

# Revelation Thirteen (vv.9-18)

## The Beast of the Earth [13.11-18], or The Companion Conman

- The second beast, called the “false prophet” (16.13; 19.20; 20.10), is a satanic parody of the Holy Spirit – he will perform great signs and wonders to convince the world the Antichrist is the leader worthy of their devoted worship.
- The false prophet is an imitation of the Holy Spirit in several ways:

Holy Spirit	False Prophet
Points men to Christ (John 15.26)	Points men to the first beast (Revelation 13.12, 14)
Instrument of divine revelation (John 16.13)	Instrument of satanic revelation (13.11)
Seals believers to God (1 John 3.24)	Marks unbelievers with the number of the Beast (13.16)
Enlightens mankind with truth (John 14.17, 26)	Deceives mankind with miracles (13.13-15)

- Satan is a master of deception (cf. John 8.44; 2 Corinthians 11.14), and his two beastly agents will be no different.
- MacArthur says, “*Just as the false christs who have plagued mankind will culminate in the final Antichrist, so also will the false prophets culminate in a final false prophet (cf. 16.13; 19.20; 20.10). He will be Satan’s last and most powerful lying deceiver. The false prophet will be Antichrist’s partner in Satan’s massive final deception of the world. While Antichrist will be primarily a political and military ruler, he will also claim to be God. The false prophet will be his high priest, the religious leader who will lead people into the satanic religion of worshiping Antichrist.*”

## An Exhortation to the Saints [vv.9-10]

**v.9.** Amid the two diabolical descriptions of beasts in this chapter, there is an exhortation to the saints – two verses which have been called ‘the quiet verses’ of Revelation 13. Given the sobering conditions of these last days, John issues an urgent injunction; they must have *patience* to wait God’s time and *faith* to trust God’s word. **If any man have an ear, let him hear** is very similar but shorter to the instruction given to the seven churches. Here there is no, “Let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” for the simple reason that the church has been removed from the earth. This is probably a call to every and any person to hear the solemn pronouncement of the word of God. **v.10.** Difficult textual issues and differing manuscripts mean this verse can be interpreted in two ways. **1.** The verbs could be *active* and thus describe the law of harvest (cf. Galatians 6.7) – those who subject the saints to **captivity** (to be taken as a prisoner of war or removed to exile) will themselves reap captivity. This is God’s perfect justice. The beast and his false prophet who subject the saints to unjust detention for failure to bow to their religious regime, will themselves end up as captives forever in the lake of fire. Likewise, those who **kill with the sword** – probably capital punishment for failure to bow to the image of the beast – will themselves be slain by the sword, even at Armageddon (19.15, 21). **2.** Alternatively, the verbs could be *passive*, hence the NET translation, “*If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, he is to be killed with the sword.*” This would act as a warning of the impending persecution the kingdom of the beast will bring and encourage the saints to expect captivity and martyrdom as part of the permissive will of God. This is a clear allusion to Jeremiah 15.2. The closing statement of the verse suggests this is the correct reading. In view of such persecution and suffering, believers are called upon to have **patience** to wait God’s time and maintain **faith** (confidence) in God’s word. The word ‘faith’ could be *subjective* – they are to keep trusting God, or *objective* – they are to maintain their fidelity towards God, when so many others are worshipping the beast.

## His Manifestation [v.11]

**v.11.** John **beheld another [allos] beast**. The word *allos* means ‘another of the same kind’ indicating this man is as beastly and cruel as the first – they are a diabolical duo. This time the beast is **coming up out of the earth** rather than the sea. Many commentators suggest the ‘earth’ refers to Israel and suggest this man is a Jew or has Jewish heritage. But there is no comment here on the false prophet’s ethnic identity. Furthermore, whilst the word ‘earth’ can be used of the land of Israel, this is not how the word is used in Revelation. It seems better to see the word ‘earth’ as a contrast to heaven – this man’s horizons rise no higher than the earth, he is earthly. In light of the great anti-Semitism of the last half of the tribulation, it seems unlikely that Satan or the first beast would allow a Jew to live, much less occupy such an important position of power and authority. He has **two horns like a lamb**, suggesting he has less power and authority than the first beast with his ten horns, and has the deceptive appearance of all the meekness and gentleness of a lamb though he is a fierce wild beast. False prophets often appear mild and harmless, but when this man opens his mouth, he **spoke as a dragon**, serving as Satan’s mouthpiece and speaking words inspired by the Devil himself. He will likely speak “*winsome, deceiving words of praise about the Antichrist luring the world to worship that vile, satanic dictator,*” (MacArthur).

### His Motivation [v.12]

**v.12.** The verb *poieō* [to 'exercise', 'do' or 'make'] is used nine times in the next six verses to describe the activity of the second beast on behalf of the first. He takes on the role of a personal aide. There appears to be a distinct chain of command as the dragon gives his authority to the first beast (v.2), and now **all the power** (ruling authority) is delegated to the second. The phrase **before him** (in his presence) suggests the first beast has general oversight of the activities of the second. The authority of the second beast is used to cause **the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast**. The basis of such worship is the imitation death and resurrection of the first beast whose **deadly** (mortal) **wound was healed** (cf. v.3, 14).

### His Miracles [vv.13-14a]

**v.13.** The second beast **doeth great wonders** [*sēmeion*], the *present* tense indicating he engages in the display of one miraculous sign after another. These will be spectacular but counterfeit miracles that Paul describes as being performed *"by Satan's working with all kinds of miracles and signs and false wonders,"* (2 Thessalonians 2.9, NET). Perhaps his crowning feat is to mimic the miracles of the two witnesses (11.5-6) by making **fire come down from heaven** in full view of the people. This was the divine sign to authenticate Elijah as a true prophet of the LORD (1 Kings 18.36-38; 2 Kings 1.9-12). Interestingly, a Hebrew superstition believed that demons could perform miracles on earth, but only God could work miracles from heaven, hence the request of the Pharisees to the Lord Jesus to *"shew them a sign (out) from [ek] heaven"* (Matthew 16.1). **v.14a.** The miracles are calculated to **deceive** [*planaō*], not in the sense of being pretend or fake, but to cause people to 'wander' from the truth. Paul refers to the same when he says these miracles will be used by God to *"send them (those who refuse the truth) strong delusion [planē]"* to believe the lie that Antichrist is God (2 Thessalonians 2.11). The phrase translated **which he had power** [*edothē*] **to do**, or "he was permitted to perform" [NET] shows God allows the beast to be empowered by the dragon to perform such miracles. Osborne says, *"Since the sinners have rejected God's offer and refused to repent, God is 'giving them over' (cf. Romans 1) to the deceptions they clearly prefer."*

### His Model [vv.14b-15]

**v.14b.** The second beast commands them that **dwell on the earth** (the technical expression for those in rebellion against God) to **make an image to the beast**. The Greek is ambiguous and could be rendered "he ordered" [NIV] or "he persuaded" [REB]. The **image** [*eikōn*] will likely be some kind of visual or holographic representation of the first beast. Jim Allen says the word 'image' contains two ideas, *"First, the idea of likeness or representation – the image represents a person; second, the more important idea is manifestation – the image reveals a person. Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1.15) and not only shows the likeness of God but manifests God because He is God. This image was to be not only a likeness of the beast, but a manifestation of one who was worshipped. The image bears the physical likeness of the Beast but it is also a visible and tangible manifestation of this mighty personality."* This image is described by the Lord Jesus as "the abomination of (that causes) desolation" spoken of by Daniel the Prophet (Matthew 24.15). The reference is to Daniel 9.27 which describes an idol being erected on the wing (pinnacle) of the temple in Jerusalem. A foreshadowing of this event is recorded in Daniel 3, when Nebuchadnezzar constructed a golden image of a man (symbolic of the power of his empire) and commanded the nations to bow down and worship it. The image was 60 cubits [90ft] high, 6 cubits [9ft] in breadth, and serenaded by six musical instruments – 666! A second foreshadowing, mentioned in Daniel 11.31, took place on 16th December 167BC when Antiochus Epiphanes polluted the temple in Jerusalem by sacrificing a pig on the brazen altar and sprinkling its blood around the courts. An image to Zeus was even installed in the Holy of Holies. The reason for the image is to facilitate the worship of the beast which **had the wound by a sword, and did live** ("but still lived", NET), the same language being used of the Lord Jesus, "which was dead, and is alive" (2.8).

**v.15.** God will permit the second beast (by the power of the Devil) to **give life** [*pneuma*] to the image of the first beast. The word *pneuma* is not the Greek word for life [*zōē* or *bios*], but rather 'breath' or 'spirit' so the image becomes animated, perhaps through an indwelling evil spirit. This is not real life, which only God can give, but a deceptive miracle by which the image appears to be alive. The image uses its breath to **speak** and pronounce the death penalty for any who would not **worship the image of the beast**. Just as, at the beginning, the Devil caused the serpent to speak in Eden, now, at the end of the ages, he is using the same trick. It will be a capital crime to refuse to participate in the worship of the Antichrist.

### His Mark [vv.16-18]

**v.16.** The second beast also implements a global registration programme using the **mark** (brand) of the beast. All people, whether **small** or **great** (social), **rich** or **poor** (economic), **free** or **bond** (cultural) – the three expressions are a formula for universality – must receive a mark to identify their allegiance to the beast (Antichrist). The word for **mark** [*charagma*] refers to a literal brand, tattoo, or etching as practiced by pagan religions. It will be a visible branding of the name of the beast, or the number of his name (v.17). In the Roman empire, *charagma* was a term for the images or names of emperors on Roman coins. All this is a satanic counterfeit of the seal of God that is placed on the foreheads of the saints (7.3). Believers today are sealed with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1.22; Ephesians 1.13; 4.30). He is the token of divine

ownership and security. The seal is a mark of ownership – these devotees of Antichrist now belong to the Devil. They have rejected former loyalties and wholly accepted a new allegiance. The brand is **on the right hand** (service) or on the **forehead** (intellect) – the most conspicuous and noble part of a person. To take the mark will mean final rejection of Christ and guaranteed eternal damnation (14.9-11).

**v.17.** The mark will constitute a global registration system, membership of which will be required for any and every commercial transaction. The world economy will be controlled by the beast – both *supply* (no one will be able to **sell**) and *demand* (no one will be able to **buy**) without the mark. There will be no buying clothes at a shopping centre, eating at a restaurant, filling the car with petrol, paying utility bills, or making mortgage payments without pledging allegiance to the beast. The Greek suggests the mark takes the form of *either* his **name** written in normal form, or expressed in numerical form, “*the mark of the beast – that is, his name or his number*” [NET]. **v.18.** John calls for those alive at this time to exercise **wisdom** and **understanding** (discernment). It seems the numerical representation of the name of the beast will require Spirit-given illumination which will be evident to the saints (cf. Daniel 12.10). The beast has a **number** which is the **number of a man**; his number is **six hundred threescore and six** (i.e. 666). This statement refers to the ancient practice of *gematria*. In *gematria*, a numerical value is attributed to each of the letters of the alphabet – a practice which is normal in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Generally, the first nine letters of the alphabet are numbered 1-9, the second nine letters 10-90, and so on – see table (below).

The repetition of the number **six** makes this man a total failure. He will never make the number seven! In Scripture, the number six is generally associated with man since he was created on the sixth day. Bullinger notes, “*Man was created on the sixth day; and this first occurrence of the number makes it (and all multiples of it) the hallmark of all connected with man. He works six days. The hours of his day are a multiple of six.*” Jim Allen says, “*the triple six has generally been taken to mean man at his best, man at the height of his power, yet still short of the divine perfection seen in the triple seven.*” Note also that the numerical number of the name “Jesus” is 888. In fact, each of the eight names of Christ in the NT (Lord, Jesus, Christ, Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, Lord Christ, and Lord Jesus Christ) all have numerical values that are multiples of eight – the number of resurrection, regeneration and new beginning.

Alpha .....	α .....	1	The name “Jesus” (Ιησοῦς) in Greek adds up to <b>888</b> . [I = 10, ē = 8, s = 200, o = 70, u = 400, s = 200]
Beta .....	β .....	2	
Gamma .....	γ .....	3	
Delta .....	δ .....	4	
Epsilon .....	ε .....	5	
Zeta .....	ζ .....	7	
Eta .....	η .....	8	
Theta .....	θ .....	9	
Iota .....	ι .....	10	
Kappa .....	κ .....	20	
Lambda .....	λ .....	30	
Mu .....	μ .....	40	
Nu .....	ν .....	50	
Xi .....	ξ .....	60	
Omicron .....	ο .....	70	
Pi .....	π .....	80	
Rho .....	ρ .....	100	
Sigma .....	σ ζ .....	200	
Tau .....	τ .....	300	
Upsilon .....	υ .....	400	
Phi .....	φ .....	500	
Chi .....	χ .....	600	
Psi .....	ψ .....	700	
Omega .....	ω .....	800	