2 Peter 2:3) “and in their greed...”

That is to say, “their desire for more” is the best description of this. And they become fraudulent and exploitive in what they do.

“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words...”

Oftentimes, telling you whatever you want to hear, as 2 Timothy 4 says, “People wanting to have their ears tickled will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desire.” So, yeah, I mean, where do all these people come from that are popping up that the masses are going to? I can tell you where they're going to. They're going to the guys that are telling them exactly what they want to hear. And one of the difficult things about our world is that there's so many churches to choose from. You've got this smorgasbord out there and you just go, “Well, I think I'll choose that one because they're having singing tonight. I think I'll choose that one because they have a youth group. I think I'll choose this one because...” And who's choosing it because it's a place

where God is elevated and where they're growing in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Who's choosing that? Well, when you have so many choices, you see, it brings that kind of confusion. Of course, we obviously live in a world like that.

But it goes on and says,

“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words...”

They'll tell you what you want to hear. You want to find a church that will tell you, “If you give a dollar, you're going to get \$5 million back,” then it'll pop up. Get enough people wanting that, and those kinds of churches will pop up. Because Jesus said in the last days, many false prophets will arise.

“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”

It's not negligent or lingering.

He goes on to say,

(2 Peter 2:4) “For if God did not spare angels...”

He gives an interesting description as you go on within the passage in verse 13,

(2 Peter 2:13) suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

(2 Peter 2:14) having eyes full of adultery..."

These are false prophets, by the way.

"... that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls..."

Those are people that don't open up their Bibles. Yeah. I mean, the false prophets start making statements, and what you should be saying is, "What verse is that?" But instead, people just shake their head, "Uh huh. Uh huh. Mmm." It's not in there. Most of what they're saying is not in there. I've sat laboriously in front of some of these, because people ask me, "What about this guy?" and tell me that I've got to listen to this guy. So, I'm listening to this guy, and I'm going, "He hasn't spoken one thing from Scripture." Not one thing from Scripture. Where is he

getting this stuff? You know, it must be a joke book or something, but I don't know where he's getting it from.

But the passage reads,

“having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed...”

Why do you think they're telling you what they're telling you? Because they're using you.

(2 Peter 2:15) “Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam...”

Who was a prophet for hire, you know, “Tell me what you want me to do.”

“... who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

(2 Peter 2:16) but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.”

This is actually a case of dumb and dumber. You know, you have a dumb donkey, but somebody dumber than the donkey is the prophet. And it's an interesting picture.

But as you come back to Revelation, what you're going to see in Revelation 13 is that this is literally a description of

a false prophet. “How do you know that, Gary?” Well, I read ahead. So, I cheated. But if you look in Chapter 16, it will mention this beast as a false prophet in this text. So, he'll be listed, and then we'll go into another text.

But if you look with me in Chapter 16,

(Revelation 16:13) “And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet...”

So, we have a dragon, beast; oh yeah, there's one more, false prophet.

“... three unclean spirits like frogs.”

It's an interesting description, and we'll get to that.

But if you go into Chapter 19, the clarity is revealed,

(Revelation 19:19) “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”

(Revelation 19:20) And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received

the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image...”

So, that's actually what we're going to see in this particular passage, that this beast that's coming out of the earth is the false prophet who is going to deceive.

And so, we'll pick up in Revelation 13, and it says,

(Revelation 13:11) “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth...”

Shall I say, using the things of the earth, terrestrial goods, the pleasures and the honors of the world.

“... and he had two horns...”

Obviously, there's a facade that is going on by doing that.

“... like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.”

Now, up to this point, what the dragon is declaring is, “I'm all powerful.” Now, once again, I just want to go back to the origin of the dragon out of the sea. So, what do people like to hear? People like to hear that you're empowered, “You are empowered. You're the great ones.” You can hear the masses roar. You can hear them. And the more you can tell them that they're the heroes,

oh, the more they love it. There's an insatiable desire for these kinds of things. So, if you understand, the blasphemous words are man elevating himself. The blasphemous words of the beast is, "We're god." That's the blasphemous words. And so, what's going to happen is a false prophet's going to come up, and what do you think he's going to do? Well, if he's a false prophet, he's going to say, "You're right. You guys are the god." See? So, the passage reads this way,

(Revelation 13:12) "He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence..."

That is to say, he does what he does to please these nations that have come up with great power and declare themselves as being the answer to the world. So, in their presence, he comes in and he says, "You are what you say you are." He affirms everything.

And it says in the passage,

"... And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it..."

By the way, the word "dwell" in there has its root word "home". Do you know what it means? It means that

they've made this their home. You and I have made heaven our home. They've made this their home.

“And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast...”

Remember the text that goes back, verse 3,

(Revelation 13:3) “I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed...”

First of all, “as if slain.” The Scripture's not saying he was, but as if slain. So, the perception is that he died, and now he, a ruler of a nation, is perceived as resurrecting from the dead. Well, that gives him credence immediately. And it's almost like Satan is trying to mimic something. I don't know.

So, if you drop on down,

(Revelation 13:12) “... And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast...”

To worship the nations that have come up and the power that you've declared as your savior.

“... whose fatal wound was healed.”

And it goes on to say that the second beast, false prophet, performs great signs and wonders.

The very beginning of this is revealing that man is deceived through physical persona. In other words, if you can wrap something up in the right kind of garb, you can deceive people. The disciples were deceived by the Pharisees. You know, they have these long robes and they broaden their phylacteries, and they look so holy. I mean, they're wearing holy stuff. They've got to be holy, especially if they really have the real stuff. I mean, this isn't stuff you buy at Kmart. This is like real stuff. So, you're wearing those things. You've got to be holy, right? I mean, you go into these big temples, these big edifices, and they're so grand and they're so glorious. You've got to be holy. Right? Well, Jesus calls them sons of the devil. But man is so visual that if somebody comes across in any way like a lamb, but yet speaks with great power that allures them, they're going to fall for it. They're going to fall for it. Because many people are literally superficial and are appealed by those kinds of things. And that's evidence.

I don't like to pick on too many people. First of all, I'd be here all day. But you know, it's Christmas time, and I've often thought about the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Here they are singing hymns, gospel hymns, choruses, and they literally are from the pit of hell. And I'm saying, "What are you listening to them for?" It's like the psalmist says, "What right do you have to put my words in your mouth? You're not following Me." They deny the deity of Christ. What do I have in common with a Mormon? It's just ridiculous. But anyway, it's just an example. Because if you look at the Christmas setting, "Oh wow, this is Christmas." You look at this grand tabernacle choir, sometimes the great pipe organs and everything that go with it, and you go, "This is a holy moment." It's not a holy moment. It's a moment that grieves God. And so, we see the visual coming into play, and that's how Satan begins to deceive, with the visual. You know, Jesus specifically went against the Pharisees and Sadducees because of their garb. He says, "And on top of this, you present long prayers while picking the pocket of a widow. So, obviously, you don't really care for those people." But on top of this, there's that kind of verbal, bombastic speech

that oftentimes comes out that is high-sounding, inflated, pretentious, that begins to affect those who are eager to please men and are oftentimes intimidated by men. So, you get a guy up there that begins to speak with great vibrato, and he speaks of great things and people are going, "Yes." And then he begins to empower the people. Then they begin to be drawn to him. I think that's actually called magniloquent speech. But that kind of speech begins to come into play, and it draws the crowds. You think about it, "Oh, wow, this is wonderful. This is magnificent." And it's by speech. Well, he speaks like a dragon. Fascinating. Can't keep your eyes off him. Well, what are you drawn to? Paul says, "I came to you in weakness, presented to you nothing but Christ crucified, so that you wouldn't boast in me or my appearance or even the speech or my reasoning, but that the gospel would be the one thing that you'd be drawn to." Paul, in comparison with Apollos, was not good at booking up the halls. He says, "You look at me and you say, 'Wow, he's unimpressive and his speech is contemptible.' But you long to hear Apollos speak." But he turns and he says,

“But Apollos didn't want to come. So, I guess you're stuck with me.” (I've had a number of those occasions.)

But the passage is revealing the deception, whether it's visual or verbal, that this false prophet is going to use anything and everything. And don't think for a moment that he's not going to use sensationalism. And he's going to pull every rabbit out of the hat to get people to follow. And quite frankly, you have people that are so surface that they literally go to church to “ooh and ah.” I mean, they're looking for that kind of sensational thing that will entertain them, and the more entertaining, the greater.

So, the passage reads,

(Revelation 13:13) “He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.”

Now, as 2 Thessalonians 2 made very clear, these are false signs. So, lest you think that he's actually calling down fire from heaven, think again. But we know that there's all kinds of ability now with ships in the air and things that we can control, that we can make things look like fire from the sky. And he's going to call down fire

from heaven in the presence of men, the picture meaning that everybody's longing to see this. It's an entertainment event.

(Revelation 13:14) “And he deceives those who dwell on the earth...”

Once again, those who live on the earth; those who perceive the earth as their home. Why are the people on the earth deceived? Because they want to be. This is the key point. Christ will over and over again say, “Don't be deceived. Don't be deceived. Don't be deceived. False prophets are going to come, don't be deceived.” But He'll go on and say, “Keep yourself in the righteousness of God so that you're not deceived.” In other words, keep yourself loving the right stuff, and you'll never be deceived. You love the wrong stuff, and wow, you're there for the picking.

So, he comes in, and he actually uses a different word in verse 14, “*planaō*”. He uses a word that describes a leading astray from the truth. It's specifically designed to do that. And so, the point is that he has one goal, and

that's to take people off of following God in any way and leading them to follow him.

So, the passage reads,

“And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him...”

Which seems to convey that the signs were affirming what the people were wanting. So, if you could do a sign or a wonder or something great that would allure people; I don't know, maybe it could be a sign in which he all of a sudden does this and money starts falling from the air. Wouldn't that be a great sign? That'd be a wonderful sign. People start picking up all the money. Yeah. You know why they believe him? Because they love his signs. You know why we believe Christ? Because we love His signs. They're totally different signs. The signs of Christ was a sign of His love for us. The signs of man are things that boost him and boast him in his spirit.

“... it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast...”

Which once again, the presence of the beast, where did he come from? The masses. So, who is he pleasing? Who is he energizing? These great nations that have come up and they're going, "Okay, tell me more." "I'm going to make you powerful. We could do this." "Tell me more." "...in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast..."

Now, this goes from sensationalism into entanglement. So, if you just kind of follow it through, he's been visual in his physical persona to allure. He's been verbal as his bombastic; almost intimidation of sorts would be. Then on top of that, there is sensationalism with the great signs and wonders and miracles. Now, he's going to entangle. You see, because once you get people involved, then they get really hooked. It's not until you get them involved. You invent a holiday that's not godlike, but you get people baking. Now, they're involved. It's their holiday. You get people involved in dressing a certain way on a holiday. Now, they're involved. Now, it has become like their holiday. So, what do you do? You get people making an image. Now, the image is going to be the image of the

beast. What do you think the image is going to look like? Well, go back into Daniel and look at the great image that Nebuchadnezzar formed. What was it? A man. And what was his head made-up? Gold. What was his arms made of? Silver. I'm not saying it's the same image, but what I am saying is, it's an image of the beast.

So, the passage reads,

“... make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.”

(Revelation 13:15) And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast...”

Now, this gets in the bizarre. This actually gets into science fiction, but it actually is more of what is happening today. Because of sorts, we're breathing life in technology. My brother-in-law has written a number of books in Germany and was actually writing them for a lot of the hospitals because they were trying to deal with the ethics of biotechnology. And I don't know whether or not how far you know it's gone, but the technology is actually talking to cells, and they're working together. That's how intensely it's gotten. So that before long, you don't know

where the biological ends and the technology begins because it's working so intricately. And we're not talking about arms that are placed on somebody. We're talking about cells that are talking to each other. So, what's interesting is, of course, is we're building an image of ourselves. You think about the whole computer thing; we're just trying to build a better us. We have a hard time remembering, so we'd like somebody that remembers better. "What was that password again?" So, all these things are a better us. So, if you can imagine taking it to its fruition, what's going to happen? What's going to happen is that up to this point, we've been maneuvering through our technology; what's now going to happen is that this false prophet is going to breathe into it.

Now, once again, if you go to Chapter 16,

(Revelation 16:13) "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits..."

So, what do you think is coming out of this false prophet? An unclean spirit. Right.

So, it says in verse 15,

(Revelation 13:15) “And it was given to him...”

That is this false prophet.

“... to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak...”

“Articulate sounds” would be the best way of describing that.

“... and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

Well, that's a game changer, isn't it?

So, if you look at the deception, it's first visual, it's then verbal, it's then sensational, it then begins into the realm of entangled. You now have people involved in it. And what do you think is the icing on the cake? Fear. And at the end of the day, nobody is going to be able to deny the mark of the beast. As the passage would go on to say, rich or poor, doesn't matter who you are, you won't be able to buy or sell without this techno wonder that is breathing an evil spirit that will literally control everything that you think or do. We've had some interesting changes even in our lifetime. We've seen people stand in line to get

beamed with something on their foreheads. And willingly. I'm going, "Really? Willingly, you're doing that?" "Yeah." "Next." I'm going, "Okay, they're getting used to it." Because you won't be able to buy or sell without the mark on your forehead or on your hand. And we're already hearing the whole argument about putting the chip in us. Here's the whole argument: "We're going to have all your medical information on it, so we're protecting you." But I've read enough to see, they're not just going to put medical, they're going to put your finances, they're going to put everything in that chip. They're just going to say, "It's a twofer. We'll not only take care of you medically; we'll make sure that nobody else gets your information, and it'll be on your person, and we'll have all that stuff." Guess what? No matter where you go, you will not be able to buy or sell without the mark. The day is coming. There are certain cards that I have, I go, "I can't even use this card anymore." They go, "No, we don't take those cards." Some places I can't even get cash. So, the technology is always short. I can't go to the airport and buy a ticket without going to the kiosk. They have people at the desk, maybe one or two, and you walk up to them,

and you go, "I'd like to get a ticket," and they go, "I can't help you." I'm going, "What are you here for?" But the world that we're coming into is a world that's being completely controlled. You're being controlled. You don't know it. But every moment that you breathe, you're giving up a little bit of freedom. But we know that this is part of bringing it down to this. But who is the beast, see? It's man. And who should you be afraid of? Man. Who should you give your allegiance to? God. Yeah, because that's the Lamb that was slain. Everything else is going to consume you, is going to devour you, is looking to use you and exploit you. We know that's true. But the fact that Revelation paints this graphic picture, you go, "Okay, now I see what it really is." Because up to this point, you're going to hear all the propaganda, and you're going to believe all the lies. I'm not asking you to walk around paranoid. We're the ones that don't have to be paranoid. Because we give our lives to Christ; He's got us. He's going to take us home. I believe He's just going to take me home before all this lunacy happens. But we can see it happening in our day and age. Think about it. We've been allowed to see it happen, and we have the greatest

message that anybody could ever have. And that is the message of Christ. So, great days.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and how You direct us into truth. Lord, we see these pictures and it's stirring emotions because we realize that what's behind all the technology and all the glitter and all the show business and all of the wonderful statements that speak out boldly for themselves is really just a beast. And though it may be wearing a sheep garb, it's still just a ravenous wolf. And Lord, thank You for these pictures. Thank You for revealing to us in this Book of Revelation what this world is really like and what You're really like.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to choose the Lamb. Choose the Lamb. He loves you enough to die for you. He's not trying to take from you. He's giving to you. For God so loved you that He gave His Son. He's not trying to manipulate you. He's not trying to exploit you. In fact, He wants to give you more. Not one good thing is He going to withhold from you if you love

Him. Come to Him today. The decision is so clear when you see the reality of what the world is about. Thank You, Lord, for revealing these things.