***The Deception of the False Prophet

RV176-02***

Our subject is "The False Prophet." This is segment number nine in Revelation 13:11-18.

Many centuries ago, on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, the apostle John, near the end of the first century, received directly from the Lord Jesus Christ a revelation about future events via a vision. The information John received has, under the supervision of God the Holy Spirit, been accurately and correctly recorded in the book of the Revelation. This book, in the nature of the case, is a bombshell. It is staggering to the human imagination in what it has to say about future events. It is interesting that it is the only book in the Bible which, right at the very beginning, promises a blessing to those who read it; who understand it; and, who obey it, and promises a curse at the end upon those who take anything and detract in any way from it.

There are many believers who do not receive that blessing because they don't understand this book, for they have no one to teach them. The only people that they have to teach them tell them that it is an enigma within a conundrum; that cannot be understood; and, that it is a meaningless book. A large part of Christendom says that everything in the book of the Revelation was fulfilled by the year 70 A.D., and, therefore, it has no meaning for us today or in the future. This is completely false, and of course, it is one of the delusions of Satan in order to keep the eyes of people off the future, because future events make it very clear that history is moving under the controlled guidance of Almighty God.

Here in Revelation 13, John records the future arrival on the world scene of two forceful personalities. The time of this is during the final seven years of human history before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ – that which we refer to as the tribulation era, and is the last of the 490 years predicted by Daniel that God would deal with the Jewish people. To the very day (not to the very the day before, but to the very day) chronologically, the 483rd year was completed on Palm Sunday when Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on that donkey, and made the official presentation of Himself as the King and Messiah who had come to fulfill the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants. He was rejected, and the prophetic clock stopped ticking with seven years left unfulfilled.

Revelation 13 deals with that seven-year period. It is in the future, and it will begin ticking off once all of us have been removed from this earth – we who are the body of Christ, the church. We are taken off this earth to meet the Lord in heaven, dead Christians and living Christians. Then God will turn His attention once more to the Jewish people, and to fulfilling the promises that He has made to Abraham, and the promises of a God who never lies and never goes back on His word.

**The Antichrist**

One of these two famous personalities here in Revelation 13, which is coming in the near future is the antichrist. He is the man who will become the head of a one-world government under a new world order in which there will be a combination between the civil and the religious in one structure.

**The False Prophet**

The other man is the false prophet who will head up the universal religion of the tribulation era. Both of these men are given superhuman powers by Satan, with whom they form a false trinity. Both men are taken captive at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and their judgment is to be thrown into the lake of fire. We have this recorded in Revelation 19:20: "And the beast (that is the antichrist) was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs (the miracles) 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."

**The Lake of Fire**

The lake of fire (hell) is a very real place. Do not believe the Jehovah Witnesses. They lie to you. They are deceivers when they tell you that there is no hell, and that there is only extinction for those who are rebels against God. The Bible is explicitly clear that that is not the case. We know that, as a matter of fact, from that which will be happening to these two men, because 1,000 years later, after the Millennial Kingdom has come to an end, and eternity is about to begin, Revelation 20:10 gives us an insight of how things are going with the antichrist and the false prophet in the lake of fire. Note that it says, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire." The devil has had his last hurrah. He has been released from the imprisonment in which he has been held during 1,000 years. He has raised one more rebellion among the children born during the millennium, and that has been totally put down.

Satan is put into the place that originally was created for him and his demon angels, and all human beings who choose to follow him. So, the beast (the antichrist) and the false prophet have been in the lake of fire for 1,000 years. What is their condition? The devil now joins them: "He's thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast (that is, the antichrist) and the false prophet are also. They will be tormented day and night, forever and ever." The Bible is very clear that after 1,000 years, these two men have not been rubbed out of existence. They are still fully conscious, and they have all of their feeling faculties upon them. The pain that they experience is constant night and day. Few of us have ever experienced something like this.

I know a person or two who now have physical disabilities which are just out of the reach of medical science to help. It is of a nature that they are under constant discomfort and pain, and it goes on night and day. They can't sleep at night. They're tired during the day. They're so despondent when they speak to me; they're so blue; they're down in the mouth; and, they're discouraged. That's what constant suffering does. Indeed, these men in the lake of fire will not have the grace of God, as we Christians do, to carry us through times like that. This will be an unbelievable price to pay for thumbing their nose at the Word of God; the authority of doctrine; and, and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world in which we live today is rapidly being prepared for the arrival and the acceptance of these two evil agents of the devil. The nations of the world are moving toward political and economic unity under total computer control.

I received a letter from Exxon Corporation this week in which they happily explained to me that now I can use my Exxon card at any gas station, and they will deduct the price of the gas directly from my bank account. I won't have to worry about writing any checks. That seems very attractive to some people. What we are seeing is one more notch being pulled down so that one man can indeed control all of the economic activity of every individual in the world.

I want to warn you that the Revelation is a staggering book. It is hard to believe these things, and it is hard to imagine that these things will actually take place. It is difficult to think that people of the world, intelligent statesmen and world leaders, would actually look upon the antichrist as the man of the hour – the Savior to carry mankind through. You would think that they're too smart and too sophisticated for that, but that will not be the case. Nations are moving toward political and economic unity. World government is on the horizon. The religions of mankind are moving toward an ecumenical alliance. I worry a lot about the Pope. He is simply wearing himself out, running around the world to all the religions of the world, not just to Catholics, and he is promoting and encouraging a spirit of religious unity. The Pope, one of Satan's prime agents, is laying the groundwork for the religious ecumenicism that will exist in the tribulation era.

The Bible, as the Word of God, with binding authority on human conduct, is being increasingly rejected. Please don't bring up the Bible on the Donahue program, or you know what it means to get the back of somebody's hand, as any moral discussion does not depend upon the Bible. Anything that has to do with right and wrong – the Bible is irrelevant to the issue on that show, and that is the attitude of Americans today. This is dramatically different than it was within the lifetime of some of us older folks here today, when the Bible was, universally within this country, the respected book that had a message from God. That is no longer so. Spiritual truth is being sought now in human reason, and emotions, and miracle experiences. So, the unthinkable of a generation ago, even now, has become the thinkable and the acceptable.

These two strange men will not be so offensive to the general public that they will not be welcome.

Christians themselves have, of course, anticipated the rapture of the church for so many generations. It is hard to believe that we are going to be the ones. I mean, it has been almost 2,000 years, and the Lord made it clear through His apostles that everything necessary for Him to come back and take us to heaven, to meet us in the air – all that has all been put in order. There's nothing standing in the way. In God's own time, the signal will be given for that to happen. It is hard to believe that that is actually going to happen.

Yet, I can assure you that it is more likely today because of what is taking place than at any time in past history. In Matthew 24:33, the Lord gives us this admonition: "Even so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near, right at the door." Now we have things that are true in prophetic fulfillment which have never been true in the history of the world before. Jesus says, "When you see that, at least have the sense to know that that means that I am pretty close to coming back."

After all, this is what it must have been like for the Jews waiting all those centuries for the arrival of the Messiah Savior, the Messenger from God. And then, lo and behold, on that first Christmas day, suddenly it happens. Suddenly, what everybody has been waiting for centuries, and not even dreaming that it would happen in their lifetime, it did take place.

I think it would be very foolish, as a Christian, not to very seriously live on the principle that you are going to go up in the rapture as a living Christian. That's how close the time is.

This false prophet, when he comes on the scene, John tells us, will come on with a gentle, lamb-like man-of-peace and compassion. He'll walk around with his hands folded in front of him, or one laid upon another. He will smile a lot, and he'll make lots of religious signs, and everybody will say, "What a sweet, sweet man he is: the vicar of God upon this earth."

However, John tells us that his true nature is revealed by what the Bible calls "your fruits." The Bible says, "We will know you by your fruits." That, of course, is not your lifestyle and how you act. In the context in which that is spoken, it refers to your doctrine. We will know you by what you teach. John tells us that when the lamb-like leader opens his mouth, out comes the words of Satan. He speaks with the voice of the devil.

Only a knowledge of doctrine will enable those living in the tribulation to spot the real nature of the false prophet. Most of them, because they are denied doctrine and because many of them were in churches before the rapture, and they continued as unbelievers into the tribulation, have so little knowledge of the Word of God, that they have no frame of reference for judging what this man says.

Furthermore, the false prophet will exercise great powers given to him by Satan. There are powers that include the ability to work miracles. We have gone through with you carefully and shown you that miracles are not constant in the history of the world. They are not constant with God. Miracles come on periodically when God needs to authenticate and to establish a new direction in which He is moving. The first time was with Moses. The second time was with Elijah and Elisha. And then for centuries, there was not a whisper of a miracle. Then, with the time of Christ and the apostles, another time came for authenticating that God was making a dramatic change from Judaism to Christianity, and miracles burst out again. Then, having served its purpose, miracles phased out.

There are no miracle-workers today. There are only liars claiming to be miracle-workers. The truth of the matter is that the Bible is quite explicit in declaring that the next era of great miracles will be during the tribulation, and they will be performed by the devil. He will give this power to the false prophet so that he can even imitate the miracles that God's men do, just as the agents (the priests) of Pharaoh were able to perform the miracles that Moses did under God's power. The Bible tells us that this false prophet will be able to bring fire down from heaven in the pattern of Elijah and of the two witnesses.

The main job of the false prophet is going to be to lead mankind to worship the vile and blasphemous antichrist as God. All of this is in the future. Revelation 13 is specifically at the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period.

We now pick up our study at Revelation 13:14: "And he deceives." This is speaking of the false prophet. The word "deceives" is the Greek word "planao." This word means "to tell a lie." Actually, it literally connotes wandering away from the path of truth. That is why from this Greek word, we get our English word "planet," because planets, as they were once viewed in the sky, did not follow an orderly orbit. They were viewed as wandering stars – just wandering helter-skelter about the sky, because they had a different structure than all the rest of the interstellar bodies and the stars. So, these particular lights out in space were called planets from this Greek word "planao," because they were wandering around from a basis.

This word can be illustrated (to get the idea of what is what the false prophet is up to) in Ephesians 4:14, where it is used: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful (and there's the word) scheming." So, this word "planao" inherently means wandering away from the truth. It means to be telling a lie.

We can illustrate that also in 1 Thessalonians 2:3, where this word is used: "For exhortation does not come from error (there's the word), or impurity, or by way of deceit." Here, the word means "a deliberate lying."

This, of course, is the prime characteristic of Satan, as we have in John 8:44, where Jesus says, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning. He does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar, and the father of lies." Can you communicate with the spirit world and receive truth? Yes, you can. But it will always be truth which is directed toward a deceit. It is truth which is meant to lead you astray.

I have actually heard Christians say, "I am willing to accept information and seek it from any source whatsoever." An example is hypnotism, which is a prime area for satanic information to be intruded through the subject. That is a foolish attitude. It shows that you do not take seriously what God has told us about Satan. Whatever else is primarily true of him, this is it: He's a liar, and he seeks to deceive. So, when his people come along, as indeed the Lord on another occasion said – that since Satan is the great deceiver, it is no wonder that his own agents should also be masters of deceit, and that they too should be pretenders of enlightenment when they are nothing but purveyors of darkness.

This word "planao" is in the present tense, which means that this is what they do all the time. This is not a sometimes thing. It is in the active voice which tells us that the false prophet deliberately does this. This is a calculated deceit. And whom does he deceive? He deceives a certain segment of the human race: "Those who dwell on the earth." The word "dwell" is the Greek word "katoikeo." This word refers simply to residing somewhere, and specifically, to residing on the earth. It is used 13 times in the book of the Revelation. It has, in fact, become a technical word meaning those who live in the tribulation who are unbelievers. They are not of heavenly people.

For example, in Revelation 13:6, we have the phrase "Those who dwell in heaven," referring to believers. This is the opposite. It's the technical term for those who are not believers. So, their sphere of association is simply earthly. This is their constant place of residence. It is also active voice, which tells us that this is where they choose to live. This is where they want to be. The tribulation unbelievers, of course, have no divine viewpoint frame of reference, so they are easily deceived by the false prophet on spiritual matters. They have no way of identifying who is a false teacher. The false prophet deceives people in spiritual things, in contrast to what the Holy Spirit does, who guides believers into all spiritual truth.

John 16:13 tells us: "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on his own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will disclose to what is to come." God the Spirit will not allow you to store in your human spirit that which is false – that which is error. That will only hang up in your mind. But down in the storage place of doctrine in your human spirit, from which God directs you in the facets of your soul, only God's truth will be reserved and will be stored there. So, the greater frame of reference you have, the easier it is for God the Holy Spirit to guide you. Most of you people are well-versed in the Word of God such that you can sit just about anywhere and listen to a false teacher pop off, and you'll spot it immediately. You have a sense directly of knowing that you are not listening to one who speaks for God.

**Miracles**

So, the false prophet comes on the scene, and he proceeds to pull a big con job, as religious leaders have often done historically, on a group of unbelievers on the earth. It says, "Because," which introduces here actually the means by which he's going to do that. And the way he deceives them is with signs ("semeion"). This is used in reference to a miraculous act. Now, here we are – back to miracles. This is the use of miracles to convince people of a point of view. Satan gives the false prophet the power to perform paranormal acts. These miracles of Satan are used to get people to believe his false doctrines. Those who do not understand the doctrine of miracles will easily be deceived.

It is not only that a supernatural act has taken place, but you have to understand God's purpose of miracles in order to establish His truth. If the miracle is there, but the truth is not compatible with the doctrines of Scripture, you know that the power is not a power from God, because it is designed to deceive you into a false doctrine.

So, a miracle, in contrast to what I've heard Richard Roberts say (of the Oral Roberts organization in Tulsa) – that a miracle settles the question. He's wrong. The miracle does not settle the question. It is doctrine that settles the question. It is God working in compatibility to His Word.

So, those who do not understand the place of miracles will easily be deceived. But of course, mankind has always been awed by magic and supernatural, human, paranormal acts. Satan and his demons cannot create as God can, but they do have power to manipulate God's creation. They cannot visualize something into reality. They cannot speak something into reality. They're not omnipotent. And this is what is becoming very prominent, especially in charismatic circles. You hear a lot of this on TV now: "Visualize!"

I followed a car the other day, and there was a bumper sticker on it that said: "Visualize Peace." I knew I was following a New Ager, and I honked for Jesus, just to remind him what a clod he was. "Visualize Peace." That's the same stuff they tell us up at the ski slopes at Winter Park. When they don't have snow, as you're getting on the lift, they have these chalkboards, and on it they have: "Visualized Snow." And all the while I'm on the lift, I look up and I visualize snow, but I'm not omnipotent, I'm sorry to tell you. Some of you think I am, and I don't want to disillusion you. But these men do not have the power of omnipotence. When the charismatic preachers are telling people to visualize themselves out of their poverty, and into the things they would like to have, it is an agent of Satan conveying to you that which is false.

Matthew 24:24 indicates that the tribulation is going to be the next period in history when miracles will be seen in abundance: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise (speaking in this context of the great tribulation), and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." How can you keep from being misled as a Christian? You know your doctrine. Otherwise, you're going to be deceived.

You'd be surprised how often people come to me and say, "Hey, I've just got some material here from Oral Roberts, and look what he says about healing and miracles." I mean, these are the same people who have sat here and listened to the explanation from the Word of God. But, boy, that experience of seeing the power and the paranormal just captivates them.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 indicate the Satan is going to use miracles as false signs to convince people that his antichrist is God, and that they should worship him as such: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come (the tribulation) unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness (the antichrist) is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." He puts himself in the holy of holies, replacing the cherubim angels with their outstretched wings over the mercy seat.

Verse 9: "That is, the one who is coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders." We even have a signs and wonders group which considers itself the third phase of the charismatic Pentecostal movement. Of all places, it originated out of Dallas Seminary. The leaders of this movement are making the same claims that Satan is making: "Watch my miracles, and I will show you what is true." How deceptive! Yet, the Word of God makes it clear that this is going to be Satan's modus operandi.

The tribulation people are deceived by Satan's miracles – those who are negative to doctrine, especially the truth about salvation. If you turn your back upon the Word of God (and you have been given extensive instruction in this congregation about reversionism) – when you do that, you open yourself to the most abject kind of blindness; you go into a spiritual tailspin; and, you will become a spiritual casualty.

There have been many people recently talking to me about folks who used to be here, and they say, "Do you remember Mr. So-and-so. Whatever happened to him? He was a powerful figure among us. He was a significant voice for the Lord. He made an impact on the work of Christ." And he got hung up in a false doctrine. This lady over here used to be so significant. Where is she? She is hung up in false doctrine, and into a tailspin. If you arch your back against the authority of the Bible, just be sure you accept the fact that you are going to be blinded by God, and you will think you're so right, because you cannot see the light anymore.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, this is explicitly declared: "With all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. Many people of our world today make fun of fundamentalist Christians, who think that God has spoken indeed in the Scriptures, and who explain that to people, and they turn their back against it, and they make fun of it, and they reject it as a stupid thing that no sensible person would believe. You know what the apostle Paul said – that people call the gospel foolishness, but God says it is the power of God unto salvation.

The old sin nature in man is always going to seek spiritual truth by his experiences, and through his emotions, rather than through the revelation of Scripture. He will believe what he feels and what is reason rather than what Scripture says. So, the world rejects the truth of the biblical record about Jesus Christ and His mission; His miracles; His deity; His payment for sin; His resurrection; and, His ascension. The world rejects all of that. The tribulation world will believe, however, the lies of the antichrist, because of the miracle experiences and the euphoric emotions which are generated by the false prophet.

**Charismatics Today**

Truth by your experience and your emotions is what Satan is using today to deceive the whole charismatic movement into serving his cause. The charismatics are always jumping with their religious bungee cords too long, and knocking themselves senseless, so that their brains cannot get together to be oriented to spiritual reality. What are they looking for? They're looking for experiences and emotions to establish the truth.

So, the false prophet, we're told, proceeds to deceive the unbelievers who are on the earth in the latter part of the tribulation, and he does it by means of miracle signs which are given, which means he has to receive it from outside himself. He does not naturally have power to perform these paranormal miracles. He receives this from Satan, and he performs them. He does these things in the presence (that is, in behalf of, or by the authority) of the beast, the antichrist. The false prophet is a minister of propaganda of the antichrist's kingdom, and it is the purpose of the false Christ to exalt the false Christ. He exalts the antichrist – the beast.

The word "beast" here ("in the presence of the beast") refers both to the antichrist as a man, but it also refers to the kingdom that he rules over. This kingdom in the Old Testament, in Nebuchadnezzar's image, was presented in a variety of beasts. What he is ruling over now is the period when the nations of the world are again joined together so that they are in the structure once more of the Roman Empire united as it once was before. That's what was so amazing – that here was what seemingly was a death blow to the empire, and now it is alive and well again. The antichrist is thus viewed as both the tribulation world ruler and as the summation (the epitome) of the Roman Empire over which he rules. The antichrist is viewed as responsible for the miraculous restoration of the seemingly dead Roman Empire.

**An Image**

So, in the presence of this beast, both his empire and himself, he now gives the message: "Telling those who dwell on the earth." Again, you can tell now yourself, that "those who dwell on the earth" receive instruction from the false prophet, and these are tribulation unbelievers. They are under the control of Satan. They believe his lies about his personal godhood, and the deity of the antichrist. He tells them "To make (to structure, or to build) an image;" that is, an "eikon." This is specifically something to symbolize the power and the majesty of the antichrist. While this word does not specify what the image would be in appearance, it is probably going to be a bust, or a full statue of the antichrist, because later we shall see it even speaks.

**A Wound from a Sword**

This object is designed to honor visually the antichrist before all the people of the world. He is specifically identified as the antichrist – the beast (the man) who has had a wound. This wound is the Greek word "plege." The word "plege" is a wound that is caused by a stroke of something – being hit by some stroke. And the stroke here is: "Because of the sword," which is the "machaira." The "machaira" was the two-edged, standard issue, military weapon of the Roman soldier. As a matter of fact, it was only about 18 inches long. It was razor sharp on both sides, and it revolutionized ancient warfare. It is what made the Roman Legion so terrifying, because they got away from those long swords, some of which had to have two hands to use. And in the process of using it, the body was exposed to a close-in thrust. So, they found that the small sword was much more effective.

The decline of the Roman Empire, as you know, was brought about by the sword of the barbarian tribes which moved in from the outer perimeters upon the decaying Roman Empire. So, the Roman Empire, since the fifth century, has been broken up into nation states as the result of the sword being exercised and being imposed upon the empire.

Now, this antichrist, who is as an individual, but who also represents the empire, is being spoken of as the one in his emperor role who has taken the wound of the sword (that is, the empire being destroyed), and now has come back to life. The word "life" is the Greek word "zao," which means that it is now restored once more to capacity. So, here is the reference to the restoration of the Roman Empire under the antichrist as its emperor.

This takes place at the point when he conquers three nations, and seven others choose to join him. It is done by the antichrist himself, and the Greek word "zao" in the indicative mood. It is a statement of the fact that he has accomplished this amazing thing of bringing these nations together.

**The Antichrist**

Now, at mid-tribulation, Russia and her Arab allies, who made their move against Israel, will have been destroyed by God, so that now there is a power vacuum in all the world. The antichrist rapidly moves in from his base in the Mediterranean area, and at that point in time, he becomes the world ruler. So, at tribulation, mankind views the antichrist as the greatest man of all time. He's as impressive as any leader in history past. Look what he's done. He has conquered the whole world. He stands astride the whole thing. He has survived his enemies. No one can resist him. He has total economic, military, political, and social control over the individual lives of people. Talk about big brother government!

He and he alone has been able to kill those miserable two witnesses that, for the first three-and-a-half years, were such a thorn in his side. He is the leader qualified to bring order out of chaos – the chaos created by the plagues which God has been imposing under the seals and trumpets against the tribulation humanity. It will be easy to look upon him, and to see him as mankind's best hope for universal peace on earth and prosperity for all mankind. His restoration of the Roman Empire will be seen as the act of a god. The antichrist will be seen as the apex of the process of evolutionary humanism, and therefore, he is deity. He will be the finest thing that evolutionary humanism has produced up to that point.

**The Colossus of Rhodes**

Tyrants have, of course, historically erected images of themselves for the masses to use in doing homage to them. Unbelievers like to see their gods, so they create idols of them. One of the wonders of the ancient world was the Colossus of Rhodes. This was a statue of Apollo. It was 120 feet tall. It was like the length of this whole building out through the foyer. That's a pretty big statue. And it stood astride the harbor entrance to Rhodes. This was erected in 280 B.C. Why did they do this? Because he was their patron god. They built this enormous statue. How in the world they did it, we can't figure out to this day, any more than we can figure how they built the wonder of the pyramids. But here was this giant Colossus of Rhodes.

Also, the communists, as you know, were in the habit of erecting statues of their dictators. On special occasions, they would display huge pictures of their leaders against buildings, and they paid homage before their tombs. People are still lining up at Lenin's tomb. During the break-up recently of the Communist Party in Russia, the people have vented their rage against these statues, which to them represented the leaders who have created their agonies. Their gods have now fallen.

This was the ancient custom, as with Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:1-11, when he chose to erect a statue of himself, and declare that everyone must worship it. When the music sounded, and the time came for worship, not to do so would be to do so upon pain of death. Don't forget that we're talking about three-and-a-half years of enormous turmoil in the world. What do we have? Six billion people in the world today? By the end of the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, half the world's population will be dead: three billion people. Talk about buying stock in the funeral industry! That's the place to put your money – those of you who are going to hang around for the tribulation. They're going to have lots of business – more than they can handle. They are going to look for a strong man – somebody to resolve this.

**The Deception of the False Prophet**

So, here is the picture. The false prophet, who is the agent of the antichrist, and who is the servant of Satan, makes a deliberate deception of the people of the world. Yes, he knows that his power is limited. He knows that the antichrist is not a god. He knows where this power is coming from. This is the same question that you people ask when you say, "Do these charismatic leaders who are playing these enormous, heartless con jobs on people in what they promise to them in order to get their money, do they really believe that? Do they really think that that is true?" I don't know whether they do or not, but I suspect that the false prophet understands where his power is coming from, and he has this marvelous ability to perform miracles. So, he does so in order to confirm the claim that the antichrist is deity, and that this is the channel to the true God. He tells those who dwell upon the face of the earth that they should make the image of the antichrist, this one who represents an empire, who seemed to be doomed, and now who has brought it all together, and who is now going to play his final role in world history.

There was no there was no world empire predicted in Daniel after the Roman Empire. The next world empire will be the empire of Jesus Christ. So, the empire that now comes together under the antichrist, because it will be a world empire, has to be a continuation of that Roman Empire. He comes on the scene, and all the world now rallies to him to bring together Satan's final effort to create a millennium without Jesus Christ. They need someone to lead them out of the suffering of the first three-and-a-half years.

Then, in in verse 15, talk about spookiness; talk about power; and, talk about a finish for your act! The antichrist, under Satan's guidance, knows how to play to the audience. In the next session, we'll tell you all about that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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