

The False Prophet, Part 1

📖 Revelation 13:11-18

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Q: Why won't the anti-Christ be able to get at the Jews in Petra?

A: The question comes out of Rev 12:6 and 13-18 and 13:7. These verses teach that at the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel Satan will be cast down to earth where he will indwell the anti-Christ who will commit the abomination of desolation. This will be the sign to Israel to flee Judea. The believing remnant will flee into the wilderness to a place that is most likely Petra. Satan will try to destroy them as they flee, but God will give them the two wings of the great eagle so that they can flee safely. He will then nourish them for the entire second half of the 70th week. The description of two eagle's wings and nourishing them are terms of supernatural protection and nourishment. The language comes from Exod 19 where God says He bore Israel on eagle's wings as they went out of Egypt. That was also a supernatural protection. So the reason that the anti-Christ will not be able to get at the Jews in Petra is simply because God will supernaturally protect them. Now this supernatural protection may come by way of Michael the archangel, as Dan 12:1 indicates. "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise." Why will Michael arise if not to protect the believing remnant of Israel that flees to Petra? So, there is your answer.

Q: I understand that Satan's name is not written in the "book of life" because he is not human. Is the anti-Christ's name in the "book of life?" Would you explain again please?

A: Now we will look at this a little more today, but just so this is clear, the anti-Christ's name is not in the "book of life." That's what Rev 13:8 is saying in the original Greek text. Now I know that it says in the NASB that "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." So that it sounds like it is saying that the names of all who dwell on earth who worship the anti-Christ are not in the "book of life," but the word "*everyone*" is in italics showing you clearly that it's not in the original Greek text. Here's what the Greek text says, "καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οἳ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου." Translation: "And they will worship him all those dwelling upon the earth, not having been written the name of him in the book of life of the lamb the one having been slain from the

foundation of the world." It's "the name of him," singular, and refers to the anti-Christ. His name was never written in the book of life. Now that is significant because other passages indicate that everyone's name is written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. And the only time a person's name is removed is when they die in unbelief. But here we learn that there is at least one name that was never written in the book of life, and that is the name of the anti-Christ. Now Rev 17:8 may show us that there were other names not written in the book of life, the names of those who dwell on the earth, which is that technical name for those in the 70th week of Daniel who have decided against Jesus Christ and for the anti-Christ and will take the mark, but to answer your question simply, Rev 13:8 teaches that the anti-Christ's name was never in the "book of life." And if that is a form of limited atonement, then so be it, but it would be true only as a corollary truth, that is, something you reason to, given limited revelation on the topic. But if the names not in the book of life implies that Christ did not die for them, then that is a form of limited atonement, though it differs greatly from the view of limited atonement taught by the Synod of Dordt in 1618-1619.

Returning to our study of Major Prophetic Passages, Rev 12 is the key because it shows us that Satan's agenda in history was to destroy the Messiah, either by destroying Him at His birth, as in the days of the Pharaoh who did not know Joseph or in the days of Herod the Great, or by destroying Him by destroying the Jewish people, as in the days of Haman who was ruling Persia through the king by deception. But the plan of Satan was to destroy the Messiah either way he could so that he could keep salvation from the world, and yet he was unsuccessful and Messiah was born and caught up to God the Father at the ascension, and safely out of harm's way. So Satan has to change his plan and his plan in the future will be to destroy the nation Israel so that they cannot say the words of Matt 23:39, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." That is Ps 118:26 and it is known as the Messianic Greeting. The nation Israel must issue that Greeting to Jesus for Him to ever return because Jesus said to Israel, "You will not see me until you say..." And so they must say it if He is ever to return. So Satan's strategy is to destroy them all in the last half of the 70th week of Daniel and yet when the believing remnant in the land escape to Petra at the midpoint he is now in another predicament, because he will never be able to get them and so he is enraged and he goes after the rest of the believing remnant outside the land in hopes of being able to destroy them and come back and kill the others who escaped to Petra later, which Micah 2:12-13 indicates he will do, as part of the campaign of Armageddon. But the point of Rev 12 is clear; Satan has got to destroy Israel in order to stop the plan of God.

Rev 13 is given to explain how Satan will try to destroy the rest of Israel when he is cast out of heaven to earth at the midpoint. In verse 1 he stands on the sand of the seashore summoning a great sea monster. The people of the ancient world considered sea monsters to be greater than any land monsters. So the great sea monster is a terrible monster. He is known popularly as the anti-Christ, but he has many names. Here he is depicted as having

ten horns which represent ten kings of Future Rome that he controls. He also has seven heads representing seven successive kingdoms that had the spirit of anti-Christ, the seventh of which is the anti-Christ himself. On the ten horns were ten crowns representing kingship of the ten, but they will give their power and authority to the anti-Christ so that he rules them all. On the anti-Christ's heads there were blasphemous names. They represent the seven successive kingdoms in history that blasphemed God. In verse 2 the anti-Christ is one of those heads. He is depicted as a leopard, with feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion. These are the first three Gentile kingdoms in Daniel 7 that will combine in the anti-Christ's rule of Future Rome. And Satan will give him his own power and his own throne and great authority. Verse 3 explains how. John saw one of the anti-Christ's heads as if it had been slain, verse 12 says it's the beast that will be slain. The beast is also one of the heads so that the anti-Christ is one and the same as his kingdom, Future Rome. I'm still struggling to put together what happens to him. One view is that he is killed and Satan raises him. I don't think God will permit Satan to do that. I think that is going too far. That would mean Satan would have access to Hades where the spirit of the anti-Christ would go if he died and Scripture tells us that only Jesus has the keys to Hades. So that explanation has problems. Another view is that he is killed and God raises him. It's possible that God could raise him at this time because God will raise all people from the dead, believers and unbelievers. But it makes verses like Rev 19:20 difficult to understand. Rev 19:20 says, "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; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." Since he is "thrown alive into the lake of fire" it seems that it is emphasizing that he was in the same body as before and not a resurrection body. Another solution was my idea that Satan could come to indwell the corpse of the anti-Christ. This makes good sense of some of the texts but it also has the problem of Rev 19:20 and especially 20:10. "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also..." So the three are seen as distinct, even though closely connected, and they make up the counterfeit Trinity. By the way, for all the cults that don't believe in the Trinity, why would Satan try to counterfeit the Trinity if the Trinity wasn't a true doctrine? Of course the Trinity is a true doctrine. Satan is a counterfeiter and by counterfeiting the true doctrine he unwittingly proves the truth of our doctrines. Maybe the best idea is to view what happens to the anti-Christ as him having a wound unto death, that is, a wound that would most certainly cause death to anyone under normal circumstances, but Satan heals him. That would be a counterfeit. Say he was stabbed right through the heart and blood was just gushing out, but the text says he was healed. It's from the Greek word for therapy. It's never used of resurrection. Satan doesn't raise the dead. But he could heal him from a fatal wound, one that would cause death under any circumstances. Then he comes to indwell him and what we're seeing at the end of verse 3 is the world's response to him; the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast. They interpret him as possessing supernatural power, but really it is the power of Satan. In verse 4 they will worship both Satan who gave his power to the anti-Christ, and the anti-Christ, saying "Who is like the beast?" a theft of the expression used in the OT, "Who is like God?" And they will conclude that no one is able to wage war with the beast. Why? Because Rev 11:7 says he will kill the two

witnesses in Jerusalem. And who is able to kill them? In verse 5 Satan gives him his mouth to speak arrogant words and blasphemies and authority to act for forty-two months, the second half of the tribulation. In verse 6 he blasphemes God by speaking monstrous things against the God of gods and those who dwell in heaven, which are God's tabernacle, which seems to be the Church. In verse 7 he was given the opportunity to make war with the Jewish saints and to overcome them. And he was given authority over every Gentile people on earth. This is global in scope. He's going to rule the whole world, a one world government ruled by one man indwelt by Satan. In verse 8 all the earthdwellers will worship him. He'll be the object of worship. We'll see why in our verses today. And the one whose name has never been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain is the anti-Christ here. V 9 is an encouragement to believers at that time who have ears to hear; those who take them captive will themselves be taken captive. And those who kill them with the sword, will themselves be killed by the sword. It's an encouragement to continue to persevere and live by faith in the most difficult time ever faced by believers on the planet, when they're under the deception of Satan through the anti-Christ, persons one and two of the counterfeit Trinity.

Today we come to person three of the counterfeit Trinity in 13:11-18. This is the false prophet, so named in Rev 16:13; 19:20 and 20:10, along with the beast and Satan. All three are mentioned together in two of these passages and I want to capitalize on this opportunity to introduce the counterfeit Trinity because it's first seen here in Rev 12-13 by introducing these three players; first, the dragon, who is the counterfeit Father, second, the beast out of the sea, who is the counterfeit Son, and third, the beast out of the earth, who is the counterfeit Holy Spirit. Now it's a counterfeit, meaning it looks like the real Trinity, but it's not, just like a counterfeit currency looks like the real currency, but it's not. To see how it's a counterfeit look at Rev 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 like frogs." Let's contrast this counterfeit Trinity with the real Trinity. Rev 16:13 is presenting three different persons as having three different mouths. They are too distinct. It would not be said this way of God. It would say "mouth" singular, one mouth for all three, such as in Matt 28:19 that uses one "name" for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, not three names. So this is a counterfeit of the real Trinity, it looks similar, but it's not the same. Also Rev 20:10, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire," this is after the thousand years, now the devil is thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, "where the beast and the false prophet are also..." So what's different here is the separation. There is never a separation in the Trinity, but there is a separation for a thousand years in the counterfeit Trinity. So you can see these differences and what they do for us is force us to hone our theology of the Trinity. They force us to be accurate and not sloppy.

And so now what we want to do is look at this third member of the counterfeit Trinity in Rev 13:11-18, who I believe is the false prophet¹ and that he is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. What he does is similar to what the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit points to Christ. His goal is to lead people to trust, worship and glorify Christ. What the false prophet will do is point to the anti-Christ. His goal is to lead people to trust, worship and glorify the anti-Christ.

Now, this is another very interesting section of the Bible for many reasons, including the religious and economic aspects of the future kingdom. People talk about a one world government, a one world religion and a one world economy. All that is coming from Rev 13. And it's correct. The early parts emphasize the one world government and the later parts emphasize the one world religion and economy, places that this world is heading toward at a rapid rate. And the chapter is interesting also because of the mark of the beast. This is the only chapter that discusses the mark and so we'll look at that. It's also interesting because of the signs, miracles and wonders that are done. These are real miracles, but they are counterfeits. In other words, they really take place, but they don't authenticate what they are trying to prove and we'll get into Deut 13 to understand that. Let's look at verse 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.** Now this **beast** is said to be **another**. The Greek has two words for **another**; one means another of a different kind, that's *ετερος*, the other means another of the same kind, that's *αλλος*. This word is *αλλος*, so what John saw was **another beast** of the same kind as the first beast. They're of the same kind because they're both deceivers and that's because behind them both is the dragon, Satan.

Now the difference is that this **beast** was seen **coming up out of the earth**, whereas the first beast was seen coming up out of the sea. And there have been attempts to argue that because the "sea" sometimes refers to Gentile nations, that the anti-Christ will be a Gentile, and that because the "earth" or land, sometimes refers to Israel, that the false prophet will be a Jew. I don't think that is the point of the symbology. As I mentioned last time, the "sea" in the OT was considered to contain the most terrible beasts and the earth was always considered to contain lesser beasts. The point is that both of these men are terrible but the first one, the anti-Christ, is more terrible than the second, the false prophet. A second contrast is that the first beast had ten horns while the second beast has two horns. A horn usually signifies power. The ten horns signified ten powers or kings that the anti-Christ will control in the last days. That's the one world government. The two horns of the false prophet seem to be religion, the one world religion, and the economy, the one world economy. Now this **beast**, and he really is a beast, looks **like a lamb**. He looks gentle, he looks nice, he looks like something in a petting zoo. So there is deception written on the face of the text. And his words are what's important because **he spoke as a dragon**. What a dragon speaks is fire and it destroys and the dragon is Satan and this man will be a propaganda machine for Satan. He will speak wicked words of destruction that are shrewd and sly and smooth and it will lead many to worship the anti-Christ and lead to their ultimate ruin.

In 13:12, **He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence.** Now the **authority of the first beast** is said in verse 4 to have been given to him by the **dragon**, who is Satan. **So** there is a close connection between Satan, the anti-Christ, and the false prophet. The false prophet can only exercise the authority of Satan when he is in the presence of the anti-Christ, who has been given the authority of Satan. So however this works, somehow the authority is transferred from the anti-Christ to the false prophet when he is in his presence, otherwise he can't exercise the authority. This is another description of why this Trinity is a counterfeit. It's real, but it doesn't function in the exact same way as the true Trinity.

In 13:12b **And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.** This is the formation of the one world religion. He does something to bring about the one world religion. The NASB translation says **he makes** them to worship. The verb **makes** is *ποιει* and it is used throughout this passage. It can mean “make” or “cause” in the sense of force, but it can also mean to “undertake or do something that brings about a condition.” It’s difficult to tell which meaning is in view because there are things he does that puts pressure on the world to worship the anti-Christ, such as verse 16 which uses the same verb, **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, and that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark.** So this is definitely pressure to conform. If you don’t get the mark you won’t be able to participate in the economy. But verse 13 uses the verb in a persuasive sense. **He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.** And this is done to persuade men to worship the anti-Christ. So I know 13:12 reads strange when it says **he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast**, but I think it’s fair to say that the false prophet will do great signs to persuade them to worship him and he also puts pressure on them by requiring the mark for participation in the economy.

Now those under discussion are **the earth and those who dwell in it.** The reason he mentions **the earth** is so that we know the whole earth is in view and that this is the formation of a one world religion. He wants all **who dwell on earth to worship the first beast**, who is anti-Christ. He is doing exactly what the Holy Spirit does. He points us to worship Christ. But this false prophet will point the world to worship the anti-Christ.

And just so we know for sure that in 13:3 the head that was slain on the first beast, is the beast himself, we are told in v 14 that his **fatal wound was healed.** Now again, the words literally say, “death wound was therapied.” It seems best to say this means that he receives some kind of wound that would naturally kill anyone, but in this case Satan does something to prevent him from dying. And I’ve thought about this some more and it’s just hard, so I don’t hold to these things dogmatically, but I leave some room for further discussion. It just seems that later in 19:20 he is still alive because it says the anti-Christ and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire alive. So that’s my best solution for now.

Okay, in 13:13 we see one of his very persuasive abilities in the presence of the anti-Christ. **He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.** Notice, **great signs**, not just signs, **great signs.** In Matt 24:24 Jesus said this time would be characterized by false Christs and false prophets who would show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. And it’s a first class, they are so great it’s possible the elect could be deceived. And the word **signs** is the same word used of Jesus’ miracles, it’s *σημεια*, so these are genuine signs, and they are meant to authenticate the false prophet as a true prophet of God, but they do not authenticate him because verse 11 says his words will be those of the dragon. In our day it does some good to understand the role of signs and miracles because

everyone claims that because they can do a sign of wonder it makes them a prophet of God, but Deut 13 contradicts these people. So turn to Deut 13. Deut 13 is the test of a true prophet and the test is not miracles. Satan can do miracles. The people you watch on TV who say they have visions and do miracles and are prophets of God can do those miracles by Satan. This is no problem at all. Satan is a very powerful being. And in Deut 13:1-4 God addressed this issue because this was a people that came out of Egypt. They saw Aaron cast down his rod and it turn into a serpent. But they also saw Pharaoh's sorcerers throw down their rods and they turned into serpents. And you see that with other miracles done in Egypt too and you wonder, what was going on. I would like to have been there to see how these things were duplicated and be able to compare the two. But don't ever forget it, Satan can do miracles. Deut 13:1, "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder comes true," so this is a bonafide miracle, something awesome, "concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." So what's superior? Miracles or the word of God. They did a miracle but said do not follow the first commandment. So they are not of God. The word of God is always superior to miracles. Miracles don't authenticate that a person is of God, unless that person always proclaims the unadulterated word of God. Verse 4 gives them the rule to follow, ⁴"You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him." Notice those last words, "cling to Him." You have to hold on tight to Him and the way you do that is by holding tight to His word. So just because Rev 13 describes the false prophet doing great signs it does not mean he is of God. He is most certainly not of God because although he looks like a gentle lamb his words are those of the devil. But the world, because they are drawn to the marvelous and spectacular are going to be drawn to him and to the beast and they will bow and worship the beast of Satan. The very thing Satan has always wanted, to be worshipped as God.

And look what the false prophet can do, the text says, **so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth.** Who did that in the OT? Elijah. Elijah was a true prophet of God. So he duplicates what a true prophet of God did. Yet he is not a true prophet of God. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing, a ravenous, destructive man and you will know that because the man he points to to worship is a guy with all these characteristics in this chapter and has the number 666.

And in verse 14 look what he's doing. **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.** The world looks at those signs and they say, this is the real deal, this guy is a real prophet of God. But it's a deception, it's a powerful deception. The guy is calling fire out of heaven, clearly he's of God, right? He's doing things the world has never seen. He's Wrong. It's a deception of the nth magnitude. **telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the east who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.**

¹ Some commentators (e.g. Ray Stedman) argue that this individual is not the false prophet but the anti-Christ, and the reason they do that is because in 13:1-10 they argue that that beast is not an individual but the Roman Empire. That makes the beast out of the earth the anti-Christ. And they still try to find a counterfeit trinity but it really doesn't work. Their words contradict themselves. It's much better to see Rev 12:1-17 introducing the dragon, as Satan, Rev 13:1-10, the beast out of the sea, as the anti-Christ, and Rev 13:11-18, the beast out of the earth, as the false prophet.