

Text: Rev. 13:11-18

Title: "Satan's second wild animal"

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Intro: We have seen in our study of Revelation many common themes in this book of the Bible with the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. Both of these books deal especially with a future seven-year period known as the Great Tribulation in which God is working in a special way to save Daniel's people, Israel. So Daniel helps us understand many of the things we read about in Revelation.

Here in chapter 13, we are reading about two wild animals or beasts that will be active during the last 3 ½ years, 42 months, or 1260 days of this seven-year period. When Daniel saw visions that described the future kingdoms of this world (future to him, past to us now), Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and an end-times Rome, what he saw took two different forms.

First, Daniel saw a great image of a man made up of various precious metals. It was a vision that was actually given to the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar, and it was a depiction of how that future looked from man's perspective – it looked majestic and glorious (Daniel 2).

Later, Daniel sees that same future in a different way, this time in a vision given directly to him (Daniel 7). We saw last time that he saw this future in terms of vicious wild animals, with the last animal, being indescribably horrible. From God's perspective, this future 7-year period we are reading about in Daniel and Revelation is a horrific thing. We know that is the view of the vision in our chapter, because we are reading about two wild animals.

From man's perspective, however, what we read about here will seem glorious. It is this second wild animal that will make it seem so. Just like a counterfeit \$100 bill may seem like the real thing, this second individual who works in the service of the antichrist will counterfeit Christianity in such a way that the world will think that they are being led by a great messiah and by his mighty prophet.

So going forward from this chapter, we are going to read about what God does with the first wild animal of Revelation 13, the antichrist, and this second wild animal, his false prophet, who becomes known as the false prophet (17:13, 19:20, 20:10). Here we are introduced for the first time to this second animal belonging to Satan that will come in this future period of world history, and I want us to learn four things about him from our passage this morning.

I. Satan's second wild animal counterfeits the true Christ (vv. 11-12).

Ill: There is a difference between the words *lamb* and *sheep*. I will probably never forget the year we had the live nativity at the Apple Knoll Farm and Gretchen transferred a big stubborn old sheep from its comfortable pen to the nativity scene. She kind of had it in a headlock and let it drag her all the way to where she wanted it to go. I do not think I could have done that. That animal was a sheep, not a lamb. Lambs are small, defenseless, and docile.

Appl: Well, the Greek language also has two words, one that means *sheep* and one that means *lamb*. Throughout Revelation we read about God's Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 5:6, 12, 13:8). It turns out that He opens the seals that bring judgment upon the earth. Every judgment that God shall ever bring upon a sinner

will be executed by the Lamb, whom God required to be slain for that sinner's sin. Men are judged because they refuse in unbelief the salvation purchased by the sacrifice of this Lamb. Do you believe on Him for salvation from your sin, or will you be condemned as one who rejected so great salvation in unbelief? This is the great question the Book of Revelation places upon us.

Appl2: But here we read about someone who is able to make the world not worry about answering that question, and he too is a lamb with two horns. Whatever we want to say about the symbolism of these horns, what is perfectly clear is that this false prophet is trying to look like and claiming to be a true prophet of the Lamb, someone truly Christian. Satan's second wild animal counterfeits the true Christ.

What we must understand for our lives today is that there will be nothing new or novel about this work of Satan during the Great Tribulation. When Jesus spoke of the times in which we live now during the age of the church, He warned against many false Christs who lead a false form of Christianity (Matt. 24:24, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.")

Not everything called *Christian* is truly of Christ. And much of what is called *Christian* but not truly of Christ is deceptively attractive to even the elect. We can find truly born again people following false Christianity today, but that does not make false Christianity true Christianity.

Do you know the difference between false Christianity and true Christianity? Are you willing to not be deceived by the

good feeling you get when you call some things *church* and *Christian* that are actually very far from them? The false prophet is a counterfeit Christ, and we have his kind to contend with today. We need to be able to see that as part of our gospel witness to the truth of salvation by the blood of the true Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

II. Satan's second wild animal counterfeits true miracles (vv. 13-14).

III: The Greek Orthodox Church has a ceremony on the Saturday before every Easter in which the Jerusalem Patriarch enters the supposed tomb of the resurrection of Christ and emerges with what they call "the Holy Fire," which the Church teaches falls from heaven every year to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

In a report for the UK *Telegraph*, one of the torch-bearers of the ceremony was quoted saying, "It's not a miracle. The Greek priests bring in a lamp - one that has been kept burning for 1,500 years - to produce the Holy Fire. For pilgrims full of faith who come from abroad, it is a fire from Heaven, a true miracle. But not for us. Of course the source of the fire is ancient and symbolic. I heard this from my father and I think he knew the truth."

Appl: In one sense, that is a counterfeit miracle - a natural phenomenon disguised and presented as something supernatural. I do not believe that is the kind of thing this false prophet of the Great Tribulation is going to produce. Instead, I think he is going to do something like what we read about in Job 1:16.

That fire from heaven was truly supernatural, and it looked like it came from God, but it came from Satan. That miracle was counterfeit, not because it was not supernatural, but

because it was not from God, but Satan. Jesus warned us that many false miracle workers with real power can deceive even saved people (Matt. 24:24). Just like not everything called *Christian* is of Christ, so also not everything miraculous or supernatural is performed by God's power.

3 important Bible truths about miracles:

1. A miracle is the only way a sinner can be saved from his sin. The truth of Christianity demands faith in the miraculous. We must believe that God spoke the universe into existence by a miracle; we must believe that Jesus Christ our Savior was virgin born as the incarnate Son of God and that He led a miraculous and sinless life; and our faith is not in vain this morning because of the miracle of Jesus's supernatural, historical, and bodily resurrection, proving that His death was the atonement for our sins.

We also believe that unless a sinner is born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God. You need the miracle of the new birth to go to heaven. You need a miracle to convince you of your hopelessness in sin without Christ and of the wonder of God's love for you in that condition and to make you willing to call on the Lord to save you from your sin. Have you experienced that miracle? Are you born again?

2. Not every miracle is done with the power of God (Deut. 13:1-5). Miracles that contradict the truth of the Word of God are never done with the power of God. For example, God's truth says that women should not be allowed to speak in tongues in a Christian assembly time (1 Cor. 14:34-35). So the power that causes a woman to speak in tongues in a Christian assembly time is not a power of God.

3. Miracles will be a reason many are led away from the truth (Matt. 7:21-24). Remember that Jesus said false proph-

ets would deceive if possible even elect people (Matt. 24:24). The elect are those chosen in Christ, believers. Is it possible for one of those to be deceived? You bet. Miracles will be a reason many lost people are not saved, and the reason many saved people are deceived. So our emphasis here is not on supernatural phenomena, but rather on the miracle-working Word of God (Jesus: "these sayings of mine"). If we hear and do them, we will be wise.

III. Satan's second wild animal counterfeits true worship (v. 15).

III: Our culture is getting used to speaking to machines. A friend of mine has one of those devices from Amazon or Google in his home that you talk to and it talks back with artificial intelligence technology. He asked it a question about a friend of his, and rather than answering the question, the device called that friend. It turned into a kind of embarrassing prank phone call for him.

Appl: Perhaps it will be some kind of AI that is able to work with this image of the antichrist, which John sees in his vision of the future. If that technology develops along the path predicted by some, one could easily imagine an image becoming god-like and demanding worship. This idolatry, of course, will be the opposite of true worship.

Joseph Seis comments on the irony of man's progress ending in this kind of tyrannical idolatry: "Thus, in the name of Democracy and popular rights, comes absolute Dictatorship and Imperialism; in the name of Freedom, comes complete and universal enslavement; in the name of the better Reason, which tramples on religion and Revelation, comes a great consolidated system of gross idolatry; in the name of a charitable Liberalism, which disdains allegiance to any

creed, comes a blood Despotism, which compels men to worship the base image of a baser man, or die! Here is one star in the crown of the world's boasted Progress" (347).

One of the differences between the true worship of Christ and the false worship of the antichrist is that you can get away with not worshipping the true Christ without being executed for it. In fact, God will supply all the air you need for that round of golf on Sunday morning, make sure the earth stays the right distance from the sun for you and warms you just so, and then provide a great lunch for you to enjoy after you get done desecrating His Day and denying Him the worship He desires and deserves on that day. Antichrist will not put up with that kind of thing. So what kind of true worshippers should we be? Are we who join unbelievers in their neglect of true worship actually a part of the group who will have to submit to this false worship some day soon? Why then is it you do not worship truly?

IV. Satan's second wild animal counterfeits the true name (vv. 16-18).

III: Like an image that speaks, marks on foreheads and hands that control a world-wide global economy are not hard to imagine today. A company in Wisconsin already implants RFID chips into employee hands as identification markers. No-contact payment technology and digital currency technology can make all this happen today.

Appl: The point of the mark of the beast, however, is not technological, but philosophical ("Here is wisdom," v. 18). There is wisdom to be found in correctly calculating the philosophical importance of this mark. Very simply, this mark represents the philosophy of life that lives in submission to the god of this world (Eph. 2:1-3). If you are living

that life now, you will bear this mark then unless something radically changes. What mark does your life bear? Whose name identifies you? If it is not the name of Christ, it is the same unworthy counterfeit that shall put his indelible print on every earth-dweller in this day. This ends poorly (14:9-11). This end can be avoided if we call on the name of the Lord and are saved. The saved bear the marks of Christ, including baptism, communion, true worship, and brotherly love. What marks our lives this morning?

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching