***The Image of the Antichrist

RV177-01***

We are studying "The False Prophet." This is segment number 10 on Revelation 13:11-18.

**The Deception of Satan and the False Prophet**

During the future tribulation era, the false prophet will, through various deceptions, lead mankind to worship the antichrist as a God. The false prophet will project himself as an image of a gentle lamb-like man of peace, but he will speak with the lying words of Satan. The false prophet claims to be God's minister of spiritual enlightenment, but as Satan's spokesman, he is in fact an agent of Satan's lies. He will be coming on as a true follower of God, yet he will be a follower of Satan. This is the normal approach for Satan and for his ministers.

This pointed out to us in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, and we have to understand this: "For such men (these who misrepresent the Word of God, who do not teach true doctrine,) such men are false apostles; deceitful workers disguising themselves as apostles of Christ." No wonder – for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds. Here, in the person of the false prophet, we have a prime example of an agent of Satan who disguises himself as a minister of righteousness. The lies that Satan's agents project are always subtle, but they are also surrounded by truth in order to deceive the undiscerning into false doctrines and abominable acts.

It is amazing, as you listen to cult groups on television, or read in their writings, how much of what they teach is absolutely true. It's biblical. Yet, at critical points, they deviate from the Word of God – just enough to keep a person out of heaven, and just enough to keep a person from enjoying the full council of the Word of God, and thus his full privileges and blessings as a member of the body of Christ. The thing about this is that once you get hold of a few of these basic subtleties, you find that they are through all the cults, and through all the false religions. Satan does not seem to be very imaginative. He uses the same lies over and over again, and the same false deceit, and apparently, because they work. Why fix something that works?

**Miracles**

The spiritual lies of the false prophet are going to be made very impressive by the fact that he has power from Satan to perform miracles. The tribulation era, the Bible makes clear, will be the next period in human history when there will be an outburst of miracles. The so-called miracles that are claimed today are self-deceptions. They are con man deceits, or they are manipulations of Satan. The era of genuine miracle authentication by God has passed. We now have the Bible as our frame of reference. We don't need miracles to prove that something is true, or to prove to us when God is acting and speaking. The miracles today are mere manipulations of Satan, and they are not the miracles that are characteristic of God.

**Beasts**

Satan is going to use the false prophet to perform miracles in the tribulation which will blind people to true truth and to doctrinal principles. The false prophet will tell the unbelievers of the tribulation to erect an image of the antichrist as an honor to him, and as an object of worship. Again, I remind you that when, we read the term "beast," relative to the antichrist, that you must understand that that has a twofold connotation. Yes, it does refer to that human being, the antichrist, who will become the ruler of all the world, but it also refers to the old Roman Empire brought back into existence over which he will reign as the last emperor. The term "beast" was used in describing these empires in the Old Testament revelations of Daniel.

**The Restored Roman Empire**

So, when we speak here of the Roman Empire as having seemingly sustained a death blow in the fifth century by the military onslaught of the barbarian tribes, we are not speaking of the antichrist himself, or anybody else who has died and then been resurrected. I mentioned that to you because there are some teachers who suggest that the antichrist is going to be a resurrected Judas. Or, another favorite is that the antichrist is going to be a resurrected Nero. During the tribulation, world events will enable the antichrist to actually reunite the separate countries that once made up the old Roman Empire so that the empire lives again. The restored Roman Empire of the tribulation will again be worshiping its emperor as God, as was the case in the ancient empire. The antichrist, as a man, will look very good to people – those who lack the knowledge of the Word of God.

**An Image of the Antichrist**

Mankind, by nature, is attracted to visual images for use in his worship. So, the false prophets obliges people with this image of the antichrist.

**Breath**

In Revelation 13:15, we read, "And there was given to him." The word "given," speaking of the antichrist, is the Greek word "didomi." This word means to receive something. I stress this because the antichrist does not have superhuman powers in himself. He's just an ordinary person such as you and I are. But there comes a time when this statue is erected, and the false prophet receives power from Satan to perform another miracle in connection with this idol of the antichrist. And that is: "It was given to him" by God's divine purpose to do something with this image; namely, to give it breath.

The Greek word for "breath" is important for you to understand. It is the Greek word "pneuma." This word also means "spirit." This word does not mean life. That is a different Greek word. That is the word "zoe." This is not life. So, let's make it clear. The old King James Bible is a little disconcerting in translating it as "life." What this is literally saying is that the false prophet is given the capacity by Satan to give this idol of the antichrist "spirit" – not life, because life can only come from God. Only God can give life. The false prophet cannot give life. Satan cannot give life.

**Raising People from the Dead**

You know that the ultimate expression of the gift of healing in the New Testament was to raise a person from the dead. If you had the gift of healing, you could raise people from the dead. Don't you think that if Satan could raise people from the dead, that is the one thing he would do to complete his deception, as is exercised in the tongues and the healing movements of the charismatic Pentecostals? That's exactly what he would do. But when men want to be deceived, they will not be limited, even by the obvious.

I sat in the charismatic meeting in Costa Mesa, California several years ago, and a man got up. This was the real meeting – not the Sunday where they project the reasonable, rational image. This was the jumping, jiving, Friday night meeting, where the healings, and all the tongues, and all that takes place. This man stood up and said, "I prayed and asked God for the gift of healing." And I yelled, "You can't do that. God the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives gifts when you're born again. You can't ask for it." But Mrs. Danish stopped me, so I didn't get out too many of those words. But obviously, he didn't know what he was talking about to say that. But he said, "I asked God to give me the gift of healing, and the first three people that I put my hands on to heal died. And I was confused and crushed."

I said, "Hot dog, I want to see what he's going to say about this." Do you know what he said? This was another one of these guys who jumps off with his religious bungee rope too long, so that his brains get rattled. Do you know what he said? He said, "And then God revealed to me that the ultimate expression of healing is to take a person into the Lord's presence." I said, "Did he say that?" Yeah, he said that. How stupid can you be? Just as stupid as you want to. How deceiving? How self-deceptive do you want to be? Just as much as you want to con yourself? This man has conned himself that when people died, it was the ultimate expression of the gift of healing. Tell that to your doctor. It will make him feel better.

The image of the antichrist, however here, is indeed, in some occult way, given the appearance of being alive, but it is not alive. It has given the appearance of life in some way. This is not merely an electronic robot like those of you who have visited Disneyland's Hall of the Presidents. Do you remember that? George Washington introduces and then sits down, and Abe Lincoln stands up, and he makes this introductory speech. And all of these presidents are standing, looking at each other, and nodding, and poking each other. Pretty soon you're carried away with the illusion that you have all these presidents right there before you. That's all electronic robots. But this is not going to be that, because people are not going to be fooled. These are going to be intellectuals. These are going to be the men of business, and the movers of society. They are going to be personally convinced that a great supernatural event has taken place, because this image, made of metal or whatever, actually receives animation. That's what it gets. When it says "spirit" or "breath," it means that it's animated.

Those of you who have visited Disneyland or Disneyworld may have visited the display (the feature) of the tiki birds. That is fascinating. You sit in this room, and you have all these tiki birds and parrots all around, and also these idols. And all of a sudden the mouths of these idols move, and the eyes roll. And you're sitting there looking, and you know that this is just an image made there, and it looks so realistic. And all the tiki birds squawk, and all the parents saying, and they look at each other. It's very realistic, but that's all mechanical. It's all electronic.

This is going to be something like that, but more. The false prophet, with Satan's delegated power, is able to give animation to this image. All the skepticism of science; all the high-IQ people; and, all the sophisticated worldly people will be satisfied that, somehow, this inert image has been given rationality. That's what hits them. It's not only that it moves; and as we shall see, it will speak; but, it is intelligent. It has rationality. This is no mechanical trickery, and none is needed by Satan. He is the great illusionist, and he has the power to pull this off.

**The Image will Speak**

What is the purpose of this? "It was given to him to give animation to the image of the beast that (here's the purpose) the image of the beast might speak." The word "speak" is the Greek word "laleo." This particular Greek word for speaking places the emphasis on the words used. There's another word for speaking which places the emphasis on the content (the meaning). With this one, the emphasis is on the word, because God the Holy Spirit wants to tell us that this is intelligible speech. This is something you can understand. This is something you can ask a question of, and get a response from. This is a great potential mystery. The ability of the image to speak is all that the world needs to convince it that the false prophet has performed a supernatural act, and has brought into being a living God. The image will, through Satan, via the false prophet, carry on an intelligent conversation, and it will give commands for all to hear. The image will become the prophet of God.

**Demons**

Now, you understand that all this is going to be transmitted by television. This is not going to be done in secret. This will be worldwide news. What are people going to be hearing? It will probably be the voice of a demon spirit. I remind you that the Word of God teaches us that behind every idol is a spirit of the demonic world. The apostle Paul points that out in 1 Corinthians 10:19-20, where he says, "What do I mean then? And he's talking about people coming to the communion table for the Lord's Supper, and the fact that there is a unity here, but a unity only of believers, and that there is required a separation from unbelievers. Unbelievers do not have any business at the Lord's table with believers. So, Paul says, "What do I mean that a thing sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God. I do not want you to become shares in demons."

What the apostle is pointing out is that when an offering is made to an idol, it is made to the demon which is behind that idol. I saw this many times when I was in China – people bringing offerings of food, clothing, and various things to their images of Buddha. They would be standing in front of it, clapping their hands to get the attention of the god, and bowing before it. They were not just acting in front of a dumb piece of inert material. They were actually performing this before a spirit being which was behind that idol.

In Acts 16:16, you read about the slave girl who was able to tell fortunes. And when Paul gave her the gospel, and she was born again, she lost the ability. What was she doing? She was speaking for Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians. The silversmiths were making little images of Diana that they were selling to those who wanted to consult and have their fortunes told. And that's what made them so hopping mad. After the girl was born again, the demon spirit, which was speaking in behalf of the Diana image, had left her, and she was no longer able to give them the information that demons have that people could not have about themselves.

The image of the antichrist thus will be a marvelous improvement over the dumb idols in history. People are acquainted with idols, as are we. But this is going to be something that nobody has ever seen. It will be astounding to them. In the Word of God, for example, in Psalm 135:15-16, it describes idols in this way: "The idols of the nations are but silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak. They have eyes, but they do not see."

Habakkuk 2:19: "Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake;' or to a dumb stone, 'Arise,' and that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all inside it." The idols that people are used to simply cannot speak.

Now, in ancient times, it is true that at Delphi, there was the great consulting with the gods in order to get messages and information, and a voice did speak. But this was ventriloquism. This was priests with their trickery. Here, however, with the time of the tribulation, with the image of the antichrist, from the metallic mouth of the antichrist image, will come the oracles of Satan under the disguise as being the voice of God. And the deception will be complete. There will be no mechanical trickery, and no hocus pocus. They will see that this metallic object has been animated – not given life, but it has been animated.

This is not entirely unusual or unthinkable, even in our time, because the Roman Catholic Church has many reports of the images of its saints and of Christ oozing blood, or even of moving, or smiling, and even uttering a message. A phenomena such as that is not unknown even today.

So, John in his vision, sees that the false prophet is given a great capacity from Satan to cause the image that they have erected of the antichrist to speak, and he gives a message. He gives a message, it says: "To cause as many as." And this word "as many as" indicates that some people will, and some people will not. Some will worship the image, some will not. All of mankind is going to divide over this issue. Those who worship this image will receive a mark upon them. It's called the mark of the beast. It will be up on the forehead, and it will be on the right hand, and it'll probably be some kind of invisible, electronic thing, but it will clearly, in the computer age, easily identify those who belong to the antichrist. Those who will not worship the antichrist will not have this image upon them.

The object here is that the idol of the antichrist gives a command, and that is that those who refuse to worship are to receive a certain treatment. The word "worship" is "proskuneo." "Proskuneo" means to come up and "kiss." It refers to an act of obeisance of bowing down. This is a potential act that these people may commit. This worship is performed before the statue of the antichrist directly, but I suspect that it will probably also be performed via television at the time, and it'll probably be performed in home shrines where replicas of images have been made of the image which has been placed in the temple in Jerusalem.

To worship the image of the antichrist, of course, is to worship the emperor. To worship the emperor is to worship Satan. That's the connection. Rome has been restored. The empire is again in existence. As in ancient Rome, the emperor was the god, and you were required to do an act of worship before the emperor at least once a year to indicate your loyalty to the state. And when you did that, you were bowing down to more than just a man, and more than just to a politician. You were actually bowing down to Satan and to his demon spirits.

This worship of the antichrist is going to become the supreme act of blasphemy of mankind. People have said horrible things against God. People blaspheme God unmercifully and unbelievably. But this is going to be the worst expression of blasphemy that the world has ever seen. This image will become the focus of the universal religion of the tribulation, and it will be the fulfillment of what Jesus said would happen in John 5:43, where the Lord said, "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me. If another shall come in his own name, you will receive him." It's inconceivable that the greatest; the finest; the kindest; the gentlest; and, wisest man that ever lived, the Lord Jesus Christ, sinless in every respect, should have been taken and cast out as a criminal, and crucified because even His own people would not receive Him. Yet, the people of the world will be happy to receive a low-life creature like the antichrist.

The worship of the antichrist, Revelation 13:4 tells us, will also be the worship of his master Satan. It is the purpose of Satan to turn mankind from the worship of God to himself.

Well, obviously they're going to be some people who are not going to knuckle down to this command. The image says, "We now have a universal worldwide imperial religion. All must be part of the state's religious organization, and all must express that conformity by worshiping the image of the antichrist. And those who do not are simply to be killed ("apokteino"). This means to put the death. It's in the aorist tense in the Greek language, which means that it is at the point where a person says, "I won't worship the image." It is passive, for the death is not imposed upon believer. The believer doesn't commit suicide, but it is done to the resisters by the agents of the antichrist. It is subjunctive mood, and that tells us that it is potential – that some people will, and some people won't.

The image commands the execution of all who will not bow down and worship before it. At that time, many gentiles and Jews will have become believers in Jesus Christ. They will refuse to worship the image of the antichrist, and they will be martyred, but others will escape. I must stress to you that not everyone who refuses to worship the image of the antichrist will be killed. The reason for that is that God always preserves a remnant, and He must preserve a remnant of gentiles who are alive in their natural bodies to go into the millennium. That's the basis of the Millennial Kingdom. He must preserve a remnant of Jews who are believers, and who are in their natural bodies, who go into the Millennial Kingdom.

This is why Satan would like to kill everybody in the world. He's been after the Jews in order to frustrate God's plan for a Jewish kingdom on this earth. He, at this point in time, will do everything he can to destroy all of humanity. When he sees that everything has gotten out of hand, he's going to go for broke. It is at that point that the Word of God tells us that those days will be shortened so that not everyone will be killed who is a believer in Jesus Christ.

You and I, of course, will be observers of this scene from the outside, having been previously taken into the air to meet the Lord. But indeed, many believers will be martyred, but many will escape. Many Jews, who are even unbelievers, will recoil from worshiping the image. They will flee for their lives. What these Jews are looking for is the Christ which was promised to Mary by the angel Gabriel. That's actually what they're looking for. They're looking for the Christ who will fulfill the promise to Abraham, which was then expanded in the Davidic covenant. Remember what that Christmas message was in Luke 1:32-33. Gabriel is describing the Son that Mary would bear. Gabriel said, "He will be great, and will be called the Son of God, the Most High (He will be divine), and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David (fulfilling the promise of a Messianic Kingdom on this earth), and He will reign over the house of Jacob (over the Jewish people), and of His kingdom, there will be no end." That's legitimately what the Jews have always been looking for. Their problem was that they refused to recognize the Messiah who was sent to fulfill.

Then, in time, some of these Jews in the tribulation will accept Christ as a result of the preachings of the 144,000 evangelists, and they will be born again, and they will go into the Millennial Kingdom. Revelation 11:2 and Revelation 12:6 describe that. But Matthew 24:22 says that the days will be shortened, and God will not permit all humanity to be destroyed on the face of the earth.

For those who do choose to knuckle under and worship the image, the price they will pay will be to suffer forever in the lake of fire. Revelation 14:10-11: "And he will drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full-strength in the cup of His anger. He will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. They have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." To worship the beast is to doom yourself forever to the lake of fire.

In Revelation 13:8, we're told that all those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life are going to worship the antichrist. In Revelation 13:15, we're told that those who are in that Lamb's book of life will not worship the antichrist.

What is this going to take place? This event takes place, we learn from the book of Daniel, during the tribulation; specifically, at midpoint – after the first three-and-a-half years. Daniel 9:27: "He (the antichrist) will make a firm covenant with the many (the Jewish people) for one week (that is a week of years – seven years). But in the middle of the week, after three-and-a-half years, he'll put a stop to the sacrifice and grain offerings." During the first three-and-a-half years, the antichrist will protect the Jews against the Arabs, and enable them to rebuild their temple, and resume their sacrificial system. After three-and-a-half years, with Russia out of the way, and her Arab allies devastated with her, now he can move onto the world scene as the world ruler. Remember that the Bible says that there are going to be only two men who rule all the world. One is the antichrist, and the other is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is all mankind. The book of Revelation is a staggering book. When he sees the position that he has now achieved, he wants it all.

So, he wants himself recognized as deity, and therefore, he turns against the Jews, and stops their sacrificial system. Then it says, "On the wing of abomination will become one who makes desolate;" that is, the antichrist will come as an abomination to desolate the holy of holies, and bring himself to complete destruction to the end that God has decreed for him.

**The Abomination of Desolation**

This is also indicated in Daniel 11:31: "And forces from him will rise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation." "The abomination of desolation" is the image of the antichrist. The wing that Daniel speaks of in Daniel 9:27 may actually refer to the outstretched wings of the two cherubim that look down upon the mercy seat facing one another. That mercy seat represents the throne of God. The antichrist himself is going to replace these angels with his own image. Probably, it will be kind of an image where the antichrist is standing with his hands extended, as if welcoming and blessing his worshipers. In this way, the antichrist is going to desecrate and defile the sacred holy of holies in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus Christ refers to this very event in Matthew 24:15, when the antichrist pulls this double-cross. We have looked at this. The Lord quotes the book of Daniel: "Therefore, when the abomination of desolation (the image of the antichrist) which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (the holy of holies in the reconstructed temple in Jerusalem), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. We have gone over this in detail, telling you that the city of Petra is probably the place of refuge to which these Jews will flee – these who will survive.

Of all the Jews who will be living then, the Bible tells us that only a third of them will survive the antichrist's persecution. And he will move against them so quickly that they are warned by the Lord to get out; not to turn back; not to look back; and, not to collect anything: "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child, and those who nursed babes in those days." That's going to be an added burden: "But pray that your flight may not be in winter (which would make it very hard to escape the antichrist), or on the Sabbath day (when people will not be in the streets, and your running away makes you an obvious target) for there will be a great tribulation (that's the term for the last three-and-a-half years), such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall."

The apostle Paul refers to this same event that Daniel describes, and that the Lord alluded to in 2 Thessalonians 2. I want to tie all these together for you. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Paul talks about the same thing: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the tribulation) will not come 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 (in the Holy of Holies), displaying himself as being God."

This death order for non-worshipers, of course, is very similar to what was experienced by the people who live in Nebuchadnezzar's day. You can read about this in Daniel 3:1-7 – how Nebuchadnezzar set up his image, and commanded that anybody who would not worship him at the appropriate times would be killed. Daniel's three friends refused. They were thrown into the fiery furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar learned that there was a God who was greater than he was. But it does express Satan's intense animosity toward God, and toward born-again believers – that those who will not subject themselves to this new religious order were to be killed.

This is the same kind of unrelenting slaughter of born-again believers that was once carried out by the Roman Catholic church during the Spanish Inquisition, for refusing to bow down to the image of Mary and the Christ child, which was directly from the religious system of Babylon. It is easy for us to say that, but you have no idea of the brutality; the inhumanity; and, the horrendous things that were done to genuine born-again believers by the Roman Catholic Church in trying to stamp out resistance to the authority of Mother Church.

The image of the antichrist in the holy of holies in the temple in Jerusalem will then become the focus of this world religion, which is to be led by the false prophet. This will be the climax, in fact, of the ancient religion that began under Nimrod in Babylon – a religion which was designed after the flood to replace the worship of God. This will be the crowning act of human blasphemy, and Satan is going to draw people into this by a two-pronged attraction. He's going to draw people in on the basis of miracles, so that those who are looking for experiences and emotional kicks will be impressed. And he's going to draw people in also with another approach for their personal physical survival, because as we shall learn shortly, those who refuse to worship the image of the antichrist will also be cut off from all means of economic survival. And when you have a credit economy that's working on a plastic card, it's very easy to cut you off.

You know what it is to go to a store now, and you give them your credit card. Have you noticed how they're all uniform now – the kind of slips you get out? It all kicks out the same little white slip with a white yellow duplicate underneath. It's all printed the same way – uniformity. And I don't care where you go in the world, it'll be the same way. And you know what it is to stand there, and you watch that little card that says, "Now processing." And you stand there, and try to figure out what to do with your hands, while the lady is looking at you steely-eyed, until that approval sign come on there. What is the approval never comes on? That means that they got you. And businesses are going to go increasingly to where there's no cash – just the card that deducts from your bank account. Then they will have total control.

Satan is going to use the miracles in controlling your physical survival, and most unbelievers are going to knuckle under. As Job 2:4 says, "A man will do anything for his skin."

However, believers, in contrast, are going to be ready to suffer, and they're going to be ready to die on the principles of the Word of God. Revelation 12:11 says, "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." And verse 11 describes the reason for this joy: "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because the word of their testimony, and did not love their life even unto death." They knew their doctrine, and they took their stand.

**New Age Doctrines**

It will be considered quite anti-social and anti-state to refuse to worship the antichrist's image. With the deity of the antichrist now established, the satanic state will now be joined to the satanic religion worldwide. And here you have a joining such as the world has never seen – one-world government under one universal religion. What will be the doctrines of that religion? It will be the new age doctrines. They will reign supreme. The basic fundamental principle of the New Age doctrine, which is a modern variation of Hinduism, is that man has potential deity. The charismatic false prophet will rally all of mankind to this blasphemous union of religion and government as the road to liberty, equality, and fraternity. The ancient Roman Empire will have come full circle with those who are unwilling to conform to the imperial religion. They will be killed.

During the French Revolution, there was one occasion where one of the leaders, Mirabeau, had a statue of himself prominently displayed, and people, in their zeal and enthusiasm, were bowing down before him until somebody said," What are you doing? This is an act of blasphemous idolatry." And the people turned to that person and said, "Bow down or be killed." That is precisely what's going to happen. We read these and say, "It's kind of hard to think that people would do this." They've already done it. There are times in the history of the world where people have been willing to rally to a state-and-religion combination. And out of this, what will happen?

Well, you know that this is going to be done in the name of democracy (the rule of the people), and what is going to come out of it, as always – from democracies comes dictatorships. In the name of freedom, there will come universal enslavement because the New Agers say, "This is the utmost freedom." New Age doctrine teaches that, in the name of reason – a reason which tramples upon the Bible and its authority, will come gross, degrading idolatry. And in the name of human welfare (taking care of people in their needs), what are we going to have? They're going to find themselves with death and destruction on their hands. Any religious leader who guides people to any other God than the biblical triune God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a false prophet. Deuteronomy 13:2-3 warned the Jewish people not to listen to a person like that.

What we have been talking about (to tie this all up) is what the Bible calls "the big lie." God is going to turn these people over to the big lie. The apostle Paul uses that reference in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come until the apostasy comes first. The lawless one is revealed. He opposes everyone. He exalts himself above every other god. He makes himself the object of worship, displaying himself in the temple as being God.

**The Lie**

Drop down to verse 8: "And then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to an end, by the appearance of His coming." The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will kill the antichrist: "That is, the one who’s coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power, and signs, and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish because they did not receive the love of truth so as to be saved. And for this reason, God will send upon them a diluting influence so that they may believe what is false;" or, better translated: they will believe *the lie*, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

What we are told from the time of Lucifer, to Adam, to our very day, there has been a single idea that has seduced angelic and human beings. They've been drawn to it like a magnet. And that is the idea of potential godhood. You must not dismiss that as a crazy thought, because you, as Christians, would not respond to that. You should understand that this is a very attractive idea in the highest echelons of American society today – the potential of human God. And for those who pursue the New Age doctrines, this is exactly what they're seeking. Here in 2 Thessalonians, the Bible calls this idea "the lie."

**Human Godhood**

This idea of human godhood is the foundation of Hinduism; Buddhism; Sufism; Jainism; Sikhism; Taoism; the Jewish Kabbalah, and, all the occult creeds like philosophy; Mormonism; Masonry; Rosicrucianism; and, certainly the New Age movement. They all have in common the basic principle that they will be gods.

**Mormonism**

There was a time when I wasn't as well informed on Mormonism as I am now, and we used to have several children from Mormon families in our school. And we had a visiting ex-Mormon one Sunday. ... In the process of this discussion, one of the mothers said, "Yes, it is true that we do wear certain underwear that protects us against harm (our sacred garments)." I almost wanted to say, "You do? Let me see that." But I didn't. I had never heard of this. Then she said, "And yes, we do all expect in time to become gods, and to have our own planet out there, and propagate it with our husbands to reproduce what God has here on earth." Well, boy, I'm ready to go through the ceiling at this point. These are the most moral kids; the most obedient kids; and, the nicest kids that we have, and this is what they believe? These were people who were well-off. They were not stupid. They were not dumb rednecks. They were intelligent people. And they believed that they're going to godhood, because that's what Joseph Smith, one of Satan's agents, had taught them.

Religious rituals, therefore have been, from time immemorial, used: the chanting of mantras; and, pilgrimages to sacred sites, all for the purpose of finding one's deity. Death is viewed as simply passing through a veil into one's deity. Sin is an illusion, and of no consequence eternally. This is what makes the lie of Satan so appealing, because obviously, if you are God, and you sin, what's happening? You were sinning divinely. You can't condemn a god for what he does, no matter how vile or how heinous the act may be.

There is, of course, some restraint by karma and reincarnation, but in the end, it all works out well if you have the right expanded consciousness. The lie blots out the consequences of reality, which is what Satan wants to do – the consequences of moral evil, such as is being suffered by the people who have AIDS today? They blotted out the moral evil in their minds, and they thought there were no consequences.

Satan, as you know, told Adam and Eve that they were potential gods. He told them that death was non-existent. It was just an illusion (Genesis 3:4-5). He told them what was just the opposite from what God had told them. Now the question is the same one you and I face: Who will we believe? Are we going to believe the Bible, with its proven track record and authority; or, are we going to believe some religious leader? Adam and Eve had a maximum capacity for life, and a maximum capacity for achievement. They had a maximum intimacy with God, their Creator, and they lived in the perfect environment where everything was provided for them. Yet, Adam and Eve, believe it or not, like millions of others, have fallen for the great lie of Satan – human godhood. They did this in spite of all their magnificent reason and all the reality that they were experiencing with their Creator. It is only God's grace that ever brings us back to that reality and to that rationality.

Lucifer was even more amazing. He stood there and watched God bringing the universe into being. He saw Him in His creative acts. He saw the power; the love; the magnificence; the glory; and, the honor. He knew God in all of these things. Yet he chose, through his self-pride, to become the father of lies. Satan's fall made him so angry that he has ever since been trying to bring as many people and angelic beings down with him as he could.

So, Satan has built a counterfeit religion. It began in Babylon. It is based on the lie of potential human deity. It has had its various expressions throughout the ages. It is centered upon the mother child cult, which has been absorbed into Roman Catholicism, and it will come to its climax with the image of the antichrist in the temple in Jerusalem. Man is viewed as the highest product of evolution, and the antichrist will be the best of all, and therefore, he will be seen as deity. But Babylon is the fountainhead of this doctrine of human deity. Biblical moral laws are irrelevant, and God says that they, who are deluded by the big lie of Satan, will have a terrible price to pay (Isaiah 47:8-10).

The religion of Babylon was an occult. It was the power of Satan and the demons. It dealt with astrology; it dealt with horoscopes; and, it dealt with channeling. The Babylonian mystery religion spread throughout the ancient world, and will reach its climax, as I have said, in the antichrist in the tribulation.

Nimrod built that Tower of Babel when he was putting together this religious system. He built it as a connecting point between heaven and earth. When you climbed the steps of that tower, you were symbolizing your progression to your God-consciousness. Have you ever wondered why, in Mexico, for example, all these Mayan temples have these multiplied steps that you have to walk up to get to the top where the worship center is? That's not just beauty. That's not just architecture. That's so you can demonstrate climbing step-by-step to where you discover your own deity – where you come to your own God-consciousness.

This, of course, was the origin of the mother goddess cult, Tammuz and Semiramis. The king in Babylon was the God priest. He led the nation through knowledge from occult powers. He had contact with the masters of wisdom, as Shirley MacLaine calls them. This religion existed actually before the flood, and, strangely enough, it reappeared after. And today's new agers are the final expression of the religion of Babylon with all of its channelers and so on.

Contact with the demon world, however, is an abomination with God. There are many Scriptures about this: Isaiah 8:19; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 19:31, Leviticus 20:6-27. All these passages, and many more, indicate that, with God, it is an abomination, and it was a capital crime to have contact with the spirit world.

Of what interest is that to us now? Only to remind you that, if you take the same attitude toward the Word of God and are negative to doctrine, you expose yourself to demonization – not to being indwelt, but to being demonized. Perhaps this is what happened to the man at Gadara, who had a legion of demons in him. Perhaps he was a man who had heard the Word of God, and had been indifferent to it.

In ancient Egypt, the God Seth, who is a twin with Osiris, had his image carved on the corridors beneath the Valley of the Kings. His huge statue stands among the pillars at Karnak. Seth was one of Satan's demons, and he took the Egyptians into the lake of fire. I've had people tell me that they look upon these great civilizations, and they mentioned Egypt in particular. They say, "This was a magnificent culture. It was a civilization that lasted for a long time. These people had a religious system – a sincere reaching out to God." And these people tell me they believe that God will accept that reaching out to Him. What are they reaching out to? To Seth. Some people who have been indwelt by demons find that Seth is the demons, by name, that deals with them.

All of this system had, at the core of it, to contact the gods, the prostitution system of male and female priestesses who are there for sex as a means of contacting the gods. This is practiced in India in temples there to this day, for this is still Satan system for reaching out to the gods.

So, what you are reading about in this verse in Revelation 13:15 is the final climax of this whole system of evil worship. Those who will not conform will not live. It is amazing to believe and to realize that this is going to happen just shortly over the hill, and this whole world is suddenly going to be changed in this unbelievable way. What should we do with it? Get serious about fulfilling your mission in the body of Christ.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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