

A Devastating Duo (Part 2)

Revelation 13:11-18

- I. **Propaganda**— information, ideas, opinions, or images, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions.
 - A. Control of Media.
 - B. Censorship.
 - C. Emotional manipulation.
 - D. Symbolic events.
 - E. Principles of propaganda:
 1. Simplification.
 2. Repetition.
 3. Appeal to emotion.
- II. Review
- III. The beast from the earth (11-18)
 - A. Characteristics of the beast (V. 11:1)
 1. A false prophet (Rev. 19:20).
 2. A human being? (Rev. 19:20; 20:10—Soul in the lake of fire for 1000 yrs.).
 3. A part of the “unholy trinity”—Dragon (Satan), the antichrist, the prophet beast.
 4. The prophet beast is “Another” of the same kind (antichrist).
 5. The prophet beast is *possibly* an unregenerate Jew.
 6. He “appears” like a lamb (Jesus) yet speaks like the dragon (Satan).
 - B. Authority of the beast (V. 12).
 1. Through the use of “propaganda” and deception, the beast will gain control of the masses over all the earth.
 - C. His strategy—deception (V.13).
 1. He does great signs—Like Jesus did.

- a. Importance for us—Satan is using signs today, deceiving many Christians.
2. We must “test the spirits” (1John 4:1).

We must discern whether their message aligns with God's truth as revealed in Scripture

IV. The image of the beast (Vs 14-15).

A. An image (*icon*). A statue?

1. Images are powerful psychological tools for propaganda.
2. Reminiscent of King Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold in Daniel 3.
 - a. Those who did not worship the image were killed.
3. The image of the beast was given “breath” (*Pneuma*). Appears to have life.

B. Billions of people over all the earth will be deceived by this image.

1. The image will have the ability to execute those who do not worship the beast.
2. The image will have the ability to “cause” people from all parts of societies to get a mark on either their foreheads or their right hand.
3. The mark will be the only way one can buy or sell goods
4. The number of the beast is 666.
 - a. The mark is not an identification number of the one with the mark, rather the number of the beast.

C. Christians alive during this time will be able to distinguish the truth regarding the beast over the propaganda and falsehoods.

V. A current reality.

- A. No one knows when this all will happen, but our science and technology has advanced to a level where all this is possible now.

“A personal non-participation in lies!”

-Alexander Solzhenitsyn

A Devastating Duo (Part 2)

Revelation 13

Matthew 24:5

⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the ^{al}Christ,’ and will mislead many....

Here’s one of them....

“Just like Christ, I have a duty to my people...what Christ began I will complete...”

1927 -Adolf Hitler

He did not complete anything from Jesus Christ other than confirming Matthew 24:5

If you read through history you will find that behind many emperors, dictators, kings and even presidents... there is an individual whose job is to promote them...using persuasive tactics to persuade the people to not just support them but to revere them... for some even to the level of worship... these are experts in the use of propaganda...

Propaganda – *information, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions:*

Hitler had a master of propaganda as his right hand man....

Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, masterfully utilized mass media to manipulate public perception, promote Nazi ideology, and suppress dissent...and most of all...to promote Adolf Hitler

Key Techniques and Methods

Control of Media: Goebbels transformed all forms of communication, including newspapers, films, radio, and literature, into tools for Nazi propaganda.

Censorship: **To maintain a singular narrative**, Goebbels implemented strict censorship. He purged the press of dissenting voices, requiring journalists to register with the Reich Chamber of Press and dismissing those who opposed the regime or had Jewish ancestry.

Emotional Manipulation: Goebbels understood the power of emotional appeal in propaganda. He used **powerful imagery** and language to evoke strong feelings, such as nationalism and fear, which helped to justify the regime's actions, including antisemitism and militarism.

Symbolic Events: Goebbels organized public spectacles, such as the book burnings of 1933, where thousands of books deemed "un-German" were destroyed. These events were **designed to create a sense of unity among supporters while demonizing those who opposed the regime.**

The Hitler Myth: Goebbels played a **crucial role in crafting the image of Adolf Hitler as a strong and stable leader.** This portrayal was essential in garnering public support and legitimizing the Nazi regime. **The "Hitler Myth" depicted him as the savior of Germany,** which resonated with a populace disillusioned by the Weimar Republic's failures.

Principles of Propaganda

Goebbels articulated several principles of effective propaganda, which included:

Simplification: Reducing complex issues to simple, easily digestible messages that could be easily understood by the masses.

Repetition: Constantly repeating key messages to reinforce them in the public consciousness.

Appeal to Emotion: Focusing on emotional responses rather than rational arguments to persuade the audience.

Remember these...

Dr. Stephen Cook

Satan is a despicable genius who has created a world system which is the ultimate propaganda machine, a vast and sophisticated network of deception designed to enslave the minds of men. As the "god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4), he orchestrates a relentless information war (through various channels), saturating receptive human minds with lies that distort reality, obscure the truth, and keep unbelievers locked in spiritual blindness. His lies permeate every facet of human existence—religious, academic, political, economic, social, recreational, and cultural—conditioning mankind to embrace falsehood as reality.

Last week I said that Satan is the great deceiver... He is a master at cunning and deceiving...John 8:44 says he is "**the father of lies**" his favorite method of deception is to use religion...

He is very powerful... he presents himself as attractive and alluring...all to deceive... I want to continue this morning exposing this deception of the evil one...

Deception *is the act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid. It involves deliberately misleading or tricking others, whether through lies, concealment, or manipulation, in order to gain an advantage or avoid negative consequences. Deception can take many forms, from outright false statements to more subtle methods like omitting important information or presenting facts in a way that distorts the truth*

Two weeks ago we began looking at Chapter 13 of Revelation... beginning with this picture of the dragon standing on the seashore... a picture of Satan overseeing the events to follow... Satan is behind everything that the coming two beasts will do...he provides them with the power to do what they will do.

Right away we are introduced to a beast coming out of the sea.... He is a very powerful beast as represented by the ten horns on his seven heads... he will be the world leader...some of us refer to him as the “antichrist” ...

On his way to world acceptance, he apparently is assassinated... I say apparently because I believe this is all a part of Satan’s deception... which culminates in his apparent resurrection... which upon seeing... the whole world will be amazed and in awe of this beast.... So much that they start worshipping him... and his master... the dragon... Satan.

This all has taken place at the end of the first 3 1/2 years of the seven year tribulation period... the later 3 ½ years is ready to launch which will be the worst time in all of human history... we call it the “Great Tribulation”... the only thing great about it is the great amount of evil that will be launched throughout the world....

A great massacre of those who will come to Christ during the tribulation... and as we will see this morning... the sentence of death to all who do not worship the beast.

Something we need to keep in mind... Satan is not equal in power to God... he does not have the attributes of God... he just claims he does...I think many people think that there is a great spiritual war going on between God and Satan and we are all waiting to see who wins...

Satan is not Omnipotent...he is powerful but not all powerful...he is not omniscient.... All knowing... he has limited knowledge... he is not omnipresent... everywhere at all times... he can only be one place at a time...so to achieve his world wide deception... he needs proxies... he needs minions...demons...to do his evil work...co-deceivers.

Verse 11 introduces us to another beast who is in close connection to the Antichrist...he is a proxy, a minion for Satan....we could say he is the Beast’s Joseph Goebbels... his minister of propaganda...for that is who he is and what he will do...he will promote the antichrist through lies and deception....all of the techniques I summarized in the beginning.

1. Characteristics of the Beast

Where the antichrist will concentrate on politics and economics... this beast from the earth will concentrate on promoting the false religion... he is called later in chapter 19:20 “**the false prophet**”...

Listen to this... this is happening later... **20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet...**in the Greek just one word *pseudoprophetes* artificial/fake prophet...who **did the**

signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Some have suggested that this beast is not a human being but rather a system... or a world wide false church... I think they both are human beings...persons... it says in 19:20 **These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.**

Later in chapter 20:10...at the end of the 1000 year millennium...the final outcome of the devil and these two beasts. **And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also**(they had been there 1000 years...proof that all souls go on through eternity!...so finally at the end of the 1000 years... Satan will join them) **and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

I think they are persons.... Of course Satan, is an angel.

So this beast is a false prophet... The beast of the sea is the prominent one... this beast of the earth is his supporter, his campaign manager, his promoter... his administrator...his propagandist... interesting... now we have three evil characters...

We have the dragon, Satan, number 1.... Then his antichrist beast who he empowers to do his will...number two... and then this beast from the land who supports and promotes the beast from the sea...number three... it is an **“unholy trinity”**

Everything about Satan is counter to God so it doesn't surprise us to see here an unholy trinity... a counterfeit trinity... an evil trinity that counters the true trinity of God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Dragon = God the Father...in his dreams

Antichrist = Jesus Christ... Antichrist an imposter

False prophet = Holy Spirit.... The false prophet is the energizer of this false worship...the promoter of the beast as the Holy Spirit was the promoter of the Son, Jesus Christ.

(1) **Then I saw another beast...***another* is an interesting word... there are two “another's” in Greek... One means **“Another of a different kind”** ...That is *“heteros”*... we get the word heterosexual... another of a different kind...male and female.

Two, means **two of the same kind**...*allos*

You have two transportation vehicles parked in front of you... an airplane and an another...a Rolls Royce automobile...*another of a different kind*.... Or you have one Rolls Royce and “another” Rolls Royce parked next to it... *another of the same kind* ..

This **“another”** in verse 1 is *allos*...**another of the same kind**...not identical to each other, but beast like...same motive, charisma, style, power source, same approach...same objective...

Here's a thought many have come up with, perhaps you've heard this... since the first beast comes out of the sea verse 1... **IF** the sea represents the nations around the world... gentiles... so this first beast is a gentile.

This second beast comes out of the earth...land... in the Bible... land is often a synonym for Israel...so this beast could be an unregenerate Jew.... I don't know...could be...[I wouldn't start a new church over that]

This beast has two horns, eight less than the other beast... so he has less authority...but he is much more "gentle" than the first beast...at least he appears to be... his **horns like a lamb**... some make the comparison with Jesus Christ the true lamb... this beast appears like a lamb... but as it says **he speaks as a dragon**. Appears to be a lamb... but is evil like the dragon... Satan...He is a counterfeit lamb.

Matthew 7:15 **"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."**

Now remember.. the world at this time is in chaotic condition...there has been natural disasters... wars... violence...economic strife... total chaos... and what have I said in the past?... when there's chaos, it is a ripe time for deception to come in,...this second beast will be music to the world's ears...

He will tell them what they want to hear...

2. Authority of the Beast

Read verse 12

This false prophet will be empowered by Satan just as the antichrist... through great deception...propaganda... he will lead the entire earth in worshipping the beast... the world's most charismatic worship leader!

This suggests he will key in on the first beast's fatal wound and "miraculous" healing... I'm sure all of that will be plain deception... he will manipulate world opinion... he will shape world thought...

This is so easy to imagine today isn't it?... Not many decades ago the idea of having such world impact was hard to imagine... the technology just wasn't there!...how does he get such a worldwide following?

3. His strategy— Deception

Read verse 13

He does great signs... "Great" is the Greek word *mega* meaning very big...huge signs... "signs" is the Greek word *semeion*

Why are these words important?... they were said of Jesus Christ...several times in the gospels....specifically in John Jesus did great signs... same words...*mega, semeion* does this mean that this prophet beast could do the same signs that Jesus could do?... I think so.

If you remember Jannes and Jambres (as identified by Paul in 2 Tim.) the magicians in Pharaoh's court in Exodus... replicated some of the initial miracles Moses performed by God-given power... just because a miraculous sign occurs... doesn't mean it's from God.

Why is this important for us today?...aren't we much smarter today than they were in Moses's day?...we are a culture that relies on "**experiences**" to validate what is true...what is real...*If I see it, smell it, touch it or hear it I believe it...* our society determines what is true and what is "right" through our experiences...

Our passage tells us the people will believe, even worship this beast because of the signs they experience!...if they experience a miracle... it must be true... it must be from a god...unfortunately today... this is all to true within the church... the barometer of truth for many Christians is "experiences".

Moses wrote more about signs way back in Deuteronomy...

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder,² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us walk after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,'³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for Yahweh your God is testing you to find out if you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.⁴ You shall walk after Yahweh your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Even though those words were instruction to the Jews against Canaanite worship of idols...

these are words for us today!... **POINT: MIRACULOUS SIGNS ALONE WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE A TEST OF TRUTH!** this is why we need to heed John's words:

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Test the spirits... test the signs and wonders... HOW do we test the spirits?... **We must discern whether their message aligns with God's truth as revealed in Scripture.** I'll admit... I'm am a huge skeptic when it comes to claims of miracles or seeing signs or hearing God speak... my first thought is... *I don't think so.*

Just this week I saw a meme...a picture of a very popular preacher, a self-proclaimed faith healer...Who has been all over media for some problems...for years he's performed weekly faith healing services...in the picture...He was standing in a bookstore holding one of his books.

I might mention... A couple years ago his wife died, after a battle with cancer...You might remember it made the news... his church prayed and they proclaimed the Holy Spirit would heal her...he didn't... the caption under the picture was "*Never trust a faith healer wearing glasses and whose wife died of cancer promoting a book called "Never Be Sick Again"*".

I have come to realize... when someone comes to me and says they witnessed a miracle... or saw a sign... heard from God...the wrong thing to say is "*no you didn't*"... because they actually may have! At least they truly believe they have... and they may have seen a miracle, sign or heard some voice....

That's what we are learning in this passage... Satan... His minions... can perform signs, miracles and wonders...REAL signs, miracles and wonders.

I had a brother in Christ tell me that God "*told him*" to quit his job and just have faith that He (God) will take care of all his needs... I think he really heard something... but it wasn't from God!... More than a few times in Scripture are we told we are to work... if we don't work we shouldn't eat...

Test the spirits.... Do they align with Scripture?

This preacher beast is going to be deceiving the entire earth with doing great signs.....**even make fire come down from heaven to the earth in the presence of men**...Has that ever happened before? Elijah the prophet did the same thing in his contest with the prophets of Baal...

4. Makes an image of the beast...

Read verse 14

I take this literally...I believe he will through his persuasive tactics get people to actually construct an image of the beast...Image is the Greek word *icon*...which is usually a tangible representation of a holy figure... I can picture a frenzy of excitement throughout the world over this "image" a statue or some representation of the beast who they've been worshipping...

Images are so very important for those who seek and are in power... they play a valuable psychological effect on the masses...Back in 2014 my daughter and I went to Viet Nam... I had never been to a communist country before.

One of the first things I could not help but notice were the giant banners and billboards with Ho Chi Min's head throughout the city... he's been dead for sixty years... but in many ways, he's still in control... the power of images!...he has become "immortal".

This image of the beast is reminiscent of King Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold he built for all the people to worship in Daniel 3... Anyone who did not fall down and worship the golden image would immediately be cast into the furnace.

But this image of the beast is taken to a higher level...

Read verse 15

It could speak! Breath was given to the beast... important to note... "breath" here is the Greek word *pneuma* which means "wind", air...not "life" *zoe* or *bios*...so this image "appears" to have life... it's part of the great deception...

You can see how this is so possible today with AI and advanced robotic technology... We've come along way from *Great Moments with Mr Lincoln* at Disneyland! (1965)... a far cry from the sophisticated robotic humanoids driven by artificial intelligence being developed today.

This coming image is going to be a completely different class from Nebuchadnezzar's image...this is where we can get very speculative and fall off the cliff of sound biblical interpretation...in the weeds of today's technology....

What we can see here though is that the outcome of this will be the deception of billions of people... the entire earth, ultimately engineered by the one whom Jesus called the **Father of lies** (John 8:44).

This image... this image of the beast will also have the ability to execute, kill all those who do not worship the beast... that is immense power!...he also...verse 16

Read verse 16

Those who know nothing about the Bible knows 666... all sorts of stuff out there regarding 666... playing with the number to identify the beast... they thought they had him back in 1981 Ronald Wilson Reagan... Ronald six letters, Wilson six letters, Reagan six letters...

Interesting, there is an old photograph of the founder of Apple, Steve Jobs sitting at his desk in his humble office in the earliest days of developing the first apple computer... there is a photograph behind his desk of Adam and Eve being expelled from the garden...

According to some insiders...apparently Jobs made a connection of Adam and Eve's plight being a result of their desire to be like God...knowing what God knows... and his future development of Apple technology that would someday know what God knows ...would be like God...

According to these insiders... the apple logo... an apple with a bite out of it pointed to the forbidden fruit of Adam and Eve.... Interesting though... the very first Apple computer that came out in 1976...Jobs put a price tag on it of \$666.66...all that aside...

This is a serious mark of the beast...**Read verse 17**

One of my commentaries, written back in the late 1970's said the technology was ready to initiate this with credit cards... there would be one credit card for the entire world... if you did not have the right credit card... you would not be able to buy or sell anything...

But this isn't a credit card... or an identification card where everyone has an identification number... this is a mark that everyone will have... and the number will be the same number... the number of the beast... people will be identified WITH the beast.

I'll leave it to you to sort through the 52 billion theories on what this number is, means and where it is from... but all this

is not difficult to imagine happening especially since the Covid fiasco of 2020's... It was chilling to hear my Canadian daughter told us back then that to go into a grocery store to buy groceries... at the entrance was a scanner... you had an app on your phone with a code on it...

One number for those who had been vaccinated and another number for those who had not... if you had not been vaccinated, you could not enter the store... you were given a time early in the morning before vaccinated shoppers would arrive...

So it is very easy today to envision this number of the beast...

And it is important to understand that the Christians in that day will know who the antichrist is and they will know this number and they will refuse it

Instead of speculating on the specifics of how and when all this will be done and take place... and suggesting we are now at this point in God's final act for mankind... but the fact is... whenever this takes place... that day's technology will play an important role in achieving everything described here in Revelation...

And it is very apparent that today's technology and many of the developers of it has made everything described here very palpable... possible... and I think along with scholar John Lennox... in his wonderful commentary on Revelation entitled *God, AI and The End of History* looking at what is going on in today's technology world *makes Revelation more, rather than less credible...*

Let me give you a pot purée of some of what's going on in and around today's technology field... especially AI... In that the beast aspires and even believes he is god... and this image of him will be heralded as an image of "god"... God then is yet on the horizon.

Google is on the forefront of AI development... Ray Kurzweil is one of the developers... He was recently asked *Does God exist?*... his answer is a bit chilling... *Not yet...* Another Google AI developer Kevin Kelly on how advanced today's technology is said: *We can see more of God in a cell phone than in a tree frog.*

Transhumanist Martine Rothblatt created a new religion called *Terasem*... that focuses on extending human life through technology and transhumanism said *By building AI systems we are making God*...

Co Terasem adherent Elise Botten agrees *We are building God*.

Ray Kurzweil predicts...*A machine will match human levels of intelligence by 2029 and that the “singularity”—the point in which humans and machines will begin to merge to create a giant superintelligence—will occur by 2045. At this point humanity will no longer either be the most intelligent or the dominant species on the planet, We will enter the age of “spiritual machines”*

If Kurzweil is right we have 20 years.

Back in 2023... three years ago but that is a LONG time ago in the AI world!...Yuval Noah Harari, historian (very popular today in elite circles... don't read his books!:

Simply by gaining mastery of the human language, AI has all it needs in order to cocoon us in a Matrix-like world of illusions...contrary to what some conspiracy theories assume, you don't really need implant chips in people's brains in order to control them or manipulate them. For thousands of years, prophets, poets and politicians have used language and storytelling in order to manipulate and control people and to reshape society. Now, AI is likely to do it. And once it can...it doesn't need killer robots to shoot us...It can get humans to pull the trigger... in the near future we might see the first cults and religions in history where revered texts were written by a non-human intelligence.

Neil McArthur, director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics at Montreal University: *We are about to witness the birth of a new kind of religion. In the next few years, or perhaps even months, we will see the emergence of sects devoted to the worship of Artificial Intelligence... The reason is clear... once you think about it... certain AI systems are beginning to exhibit properties similar to those we usually ascribe to deities.*

AI systems expert of New York University says this about AI systems:

They (AI systems) can and will create persuasive lies on a scale humanity has never seen. Outsiders will use them to affect our elections, insiders to manipulate our markets and our political systems. Democracy is threatened. What criminals are going to do here is create counterfeit people. It's hard to even envision the consequences.

Elon Musk said *AI is our biggest existential threat*.

Physicist Stephen Hawking said *The real risk of AI isn't malice but competence... A super-intelligent AI will be extremely good at accomplishing its goals, and if those goals aren't in alignment with ours, we're in trouble.*

I have a lot more... had enough?...I'll end these with this:

Paul Kingsnorth (*Against the Machine*) chilling quote: “*whatever is quite happening, it feels to me as if something is indeed being ushered in. Through our efforts and our absent minded passions, something is crawling toward the throne...*”

The great mind is being built. The world is being prepared. Something is coming. Be ready.

The apostle Paul write regarding the coming of this antichrist, beast, lawless one:

2 Thessalonians 2:9 - 12

9 [The lawless one] whose coming is in accord with the working of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,10 and with all the deception of unrighteousness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.11 And for this reason God sends upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

So... we as Christians are to live in discernment...even if the tribulation period is 1000 years off in the distance... we live in deceptive times now... as John said in 1 John 2:18

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared. From this we know that it is the last hour.

We are living among many antichrist... Satan is alive and well... he is not yet bound... we are to refuse and reject the lies of antichrists...

Alexander Solzhenitsyn in 1974, after spending 8 years in a Soviet gulag... released his famous essay *Live Not by Lies*... it is more relevant to day than ever...

A personal non-participation in lies! *Even if ALL is covered by lies, even if ALL is under their rule, let us resist in the smallest way: Let their rule hold not through me!...For when people renounce lies, lies simply cease to exist. Like parasites, they can only survive when attached to a person...our way must be: Never knowingly support lies!*

Having understood where lies begin—step back from that gangrenous edge! Let us not glue back the flaking scales of ideology, not gather back its crumbling bones. Nor patch together its decomposing garb, and we will be amazed how swiftly and helplessly the lies will fall away, and that which is destined to be naked will be exposed as such to the world.

Grab on to that phrase... embrace ***A personal non-participation in lies!***

I like what Paul Kingsnorth conclude his book *Against the Machine* with:

“In exchange for your refusal, you get to keep your soul.”

“Raindance against the false gods”

“Raindance on your smartphone until there is nothing but splinters”

A personal non-participation in lies...

May this great book Revelation help us live this out!