

Recognizing Satan's Counterfeits

Revelation 12:1–17 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]

Revelation 13 introduces the second and third members of the unholy trinity: the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

- The dragon (Satan) counterfeits God the Father (Rev. 12:9).
- The beast from the sea (Antichrist) counterfeits Jesus Christ.
- The beast from the earth (False Prophet, Rev. 13:11-18) counterfeits the Holy Spirit.

1. The Antichrist – The Beast from the Sea (**Rev. 13:1-10**)

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast [the Antichrist] rising up out of the sea [symbolizes Gentile nations – Rev. 17:15 (turbulent chaos)], having seven heads [represents the six past world empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the future world-wide rule of Antichrist (see Rev. 17:9-12).] and ten horns [represents a ten-nation coalition under Antichrist's rule], and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. [the names symbolize his open defiance against God.]

- **What Does “Antichrist” Mean?** The prefix anti- can mean either “against” or “opposed to” or “instead of” or “in place of.” This raises a crucial question: Will the Antichrist be against Christ—His chief adversary, His arch-villain—or will he present himself as a false, counterfeit messiah? The answer? Both. The Antichrist will oppose Christ in every way imaginable, while simultaneously presenting himself as a substitute to deceive the world.

² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon [Satan – Rev. 12:9] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. [The beast combines characteristics of the empires described in Daniel 7: the leopard (Greece), bear (Medo-Persia), and lion (Babylon). This shows how the Antichrist will embody the power, speed, and brutality of these former kingdoms.]

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded [“seemed to have had” (NIV) – a counterfeit assassination], and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. [This counterfeit resurrection will captivate the world and serve to strengthen his claim to power.]

⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. [The Antichrist will be an eloquent orator, using his words to blaspheme God and deceive the masses (Daniel 7:8, 25). The 42 months (3½ years) correspond to the second half of the Tribulation, the “Great Tribulation” (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:21).]

⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name [attacking God's character], His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven [defaming the saints who were raptured]. [Blasphemy involves claiming divine powers, presenting oneself as God, or equating God with lesser beings or objects. For instance, idolatry is a form of blasphemy because it diminishes God by placing Him on the same level as the idol being worshiped.]

⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them [God permits the Antichrist to persecute believers (“the saints”). While the Antichrist may seem victorious in a temporal sense, his authority is limited (see

Daniel 7:21). And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. [His global dominance will extend to all nations.]

⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him [earth-dwellers – or those who only live for this life. They will worship the Antichrist and reject God.], whose names have not been written in the **Book of Life of the Lamb** slain from the foundation of the world. [Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (believers) will refuse to worship him.]

⁹ **If anyone has an ear, let him hear.**

¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

2. The False Prophet – The Beast from the Earth (**Rev. 13:11-18**)

¹¹ Then I saw another beast [the false prophet (see Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10) – a religious leader pointing people to the Antichrist.] coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. [The "earth" may symbolize stability or indicate that he rises from a different sphere than the first beast (the Antichrist). The "two horns like a lamb" suggest that he has a religious appearance, mimicking Christ (the Lamb of God), but his speech reveals his true nature: he speaks like the "dragon" (Satan).]

¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [The false prophet will direct worship, creating a one-world religious system, with the Antichrist as its object of worship, emphasizing his counterfeit resurrection.]

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. [He will use supernatural signs to deceive people. His ability to "make fire come down from heaven" mirrors Elijah's miracle on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38), further legitimizing his role in the eyes of the deceived.]

¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth [earth-dwellers – see v.8.]—by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [an idol of the Antichrist] who was wounded [Antichrist's counterfeit resurrection] by the sword and lived.

¹⁵ He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast [The False Prophet will create an image of the Antichrist and give it the appearance of life, deceiving the world into worshipping it.], that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. [This image will seemingly "speak" and issue orders, including the execution of those who refuse to worship the Antichrist.]

¹⁶ He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

¹⁷ and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. [The "mark of the beast" will serve as both a symbol of allegiance to the Antichrist and an economic control mechanism. Without it, people will be unable to participate in commerce, leading to widespread hardship for those who refuse it.]

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. [The number 666 is described as "the number of a man," symbolizing imperfection and incompleteness (man's number is 6, while God's number is 7, signifying perfection). The triple repetition of 6 underscores the ultimate failure and incompleteness of the Antichrist.]

Practical Applications:

1. **Recognize Deception** - Believers must remain vigilant, relying on Scripture and the Holy Spirit to discern truth from lies (2 Thess. 2:9–12; 1 John 4:1) while Satan deceives through signs, wonders and persuasive words.
2. **Rest in God's Sovereignty** – Though God will permit the Antichrist to temporarily rule with great power, believers can take comfort in knowing that God's ultimate plan will prevail (Revelation 13:5).
3. **Remain Faithful in Persecution** - Allegiance to Christ may bring suffering, exclusion, or even death. Endurance and faith are essential as we await Christ's ultimate victory (Revelation 14:12).
4. **Reject Idolatry and False Promises** - The warning against worshipping the beast reminds us to reject any form of idolatry—whether it's worldly power, money, or fame—and to worship Christ alone.
5. **Respond to the Gospel** – This chapter should compel us to avoid this dark future by trust in Christ for salvation. Believers should stay motivated to share the Gospel today and to help others resist Satan's lies.