

## Introduction

*There are but a handful of genuinely new things introduced in Revelation which have no corresponding previous counterpart in Scripture, and delineating that the Antichrist is actually composed of two figures is one of them. All the obvious previous examples for 1<sup>st</sup> century believers to this point were lone, Gentile political rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes IV and Caesar. And interestingly enough, all the counterfeit messiahs experienced both before and after Christ always seem to be lone, unaccompanied figures. But what they all share in common is the irresistible urge to deify themselves and seek to be worshiped. Politics and military conquest may be tools of the Antichrist and False Prophet, but there is no mistaking that it is all for the goal of engendering worship. Next up, the beast from the land.*

<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

## Read verses 11-13

**Q: What is the difference between coming from the sea versus “coming up out of the earth”?**

A: Whereas the biblical metaphor of the sea is the Gentile nations, coming from the land like this is the biblical metaphor for Israel. This indicates that the figure we have come to call the “False Prophet” is ethnically Jewish.

**Q: Does that automatically disqualify him from having any non-Jewish connections?**

A: No. The Church is composed of both Jew and Gentile. In 1 John 2:19 it is stated that antichrist figures go out “*from us, but they were not really from us*”. In the character of Herod, he can cross over into many other things in spite of his ethnicity.

**Q: Why do you suppose at least one of these two beasts has to be ethnically Jewish?**

A: Judaism has historically experienced false christs, both before and after Jesus, and they are always Jewish. They are spiritually disposed toward following a Jewish Antichrist.

**Point:** *Those who insist that the Antichrist is exclusively Gentile (many even say of Islamic origin) and those restricting the possibility to his only being a Jew may both be technically correct, but not taking into account that there are two beasts who are **BOTH** Antichrist.*

**Q: How is the theme of a counterfeiting Christ continued in this second beast?**

A: “...he had two horns like a lamb”, so that there is a visible resemblance, but “he spoke as a dragon”—that is, he is spiritually motivated by Satan.

**Q: How is this working of Satan illustrated in John's vision?**

A: By the fact that Satan is standing on the shore between the two. What is essentially illustrated is a counterfeit Trinity attempting to effect a substitute for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Q: What does the second beast lack when compared to the first?**

A: He has horns, but no crowns, which symbolize authority. This is explained by the fact that *"He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence"*.

**Point:** *The False Prophet does not operate outside the Antichrist's presence in a visible example of his devotion and service to him.*

**Q: What is the chief responsibility of the False Prophet?**

A: To get everyone to *"worship the first beast"*.

**Q: Who is the False prophet counterfeiting in not just performing "great signs", but even making "fire come down out of heaven"?**

A: The Two Witnesses effect many authentic signs from God including *"fire come down out of heaven"*. (Rev. 11:5) This also replays the Exodus motif when, to a point, Pharaoh's magicians duplicated the first few signs of Aaron and Moses.

**Q: Why might it be important that the biblical text here indicates that the signs the False Prophet performs takes place "in the presence of men"?**

A: This proves that these are literal, real miracles which take place in the earthly realm and that they cannot simply be allegorized or spiritualized away as something else.

**Q: However, how does the text also indicate that he is limited in what he can do?**

A: They are qualified as *"the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast"*, whereas the Two Witnesses *"have the power...to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire"*. (Rev. 11:6)

**Observation:** *Another significant difference between the Two Witnesses and the False Prophet is that whereas they "will prophesy" (Rev. 11:3, 6)—that is, speak the Word of God, the False Prophet "spoke as a dragon"—speaks the word of Satan.*

**Point:** *The primary purpose of the second beast—the False Prophet, is to deify and engender worship of the Antichrist, the first beast.*

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<sup>14</sup>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.

## Read verse 14

**Q: Who is stated here to be the ones who are deceived by the False Prophet? Why is this significant?**

A: It is specified to be “those who dwell on the earth”. This group was defined in v. 8 as “everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb”. The authentically saved will not be deceived by either his works or accompanying message.

**Q: What is biblically familiar about the command “to make an image to the beast”?**

A: It harkens back to the Gentile ruler Nebuchadnezzar, whose God-given dream in Daniel 2 contained an image of different metals, his being the top-most made of gold, who then in Daniel 3 erects an entire image of himself of gold and demands that everyone worship it. He establishes the precedent wherein all antichrist figures deify themselves and seek to be worshiped.

**Q: How would this be historically familiar to 1<sup>st</sup> century readers?**

A: Leading up to the Maccabean Revolt, the Gentile ruler Antiochus Epiphanes IV commits the Abomination of Desolation by going into the Temple, erecting a statue of Zeus using his own face, and sacrificing a pig on the alter in a public act of self-deification.

**Point:** *The second beast imitates the signs of the Two Witnesses in the course of overseeing the establishment of an image of the beast upon which to focus worship. It is the ultimate and complete implementation of establishing a false god in place of the One True God.*

## Read verse 15

**Q: Is this just the “ultimate” magic trick? What is really taking place here?**

A: Like Nebuchadnezzar and Epiphanes IV before him, the most prominent characteristic of the final Antichrist to come is to focus all worship on himself.

**Q: Is this just a trick of technology as many postulate?**

A: The keyword here is that the False Prophet gives the image “breath”, which is exactly what God did to give life to Adam and Eve. The Antichrist counterfeits Christ in his role as Creator.

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men”.

John 1:3-4

**Q: Again, what is the stated goal of these activities?**

A: To worship the beast by worshiping his image.

<sup>15</sup>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.

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**Q: Why is the penalty for not worshiping the beast significant?**

A: It is death. The False Prophet does not issue the requirement to take the mark or be killed, but it is refusal to worship the image which invokes the death penalty regardless, exactly in the character of Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel 3.

**Point:** *The second beast counterfeits Christ as Creator with a living image of the beast upon which to focus worship of Antichrist.*

**Read verses 16-17**

<sup>16</sup>And he causes all, 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, <sup>17</sup>and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

**Q: To what do parallel Scriptures speaking about this mark make a direct connection?**

A: To the worship of the image of the beast in v.15.

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

Revelation 14:9

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and **those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand**; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4

**Q: Why should this feature of the Antichrist not be unexpected? Why is it, in reality, yet another attempt to counterfeit the Godhead?**

A: Because Scripture contains examples of how God makes this kind of mark on His own people.

1. There is the marking on the forehead with the Hebrew letter "tav" (which literally looks like a cross) in Ezekiel 9.
2. The Mosaic Law led to wearing phylacteries on the forehead and hand so as to be marked with God's Word. (Ex. 13:9, 16; Dt. 6:6-8; 11:18)
3. Even in Revelation, the first to be marked were the 144,000. (Rev. 7 & 14)
4. In eternity, all believers "will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads". (Rev. 22:4)

**Q: Is this the first time Satan has marked someone?**

A: In the Nativity Narrative, Caesar as an antichrist figure "marks" everyone by assigning each a number in the course of census, a method designed to exert financial control over everyone. It is a shadow of what is to ultimately come.

**Application:** *More concern needs to be exerted to obtain the mark of God so to never worry about the mark of the beast.*

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**Q: What is the dual aspect of the mark?**

A: It is “either the name of the beast or the number of his name”.

**Point:** There is an unhealthy preponderance of interest in “the number” to the exclusion of almost any discussion about “the name”.

**Point:** The second beast employs financial control to force worship of Antichrist.

**Summary of the Second Beast**

For 1st century readers, this is a new point of information which was previously not plainly disclosed in Scripture, that the Antichrist is composed of two beasts, one mainly working in the political realm, but this False Prophet in the religious:

- He is ethnically Jewish.
- He counterfeits Christ as a lamb but is empowered by Satan.
- His authority and working is exercised only in the presence of the first beast in order to foster worship of him.
- To a point he counterfeits the signs of the Two Witnesses.
- He successfully deceives the unsaved.
- He counterfeits Christ as Creator by giving life to the image of the beast the world worships.
- He requires worship of the beast not just by financial control through the mark of the beast, but by a death sentence for not worshiping his image.

**Read verse 18**

**Q: How does this final detail establish that there must be believers present at this time?**

A: Only Holy Spirit-filled believers in Christ possess biblical “wisdom”, which is required to “calculate the number of the beast”.

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 Corinthians 1:20

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

1 Corinthians 1:30

**Q: How is this further corroborated by Daniel?**

“Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.”

Daniel 12:10

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***Point:*** *When appropriate within the greater scheme of God's timing, there will come a time when the identity of the Antichrist will be plainly understood by the faithful in Christ.*

### **Overall Application**

*The reason there is such an emphasis on the last half of Daniel's 70th Week, in this case the forty-two months, is that it is initiated by the Abomination of Desolation, and from that point forward Satan in every way is attempting to accomplish through the earthly Temple an imitation of what transpires in the heavenly. Just as the emphasis in heaven is worship, so is the aim of this satanic counterfeit. This is what Satan is attempting to do spiritually at present, but in the Last Days he is cast down to earth in a final attempt to do it openly and literally.*

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