

Charts: The Third Parenthetical Visions: Chart #15

PREFACE

Let's begin by reading the complete passage before us pertaining to the second beast.

Read Revelation 13:11-18.

We might break this passage down into a useful outline:

v11	Appearance and Speech
v12	Authority
vv13-15	Magician
vv16-18	Economist

There are a number of ways we might describe the false prophet's position in regards to Antichrist.

- He is his *vizier*, sharing some of his power and speaking for him (historically, the vizier would be the highest ranking non-royal, second only to the king himself (think Joseph to the pharaoh);
- he is his wing-man, his right-hand man;
- he is his PR man, Antichrist's agent and enabler;
- he represents (falsely) the more *religious* side of the team.

Note the verbs used in this passage to describe the work of the second beast:

- v12: he **exercises** all the authority of the first beast;
- v12: he **makes** [the people] worship the first beast;
- v13: he **performs** great signs, and **makes** fire come down out of heaven;
- v14: he **deceives** [the people] on the earth;
- v15: it is he who will **give breath** to the image of the beast;
- v16: he **causes**—i.e., **makes**—people be branded with the mark of the beast;
- and it is he who **ensures** that no one can buy or sell without that mark.

The second beast is, we might say, kindred to his boss. The same word for “beast” (*therion*) is used for both, and the word “another” here (*allos*) means “one like in kind.” As the chart (#15) indicates, the placement of this text would fall into place with the current narrative—that is, the blowing of the seventh trumpet. I have argued that the first beast—the person—comes onto the scene early on, perhaps be-

fore even the Tribulation, but certainly at the inception of the Tribulation. We can't say for sure, but there is evidence that the second beast—like the first—is on the scene early, but then rises to prominence and power along with Antichrist. More on this in a moment.

v11: THE “BIRTH” OF THE FALSE PROPHET

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

Right off we see that, like his boss, this guy is a phony. The grand-dad of all liars is Satan, showing himself to be sweetness and light to mask who and what He truly is. His son, the beast, is a chip off the ol' block, as is his son's right-hand man, the counterfeit prophet.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Paul expands on this in his counsel to *his* spiritual son, Timothy:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron. (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

We learn three important things about the false prophet in v11. (By the way, we get that label “false prophet” from Revelation 20:10 and 19:20: “And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”)

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth;

The first beast rose out of the sea; this second beast rises out of the earth. There are all sorts of opinions on what this might mean, that is, what is meant by “out of the sea” (v1), and what is meant by “out of the earth” (v11). One possibility is to think of it this way: In ancient times the sea was seen as more chaotic, more turbulent, more threatening than the land. So we might extrapolate that here to conclude that Antichrist (from the sea) will be more dangerous, his rule will be more world-altering and catastrophic, than that of the false prophet.

Remember, in the description of Antichrist in Daniel 7 we read that he “will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law” (Daniel 7:25a). The false prophet will be powerful, doing great evil during this time (as he, too, is indwelt by Satan); but he will not be the one in charge. This is one way to consider the contrast

between sea and earth, but there are many others that could hold true, as well.

and he had two horns like a lamb

This refers to his *appearance*, so the second thing we learn is that on the outside he has the appearance of a gentle, harmless lamb. And herein lies his deceit, for he at the same time, “spoke as a dragon.”

Henry Alford: An important distinction exists between the two beasts, in that this second one has two horns like a lamb. In other words, this second beast puts on a mild and lamb-like appearance, which the other did not. But it speaks as a dragon: its words, which carry its real character, are fierce and unrelenting: while it professes that which is gentle, its behests are cruel.

At least two thousand years before these two individuals will come to power Jesus, in His sermon on the mount, warned us about falling prey to such liars.

Read Matthew 7:15-17.

We cannot know who and what they truly are by how they look, but we are to judge them by what they do and accomplish—their “fruit.” This second beast will cause great harm by encouraging people *away* from Christ, to worship instead the image of the first beast. In so doing he will lead countless millions—*like* sheep—into the torment of eternal fire. That too, Jesus spoke of: “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 7:19). This will be the end of the false prophet ([Revelation 19:20 and 20:10](#)) and he will drag all these idol worshipers along with him.

Finally, Jesus told His disciples that if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father ([John 14:9](#)); those alive during the Great Tribulation will probably not be aware that when they have heard the second beast, they have heard the words of *his* father—the dragon: “and he spoke as a dragon.”

v12

He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Sidebar: John Walvoord points out that evidence exists in the Revelation to suggest that the false prophet is not just a religious figure working with Antichrist during the height of his power during the Great Tribulation, but that he will be the head of the apostate church that will almost certainly be in

place at the inception of the Tribulation, or immediately thereafter, to replace the *true* church which has just been Raptured. We will look at this in greater detail when we get to Chapter Seventeen, but for now think of it this way: The *political* power structure at the time will be likened to a revived Roman Empire, while the *religious* power structure at work alongside it—in fact, the two are reasonably inseparable—is called in Chapter Seventeen, “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (17:5).

The first sentence of v12 is a bit confusing on the surface. Does this mean that the second beast could only “exercise the authority of the first beast” if he was literally standing in the presence of the first beast? That doesn’t seem right. “Presence” here (*enopion*) does mean just that: to be before, in the sight of.

The NIVs translate this “on his behalf,” which is how some commentators interpret it. The margin note in the NASB says “or by his authority,” with which MacArthur agrees. Do those two mean the same thing? Not really; there is a subtle yet critical difference. “On behalf of” suggests a looser relationship, as being simply a representative, as in “He trusts me to speak for him.”

This text and situation is similar to that of the two witnesses in Chapter Eleven.

“And **I will grant authority** to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands **that stand before the Lord of the earth.**
(Revelation 11:3-4; emphasis added)

Martin Kiddle in his commentary explains that in this context—so similar to that in our text about the second beast—*enopion* indicates a “prophetic readiness to do the bidding of God, and *with the authority inalienable from divine communion*” (my italics). In our text this suggests that the second beast’s authority literally emanates from the first; that he is *imbued*, as it were, with his authority in a manner similar to that that passes between God the Father and his true prophets. This continues the symmetry between the Holy Trinity and the profane trinity: The dragon (Satan) grants his power and authority to the beast (Antichrist)(13:2), who in turn grants *his* authority and power to the second beast (false prophet). Thus the false prophet is imbued with Satanic power, as evidenced by the miracles he will perform.

And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

I won’t revisit here all the arguments and details about this aspect of the beast, who in a number of passages is described as suffering a fatal wound—i.e., death—

then coming back to life. I covered that in Session 35. Here, however, I'll just add this: Some who believe this refers to a person, not a state or empire, take the position that he literally dies and is resurrected. I question that because resurrection is a critical component of God's economy—for example, it was not Christ's death but His *resurrection* that validated His deity and glory. If Antichrist is physically resurrected, God would have to sanction such an action—and I do not see that happening. Thus my position is that the beast's "fatality" and "resurrection" are just part of the public relations fakery contrived by the two beasts to sell him to the masses. After all, how better to get the world to worship the beast as god than to claim that he came back from the dead. Just like Jesus Christ!

And, speaking of the two witnesses in Chapter Eleven, they *were* resurrected from the dead—after three and one half days, no less—like Christ. But in this instance it makes perfect sense that God *would* sanction the miracle, for they were *His* witnesses—not Satan's.

v13

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

Once again we have a parallel to the two witnesses, who could breathe fire to devour their enemies (11:5). The false prophet, whether by sleight of hand or a true miraculous sign affected by Satan, could call down fire "out of heaven" (*ouranou*, the sky). The present active tense of "makes" (*poieo*) suggests that the false prophet does this repeatedly.

Here is evidenced the inherent and pervasive depravity of man. It was there when God's word was being written, it is here today, and it will still be going strong in the final days of humanity on earth. That evidence is that men will believe a lie before they will believe the truth. Present the simple, clear basics of the gospel and they will scoff; but these same people will gladly believe in the healing power of crystals, or the snake oil of religious cults, or even the lying subterfuge of the false prophet and his "god." Paul describes well the irony of the final days.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

The fact that man *wants* to be fooled is demonstrated all around us. We *want* to believe the magicians tricks. The whole art of drama is based on its ability to make its audience members suspend their disbelief: We begin to believe the actors on stage are revealing to us a real moment out of time; the audience becomes the

“fourth wall” of the room. We watch a musical and accept as normal that people break out into song to express their feelings. All of this is just part of harmless entertainment. But it is no longer harmless when one accepts as real the false magic and drama that will ultimately result not just in losing out on salvation, but in spending eternity roasting on a spit.

v14

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

he deceives those who dwell on the earth...

They have already rejected Christ, so they are primed to believe a lie.

because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast,

“Show us some signs! Show us some signs! Then we will believe!” They demanded it of Christ, and they will probably demand it of the false prophet. And the latter they will believe because of their inbred nature. And because the beast’s magic will be empowered by Satan himself it will be strong and impressive. They will believe.

But there is a third reason they will so gladly believe. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false” (2 Thessalonians 2:11). As he has done before, God will sanction their following of the wrong thing, choosing evil over good. The Greek behind “deluding influence” (literally, “a working of error,” *energeian planēs*), means *an active power of misleading*. Hidden in English, the Greek shows that the same word *energeian* lies behind the phrase just above in v9, “the activity of Satan.” They will have rejected His truth, so God will *make* them believe the lie of Satan.

telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

I find it particularly disingenuous that the false prophet makes the *hoi polloi* fashion the very idol they will be forced to worship as a god. (Talk about watching them make sausage.) This seems to indicate the level of power and influence these two men have over the people of the world. Just imagine if someone ordered you to go into your workshop and carve an idol that would then be your god; your reply might be, “Well it’s a pretty figurine, but I made every inch of that statue. I cut down the oak tree and sectioned the wood. It was my knife in my own hands that cut every

feature it has. I made *it*—it didn't make me. I am *its* god—not the other way around” (Isaiah 40:16). But no, this idol—this statue dedicated to Antichrist—will be what they worship.

Now, just what will this statue look like? What will it be an image *of*?

- When Nebuchadnezzar erected a huge statue and demanded that everyone bow down to it, it was not of him, but probably of his patron god, Nabu (Daniel 3).
- In 167 BC, Antiochus Epiphanes (*epiphanes = god manifest*), in an effort to eradicate Jews and Judaism, outlawed all Jewish rites and worship; erected an altar to and a statue of his chief god, Zeus in the Jerusalem temple; sacrificed swine on the altar; and demanded that all worship Zeus.
- Three times in Daniel's prophecy (9:27; 11:31; 12:11) and in Christ's Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15) reference is made to, in so many words, the “abomination of desolation” being set up in the Jerusalem temple.

Those who claim the passages listed above (as well as here in Revelation) refer to the acts of Antiochus Epiphanes are missing something: Jesus spoke of this occurring future to Daniel, and future even to Himself; and he said it about two hundred years *after* the time of Antiochus. Antiochus could only be a prototype, a *foreshadowing* of what Antichrist will do in the Eschaton.

Verse 14 is vague about the actual appearance of the image:

NASB, KJVs, YLT: **to** the beast
ESV: **for** the beast
NIVs: **in honor of** the beast
CSB: **of** the beast

Verse 15, however, indicates that *this* image standing in the Jerusalem temple will be an actual image of Antichrist. All versions: the image **of** the beast (x3)

The standard cross reference in Daniel regarding the “abomination of desolation” is to 9:27 in his prophecy of the seventy weeks. But a parallel passage in Daniel 12 mentions this using cleaner language.

Read Daniel 12:10-11.

Just what does this mean, “set[ting] up the abomination of desolation”? From v11 we get the sequence: First Antichrist will abolish the normal Mosaic sacrifices, thereby breaking his former agreement with Israel. This will be immediately followed by his replacing the worship of Yahweh (and Christ Jesus) with the worship of himself. The false prophet will implement this by creating and “quicken[ing]” a statue of An-

tichrist which will be erected somewhere within the precincts of the temple. Scripture is not specific about its location; it could be in the holy place or even the holy of holies—an abomination indeed—but could also be in one of the more public areas.

The verb “set up” is the Hebrew *nathan* (*ntn*), which can be translated give, set, hand down, etc., but also means to “deliver to,” which fits the picture of the false prophet forcing the people to craft the statue (presumably off-site), then have it “delivered” to the temple for its placement. We will see in the following verses in Chapter Thirteen that the second beast will take steps to make it seem that the statue has been brought to life ([more on that in our next session](#)).

The word “abomination” means pretty much what one would expect; the Hebrew *siqqus* ([shi-coots](#)) means unclean, a detested thing (very often applied to pagan idols), filth (applied to food offerings), things that should not be touched.

When Linda’s brother and his fiancée were married in a Catholic church, not unexpectedly there was an image of Christ hanging on the cross suspended over the altar. As people would step out of the audience to contribute to a portion of the ceremony, they would bow or cross themselves before that image before mounting the platform. When it came time in the service for Linda and I to read a portion of Scripture, we refused to bow before that image, but just walked down the aisle, ignoring what I, frankly, considered an abomination.

The abomination Daniel prophesies will be one of “desolation,” the Hebrew verb *somem* (*smm*, [shaw-mom](#)), which means to make uninhabited, or deserted; to cause horror or consternation; the word was used of Tamar ([taw-mawr'](#)) after being raped by her brother, Amnon.

What a contrast is presented here!

The temple was built for Yahweh, who brought to Israel life and strength and purpose; he offered them peace and prosperity if they would only obey His commands. In the temple’s holy of holies sat the ark of the covenant, signifying the covenant the Lord God made with Israel for their good. Atop that ark was the mercy seat, where the high priest would meet with God, seeking and receiving His gracious mercy, atoning for the sins of the past year.

Now that same temple will be profaned. Now it will be dedicated to Antichrist and, by extension, his father Satan. The man-created idol installed there will represent only pain and suffering, persecution, starvation—and death, death of a most horrific kind, a death of eternal torment and damnation.

For the next three and one half years *this* will be the “god” worshiped by most of mankind on earth—to their eternal regret.