

The False Prophet Revelation 13:11-18

Introduction

1. An amazing thing happened in Newport, PA on July 15, 2001. Dorthy Marie Livingston opened an account at the First National Bank by passing to a teller a \$1 million bill. Apparently she was quite persuasive and the bill equally impressive. The teller conducted the transaction without question. Evidently the teller was unaware that the fake \$1 million bill is about 10 times the value of the largest bill ever printed by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and 10,000 times the value of the largest bill still being printed (the Treasury Department said).

The fact is, the \$100,000 bill existed for about three weeks in the 1930s, when it was used to transfer funds between Federal Reserve banks. It was never publicly circulated. Today, remaining notes in denominations larger than \$100 are being withdrawn from circulation as they come into banks for transaction. All of this, however, did not prevent the teller from being deceived by what appeared to be a sincere person with a genuine article of currency. The teller was fooled just the same.

2. If I were to ask you what is the most powerful weapon in Satan's arsenal, many though they be, I believe the answer would be without question his weapon of deception. So effective is he with this plan of attack that Scripture repeatedly warns us concerning it.

Jesus

- **Matthew 7:15** – “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”
- **Matthew 24:4-5, 23-27** – “And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” ... “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the dessert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Paul

- **Acts 20:28-30** – “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”

John

- **1 John 4:1-3** – “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”
- **2 John 7-11** – “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Jude

- **Jude 3-4, 17-19** – “Beloved while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” ... “But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.”
3. Our Lord Jesus tells us Satan “is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). The truth of this statement will become more evident than ever when the 2nd beast arises in Revelation 13. This beast we correctly identify as “the false prophet” (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).
 4. It will be through the instrumentality of this second beast empowered by Satan that a one-world government, one-world religion, and one-world economy will come to fruition and men will willingly submit to it. This individual, called the false prophet, will be given power by Satan to perform miracles (13:12-15). He will apparently duplicate the miracles of that one who comes in the spirit of Elijah (v. 13, cf. 11:5-6), perhaps deceiving the world into believing that he is the one who fulfills the prophecy of Malachi 4:5. Further, he apparently will cause some type of lifeless image of the beast to come alive and to speak, and he will force the world to worship it.

Paul pointed out in 2 Thessalonians 2:11 that during the Tribulation God will send the world a powerful delusion so that they should believe the lie. The lie is that antichrist, who will rule over a one-world government, one-world religion, and one-world economy, is actually the world’s messiah, the world’s god.

His close association will be this land beast (“false prophet”). In Revelation 13:11-18, his fullest description is given. In that passage we will discover some important facts concerning this spiritual deceiver. They include:

1. He will arise out of the earth or land (v. 11).
2. He will be influential in religious affairs (v. 12).
3. He will be motivated by Satan, just like the first beast (v. 11).
4. He will have delegated authority (v. 12).
5. He will promote the worship of the first beast and compel the earth to worship the first beast as god (v. 12).
6. His ministry will be authenticated by the signs and miracles he will do (vv. 13-14).
7. He will be successful in deceiving the unbelieving world (v. 14).
8. The worship he will promote will be an idolatrous worship (vv. 14-15).
9. He will have the power of death in order to compel men to worship the beast (v. 15).
10. He will have authority in the economic realm to control all commerce (vv. 16-17).
11. He will have a mark that will establish his identity for those who live in that day (v. 18).

We again see that what we are faced with is a satanic “trinity,” an unholy trinity comprising the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (16:13). The place occupied by God in His program is assumed by Satan; the place of Christ is assumed by the beast; and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is assumed by the false prophet.

Thus through this system of deception and through this deceiver, Satan will realize his ages-long goal to bring this world under his authority and to institute his kingdom here on the earth.

Transition

Walking through Revelation 13:11-18 we discover 5 defining characteristics of Antichrist’s Tonto, his Sidekick, his Minister of Propaganda.

I. He has a deceptive appearance. 13:11

John sees another (*allo*) beast (*therion*) of the same sort as the first. He comes up out of the land. Some believe this refers to the land of Israel and means the false prophet will be a Jew. Others say the land is a reference to the abyss. The difference in origin from the 1st beast may be intended to help us distinguish the two beasts from each other. It is also possible that the land, in contrast to the turmoil of the sea, implies the false prophet is calmer, more peaceful and more subtle than the Antichrist. What follows would support this.

1. He looks like a friend.

Two horns – lesser strength than the beast.

Lamb – (*arnio*) – of the 29 times it is used in Revelation, this is the only time it does not refer to Jesus.

2. He speaks like an enemy.

Spoke like a dragon (words of Satan! He is Satan's mouthpiece.)

*Looks can be deceiving.

*Listen to their message.

II. **He has delegated authority. 13:12**

Though he possesses less strength than his boss the Antichrist, the false prophet is still a formidable opponent to all who love the Lord and follow the Lamb (14:4).

1. **He works for Antichrist.**

Exercise (does)

All – it is comprehensive.

Authority (*exousia*) in his presence (before it [him]). Empowered by the dragon and loyal to Antichrist, he promotes the cause of Antichrist. He is his representative. As the 2 witnesses stood before the Lord (11:4), he is a witness before the Beast.

2. **He brings worship to the Antichrist.**

Causes (does, makes; "he causes" is used 8 times of the false prophet) earth dwellers to worship the wondrous beast who was miraculously healed.

*Here is the establishment of false religion on a worldwide scale (Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Animists, etc...). All persons of faith will join hands and heart in worship, praise and adoration of Antichrist. No doubt each faith will retain certain particular emphases that characterize their faith, but they will, they must, unite in their devotion and dedication to the Beast.

*This will be the most dishonoring form of idolatry the world will ever know. Its seeds are continuing to be sown today. The fruit it will bear will perhaps break forth in the not too distant future.

Illustration

"The secretary-general of the United Nation's Millennium Peace Summit thinks that all religious apples fall from the same tree and are equally delicious. At a recent international meeting, he told 1,000 delegates that religions need to accept the validity of all religions or else it will be difficult to attain world peace. Recently, the notion has emerged that the pathway to peace necessitates the unification of religions. The Universal Religion Initiative (URI) recently convened with 300 people present representing 39 religions and signed a charter, which officially launched the movement. The goal is that there will come a day in which "religious people will no longer insist on a single truth." Episcopal Bishop Swing, a leader in the movement, goes even further: "There will have to be a godly cease-fire, a temporary truce where the absolute exclusive claims of each [religion] will be honored but an agreed upon neutrality will be exercised in terms of proselytizing, condemning, murdering, or dominating. These will not be tolerated in the United Religions Zone." "U.N. faithful eye global religion" by James Harder. *Insight*, Oct 2-9, 2000 (Vol. 16, No. 37). Pages 22-23.

*Vance Havner well said, "A house big enough for all of us is too big."

III. **He has diabolical ability. 13:13-15**

- *Not everything that appears to be a miracle is a miracle.
- *Not everything that is a miracle is a miracle from God!

1. He uses miracles. 13:13-14

Performs (does) great signs (*semeia megalá*). This same phrase is used of the miracles of Jesus in John 2:11, 23; 6:21. The false prophet is also something of a false Christ.

Fire from heaven – like Elijah (1 Kings 18:38; cf. Mal. 3:5-6!), like the 2 witnesses (11:5).

The quality and spectacular nature of the miracles deceives the earth dwellers. They rejected the true fire of 11:5 for a false fire in 13:14.

2. He promotes idolatry. 13:14-15

Like Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, a great idol is set up. This time it is in honor of Antichrist.

The time – midpoint of the Tribulation.

The place – the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (see 2 Thessalonians 2:2-12!). The *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:11 said the Antichrist was to set up his image in every city.

*Verse 15 speaks of some miraculous and mysterious power the false prophet gives to the image of the beast. Whether this is some form of deceptive and diabolical ventriloquism (which was popular in the ancient world) we cannot be sure.

*What is clear is 1) breath (*pneuma*), the appearance of life will be given to the “idol image” so that it speaks (blasphemies? cf. 13:5) and 2) it has power to kill those who will not worship it. Idols normally cannot hear or speak, walk or see. This idol is not a normal idol. Satanically empowered, it talks and it kills, it deceives and it destroys.

IV. He has a deadly assignment. 13:15-17

Satan is not only the father of lies, he is also “a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him” (John 8:44). During the Tribulation one is either pro-Christ or anti-Christ. If you are anti-Christ you will live then but die eternally. If you are pro-Christ you will probably die then, but live forever. One’s decision will be decisive.

1. He will massacre those who refuse him. 13:15

*Few will escape the wrath of the false prophet during the last half of the Tribulation.

*The 2 horned lamb is a vicious lion who will ravage all who say no to his god! Religious tolerance will make a swift and bloody exit during this time.

2. He will mark those who follow him. 13:16-17

All – comprehensive again (3 classes noted)

- small and great
- rich and poor
- free and slave

Receive a mark – a brand, a snakebite! (as for a slave, soldier, worshipper) on their right hand or forehead.

*What is it? We don't know.

*Why do they get it? We do know – vs. 17.

Now the economic domination of Antichrist kicks in. In their book *Boiling Point: Monitoring Cultural Shifts in the 21st Century*, George Barna and Mark Hatch note that the merging of currency and economy into global compatibility and a universal quest for material gain will become the driving forces for the creation of a one world government. The building blocks for such a system are ready to fall in place. What will be a key motivating factor? Their answer: GLOBAL TERRORISM!

Verse 17 notes 3 means of identification with the beast, which allows one to buy and sell:

1) a mark, 2) the name of the beast, or 3) the number of his name.

*Believers face economic boycott during these days!

*The beast counterfeits the mark of God in 7:3; 14:1! God marks His and Satan marks his too. Whose mark do you bear?

V. **He has a defining ascription. 13:18**

*More paper, ink, and worry has been wasted on this verse than perhaps any other verse in the Bible. What is “the mark of the beast” and the “number of his name?”

*The ancient Hebrew game called gematria recognized that letters could also stand for numbers. Hence a series of letters could form a word and at the same time indicate a number. Hence the 666 of verse 18 has given us the identification of the Antichrist: 1) from ancient times as the Roman emperor, Nero Caesar particularly, and his priest who enforced Caesar worship, or 2) from modern times as Ronald Wilson Reagan. Some saw the mark in Social Security Cards, others in credit cards. Others identified it with the coming of computers. Some have noted that taxi license plates in Israel begin with 666. Of course many at the time of the Reformation were certain the “mark of the beast” involved being a follower of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Still others spiritualize both beasts seeing the 1st as representing evil political power, and the 2nd representing evil religious power wedded to the 1st. This speculation has not been helpful and in many instances it has been rather harmful. For example *RNS* (3-19-01) reported,

Antichrist

MOSCOW – Ignoring a bone-chilling rain, 500 Russian Orthodox believers and clergy gathered Thursday (March 15) in a park near the Kremlin to listen to more than a dozen speaker sound a shrill alarm, a call to action against vague forces threatening Christians, Russia and, ultimately, the world. The immediate cause of concern for these believers, and another 40,000 who has signed petitions across Russia, is a new government tax identification number designed to combat widespread tax dodging. For a range of dogged, vocal opponents, the tax IDs and accompanying barcodes are to be avoided at all costs because they contain the number 666, the sign of the Antichrist. Their anxiety and distrust – which has given rise to talk of schism – is at the root of one of the most severe crises to face the Russian Orthodox Church since it gained its freedom a decade ago with

the fall of the Soviet Union. There have been reports of priests denying communion to those who possess the tax IDs.

A two-day session last month of the church's Theological Commission drew together tax officials, prelates and politicians in an effort to soothe the tax ID opposition. Nearly all of the patriarch's annual Lenten address to believers was devoted to the issue. Judging from the mood at Thursday's rally, none of this has made much difference, perhaps because the tax ID issue is part of broader worries that Russia is falling victim to Jewish financiers seeking world domination and U.S.-sponsored globalization. Elsewhere in Europe, Orthodox Christians in Ukraine and Greece have also staged public demonstrations against the imposition of IDs, both because of apocalyptic fears and an insistence on maintaining their religious identity. The leader of the Greek Orthodox Church, Archbishop Christodoulos, is waging a fight against the Greek government, which seeks to remove religious information from government-issued IDs. The archbishop was quoted Thursday in the Athens newspaper *To Vima*, as saying, "Do you know who is behind the issue of identity cards? The Jews. And for the first time we have evidence for this." Andrei Lebedev, an Orthodox priest from St. Petersburg explained, "People think that the introduction of electronic IDs will allow total control over them through the use of the 'Global Positioning System,'" he said. "The result is an electronic concentration camp and the manipulation of the consciousness of a person. People know what a Stalinist concentration camp is."

However, is this what the text is saying? I don't believe it is. The message is simply this.

1. He is amazing: he has a 666.

John calls for wisdom, discernment, careful examination and understanding. The beast is a triple 6!

*666 is a superlative form of 6. The beast is the ultimate 6! But ...

2. He is only a man: he is still a six.

*6 is the number of man. He was created on the 6th day. He is to work 6 days.

*7 is the number of perfection.

*The beast is the greatest man, but still a man. He is a 6 not a 7. He along with Satan and the false prophet is a 666, a trinity of imperfection, but not now or ever a 777! He is the best man can produce, but he is still just a man! He is complete incompleteness, the ultimate in "coming up short." Good enough to deceive many? Yes! Good enough to displace Jesus? Never!

Conclusion

Birmingham Sunday Mercury (7th Jan 2001):

WORKER DEAD AT DESK FOR FIVE DAYS.....

“Bosses of a publishing firm are trying to work out why no one noticed that one of their employees had been sitting dead at his desk for FIVE DAYS before anyone asked if he was feeling okay.

George Turklebaum, 51, who had been employed as a proofreader at a New York firm for 30 years, had a heart attack in the open-plan office he shared with 23 other workers. He quietly passed away on Monday, but nobody noticed until Saturday morning when an office cleaner asked why he was still working during the weekend.

His boss Elliot Wachinski said, “George was always the first guy in each morning and the last to leave at night, so no one found it unusual that he was in the same position all that time and didn’t say anything. He was always absorbed in his work and kept much to himself.”

A post mortem examination revealed that he had been dead for five days after suffering a coronary."

Amazing isn't it? Dead for 5 days and no one noticed. They thought he was alive and yet all the while there was no pulse, no heartbeat, no life. For 5 days co-workers were deceived, believing he was alive, when he was dead. I suspect no one looked very closely at George. I suspect no one went by to listen to what he might have to say. Obviously a superficial investigation can cause us to mistake the dead for the living. This is true we see when it comes to a friend. This is true we must also see when it comes to the false prophet. Look carefully and listen well. The praise of and love for the Lord Jesus is nowhere to be found. Such a test must be applied then. Such a test must be applied today.