

## REVELATION 13:11-18

### REVELATION 13:11-14

<sup>11</sup> And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

<sup>12</sup> And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

<sup>13</sup> And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

<sup>14</sup> And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (Revelation 13:11–14)

The beast that comes out of the sea represents raw power, for he comes up out of the sea of humanity. The beast from the sea attacks the physical body of man with destruction and death.

The beast that comes out of the earth represents deceit. He is the false prophet who presents himself as possessing wisdom, and who has the answers to man's most pressing needs. The beast from the earth attacks man's mind through deceit and falsehoods

**A. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. (Revelation 13:11)**

The word "another" [Gk: *allos*]. There are two Greek words that are translated "another" – *allos* and *heteros* (Gal. 1:6-7). *Allos* refers to another of the same kind; whereas *heteros* refers to another of a different kind.

In verse 11, John is saying that the second beast of the same kind as the first beast, meaning to say that they have the same nature. However, the beast from the earth is also mentioned distinct from the first beast as the False Prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10).

**B. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. (Revelation 13:11)**

John describes the beast as having "two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon" (13:11; see Dan. 8:3).

Horns are a picture of power. In this case, the second beast has only two horns. The second beast also spake as a dragon. The dragon as we have noted earlier is Satan (12:9). The meaning here is that the second beast speaks deceptively like the dragon.

The two pictures – the lamb with two horns and speaking like a dragon – point to the deceptive nature of the second beast. He was designed to deceive. He appears as a gentle and harmless lamb, but beneath that lovely and respectable façade is power and deception. This is the wolf in sheep's clothing.

Is the second beast a system or a person? There are some who regard the second beast as a system and a movement and not a person.

There are others who regard the second beast as a person because the attributes are personal, and salvation and damnation are individual and not institutional. Another argument in support of the individuality of the False Prophet is that a primary function of this second beast is much like that of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ.

- The second beast has equivalent power to the first beast (13:12), he takes no glory for himself.
- Like the Holy Spirit who guides believers into all truth and declares Christ, so the False Prophet will lead unbelievers from the truth and into falsehood and declares the Antichrist.
- Just as the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, so the work of the False Prophet is to magnify the Antichrist (13:12).
- Just as the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was visibly attended by “cloven tongues like as of fire” (Acts 2:3), so read about the False Prophet doing “great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men” (13:13).
- Just as it is the Holy Spirit who now quickens dead sinners into newness of life, so of the False Prophet has “power to give life unto the image of the Beast” (13:15).

**C. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13:12)**

The second beast has the same power as the first beast. But the second beast is also said to be “before” the first, meaning to say that the second beast in the presence of the first beast implying that the power is granted to the False Prophet, but the attention was directed to and at the Antichrist.

**D. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13:12)**

The task of the second beast is to bring the people in the world to worship the first beast – the Antichrist. The work of the False Prophet is the exaltation of the Antichrist. The evangelical church is concerned about ecumenism and one world religion. The worship that is demanded by the Antichrist, however, will exclude all false religions.

- E. **And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13:12)**

The worship of the first beast is preceded by a miracle. The first beast had a deadly wound and was healed. Here, the Antichrist will imitate the Christ by his fatal wounds, death, and then resurrection.

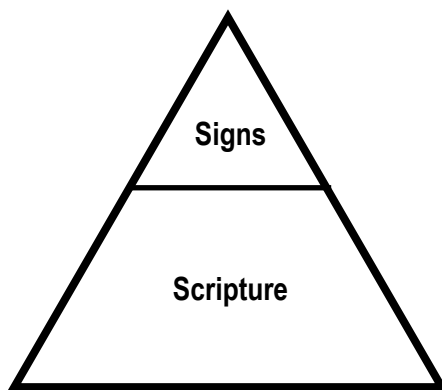
- F. **And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, (Rev. 13:13)**

Besides, the miracle of his resurrection, the Antichrist also has the power to perform great miracles. The word “wonders” [Gk: *sēmeia*] means “signs” (see 12:1, 3).

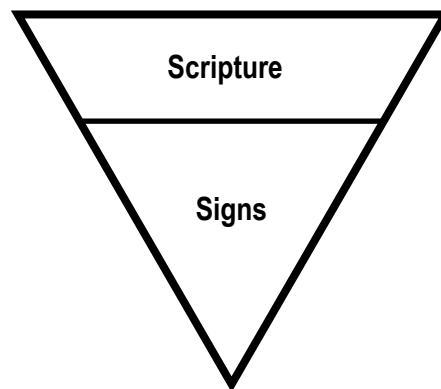
The sign performed by the False Prophet was to bring fire down from heaven, which has in the past been associated with God’s power, consuming both His adversaries (2 Kings 1:9-12) and His sacrifice (Num. 16:35; 1 Kings 18:38).

That the Antichrist has the power to perform miracles is to be expected. Our Lord Jesus prophesied that in the last days, there would be a recurrence of signs and wonders (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9-12). But that ability to do great wonders is not the only factor in determining the authenticity of a prophet (Deut. 13:1-5; see Exod. 7:11, 22; 8:7; Acts 13:6-8).

This means that believers must not be persuaded by just signs and wonders if those signs and wonders lead us away from the worship of God. Christians must carefully distinguish between genuine and false miracles, and determine whether they come from God or the devil. Our faith ought not to be validated or authenticated by experience because faith cannot be based on sight. The foundation of our faith must be the Word of God.



Scripture-based faith is stable



Experience-based faith is unstable

- G. **And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that**

**they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (Revelation 13:14)**

The sole objective of the Devil is to deceive. The phrase “them that dwell on earth” refers to people living on this earth. The phrase occurs at least ten times in Revelation, and it refers to three different groups unbelievers –

- The enemies of God’s people (3:10; 6:10).
- The people who are facing God’s judgment (8:13; 11:10).
- The people whose names are not written in the book of life (13:8; 17:8).

## **REVELATION 13:15-18**

<sup>15</sup> And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

<sup>16</sup> And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

<sup>17</sup> And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

<sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six. (Revelation 13:15–18)

### **A. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13:15)**

According to the Word of God, it is the beast that comes out of the sea that receives all the attention. The beast that comes out of the earth, on the other hand, works behind the scenes without any mention of his identity.

In verse 15, we again see that it was the beast out of the earth that gives life to his image. The word “life” [Gk: *pneuma*] means “breath.” There are some who oppose the idea of life being given to statue. They take “life” here to mean animation because there is another Greek word – *zoe* – that is used to refer to life.

The word “life” [Gk: *pneuma*] is also translated “spirit” leading some to take the view that the False Prophet impart an evil spirit to the statue. In other words, it is not that statue actually came alive, but that it was the evil spirit in the statue. The problem with this view is that there is not mention in the Bible of demon possession of inanimate objects.

This image of the beast, unlike other idols, is able to speak (see Ps. 115:5; 135:16; Jer. 10:5). This idol is also able to kill those who refuse to worship it.

Verse 15 is the point of no return. Mankind is divided into two categories – those who worship the image of the beast and they will be spared, and those who refuse to worship the image of the beast and they will be killed.

**B. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: (Revelation 13:16)**

In order to differentiate the people who worship the image of the beast and those who refuse to worship, the False Prophet devises a scheme to differentiate between the two. Three classes of people are mentioned

- “Small and great” is really an idiom that includes “people of all ages or all stations in life” (see also 6:15; 11:18; 19:5, 18; 20:12).
- “Rich and poor” denotes people across the economic spectrum.
- “Free and bond” denotes people from all the levels of society.

**C. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: (Revelation 13:16)**

The people who worship the Antichrist will receive a mark. There are several things to note with regard to the meaning and the receiving of the mark.

1. What is a mark?

The word “mark” [Gk: *charagma*] appears nine times, all in Revelation except one occurrence in Acts (Acts 17:29; Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9,11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).

There are some who interpret the “mark” symbolically, suggesting that it is the loyalty and support given to the Antichrist by those who “worship the image of the beast.”

In the KJV, we read that the Antichrist “causeth...to receive a mark...” (13:16). The word “receive” actually means “give.” Here, it is uncertain if the people are being forced to receive the mark because it was necessary for livelihood, or they willingly accepts the mark.

2. Where is the mark placed?

The mark is placed on two places – either on the forehead or the right hand. To place the mark on the hand means that it has to be visible. It is also interesting to note that the right hand is the hand of fellowship and friendship (Gal. 2:9), implying that the person is a devotee and true follower of the beast.

In the Bible, there are several examples of people who have marks on their foreheads.

- In the OT, the high priest wore a plate of gold upon his forehead with the engraving, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Exod. 28:26-38)
- Ezekiel was shown a vision where those to be spared God’s judgment receive a mark on their foreheads (Ezek. 9:4).
- Harlots wore a mark on their forehead identifying their harlotry (Jer. 3:3; Rev. 17:5).

- The 144,000 sealed of Israel have the name of the Father and of the Lamb written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1 cf. Rev. 7:3)

The placement of the mark on the hand or forehead brings to mind the OT practice of wearing God's Word on the hand or on the forehead (Deut. 6:6-9). Thus to receive the mark on the forehead implies that these people bought into and are influenced by the anti-God thinking.

3. What is the significance of this mark?

- The mark is associated with worship (14:9; 19:20; 20:4).
- The mark is associated with the name of the Antichrist (14:11). This verse goes a little further to indicate that having the mark of the beast leads to acts of worship and the bearing of the name of the beast. The worship of the Antichrist would be akin to the unpardonable sin of Jesus' day (Matt. 12:31).

Like the unpardonable sin, taking the mark is the equivalent of a permanent rejection and denial of Christ, for which there can be no salvation. To receive the mark of the beast would therefore mean that the person worships the beast as divine, acknowledges the beast's authority, is devoted to the beast, and considers himself to be the beast's slave. It is not possible to take the mark and remain among the redeemed who enter the kingdom.

**D. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:17)**

In order to enforce worship of the Antichrist and his image, the mark is tied to his global economic system. The mark is important because it is the only means by which commercial transactions can be made. There has been much speculation as to what this mark would look like, and how it will be implemented.

**E. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:17)**

Besides the mark and the name of the beast, the AV gives a third alternative, namely "the number of his name." Most people apply gematria to the interpretation of "the number of his name." Gematria is assigning a numerical value to letters of a name, and coming up with a number. The use of gematria raises more questions.

- The assigning of a numerical value is arbitrary.
- The language of name.
- The variation of the name used.

F. **Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13:18)**

This phrase – “here is wisdom” – appears twice in Revelation (13:18; 17:9). John is not inviting speculation of what the number is. Rather, he writes that God’s revelation can only be understood when the reader possesses wisdom given from above through the Holy Spirit. Wisdom here is not scientific study and research, but insight from God which the believer receives by being in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30; Prov. 25:2).

When Daniel was puzzled about the revelation given to him, he was told that “the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end...” (Dan. 12:9-10). The same principle applies here to the understanding of the number of the beast. The people who live near the time of its fulfillment will be best able to understand the full meaning of what is written here.

G. **Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13:18)**

The Word of God says that the man who understands should count the number of the beast. The phrase “let him that hath understanding” does not mean that only intellectual people have the mental capacity to interpret this passage; rather, it refers to the man who is enlightened by the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 2:14).

There are two approaches to the interpretation – symbolic and literal – of this number 666. There are some who take the number symbolically. They believe that whereas seven is the number of completeness, six is the number of incompleteness. Satan tries to achieve what he has set out to but he comes up short and faces judgment. In Revelation the number six points to judgment: at the end of the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet, and the sixth bowl. Satan’s work always results in failure. The number of the beast is 666, that is, failure upon failure upon failure!

There are others who take the literal approach. Over the years, numerous people have been identified as the man. In the second century, Irenaeus called attention to Titus, probably because the Roman general was the one who destroyed Jerusalem. A favourite name in the early church history is Nero.

The simple point is that it is fruitless for us to employ this number in speculation as to the identity of the Beast for the following reasons.

- The value of the number in and of itself is too broad. There are too many historic persons whose names can be made to generate “666.”
- The church will not be present when the Antichrist becomes known to the world. The church will have been taken in the Rapture (2Thess. 2:1-8).
- The number of his name is perhaps the least important clue among many attributes which Scripture set forth concerning the identity and ministry of this individual.

- While the Restrainer remains (2Thess. 2:7), the Antichrist will not be revealed so it is an exercise in futility to identify the man.

The identity of the Antichrist and the number of his name will not be evident until he appears and fulfills prophecy. The reason is that God wants our focus to be on Christ, and not the Antichrist. As God's people, we are to be "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).