

The Antichrist's Right Hand Man

Revelation 13:11-18

(preached Pine Grove 5/7/17; Sunday AM)

Introduction

There are certain rules that govern southern behavior...

Manners are not expected but required.

When you gossip about others, you must begin or end the conversation with "Bless her heart."

And above all, when visiting with relatives or hosting a new family in your home, never discuss religion or politics..

And the reason for rule #3 is that those subjects tend to divide people and end conversations rather than give them a sense of a warm welcome..

As a result, people often sit and visit and never talk about anything of much importance...

Usually the weather or better yet they talk about other people...

As a result, politics and religion are rarely talked about by anyone..

Southerners simply leave that to the preachers and the politicians...

Well, today we are going to talk about religion and politics in Revelation 13...

Because at the end of time, politics and religion will be married together...

Now the truth is that they have already been married together since God established human government...

People often tell me that we are to keep our politics separate from our religion, yet that is impossible if you are a biblical Christian....

Because true believers let their faith influence every part of their lives...

Who they marry..

Who their friends are..

And certainly who they vote and then pray for...

Because a true believer's life is an outworking of the faith he claims to have...

And our political persuasion is clearly a part of everyone's life..

Now often time, people allow this relationship between politics and religion to get out of hand...

They allow their politics to drive their faith, which is clearly a bad idea...

And worse still, people allow their politics to guide the decisions of the church which always ends in disaster because the purpose of the church is not to win elections but win souls...

Yet, in all those problems, we still need to recognize that religion and politics have a relationship and that relationship is one that the devil is going to use to his advantage in the final 7 years of the world...

Last week, we met the Satan-empowered political leader of the world at the end of time....

He is a man known as the Antichrist....

A man who will rise out of the sea...

Who will rise mysteriously to a place of prominence in the final one world government...

A man who will snatch control of that government through murder and deceit...

A man who will be filled with a huge ego...

Who will decide the whole world into thinking that he died and rose again..

A man who will attack Israel and the other people of God...

And then a man who will grow so confident in himself that he will demand worship for the whole world...

He will be a political powerhouse with the desire to be a religious powerhouse as well...

And guess who we get to meet this week?

The man who make him into an object of worship...

A man who is called the false prophet...

Now I mentioned this last week, but let me expand on something that we see happening here in the final days of Satan's campaign on earth...

And that is the forming of what we could call a counterfeit trinity...

You see the God of the Bible exists as one God expressed in three persons...

Father, Son and Spirit...

And that relationship between those members of the Holy is perfect...

The Father is revealed to us by the Son, and the Son points to the Father..

Remember Jesus said if you have seen Him, you have seen the Father...

And then the Holy Spirit points to the Son...

HE points us to worship the Son and obey the Son...

And this trinity, though a mystery in some ways, is holy in every way...

Well, Satan has his own trinity that comes together in the end times...

Made up of Him, the Antichrist, and the false prophet we will meet today..

And each of these members are counterfeits of the members of the trinity...

Satan is an evil copy of the Father, which is what Satan has always wanted...

He has wanted to be like God..

The Antichrist is an evil copy of the Son...

We saw last week that he even appears to die and rise again like the Son...

Then today, we meet the false prophet who is an evil copy of the Holy Spirit...

The Spirit points us to truth...

The false prophet will point us to lies...

The Spirit points us to Christ..

The false prophet will point people to the Antichrist...

So, let's learn more about this member of the unholy trinity this morning in Revelation 13:11-18....

And we will take note of him with three Ps....

I. The False Prophet's Person (11-12)

II. The False Prophet's Power (13-15)

III. The False Prophet's Program (16-18)

Let's begin in verses 11-12 with....

I. The False Prophet's Person (11-12)

11 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. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast [j]in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Just like last week, John sees a vision of another beast, but this time the beast is rising up out of the earth..

The Antichrist came up out of the sea, which is a source of mystery and intrigue..

This beast comes from the earth, which makes sense because he has two horns like a lamb..

The Antichrist had multiple and multiple horns, while the false prophet here has one head and two horns like a lamb...

And I think the impression that God is trying to make here is that the false prophet is not some fearful looking multi headed sea monster but instead has the appearance of a harmless lamb..

This fits the bill for someone who is going to lead the world's last false religion...

He is going to look like a harmless cuddly lamb...

Now, we know the Antichrist is also a charmer at first..

He will say the right things to people at first..

He will establish peace in Middle East as he signs a peace treaty with Israel to begin these 7 years...

But the false prophet is going to be a real charmer...

He is going to appear as meek and mild as Christ himself...

That is why he will look like a lamb with two precious horns...

But when he speaks, he speaks like the devil...

Look at the end of verse 11...

He spoke as a dragon...

But not only did he speak like the devil, he got his authority from the devil as well...

You can see that in verse 12...

And he uses that authority to influence people to worship the Antichrist, who he claims died and rose again...

Don't you see this parallel to the role of the Holy Spirit today?

The Holy Spirit points people to the reality of Jesus rising from the dead, and the false prophet points people to the lie that Antichrist died and rose again..

Let me pause right here and give you a possible scenario of how this could look if the Lord should see fit to return in 2017...

Let's say the rapture happens and the church is snatched to heaven by the Lord...

In the aftermath of that chaos, the world looks for stability..

So, this coalition of nations led by the European community forms a world government to investigate the disappearance of so many people from the face of the earth...

This government is made of 10 kings, but within that group, there is this real strong Muslim leader...

And maybe among the 10 leaders, there is no Muslim...

So in an effort to win the trust of the world's leaders, a charismatic Muslim steps onto the world scene and to prove that he isn't like other Muslims, he goes to Israel trying to make peace...

And Israel listens...

He even offers to let them build a temple right beside the Jewish mosque on the site of the temple mount..

This offer gains him the trust of the Jews who sit down and sign a peace treaty with him...

And this becomes headline news...

In the midst of chaos, the world has found peace...

World leaders would show up to admire such a negotiator who has finally brought peace to the most troubled part of the world...

But guess who also would show up for such an event...

The world's religious leaders...

Now at this point in history, all the religions left i the world are false religions...

The church has been raptured to heaven...

But one major so-called Christian religion would still be around and that would be the Roman Catholic church...

The Pope would still be in the headlines too as the world searched for answers...

And he would certainly show up at the signing of a peace treaty in the Middle East...

Can you imagine the scene?

The Muslims are represented there by this smooth talking Muslim leaders...

The Jews are represented there to finally secure the peace they always wanted..

And the Catholics are there for a photo opportunity...

It is not impossible to imagine, and I am not saying that is how it will play out...

But I could see the Pope making an alliance with this Muslim political leader..

And there we have the world's political power joined to the world's religious power...

And both are joined and energized by the power of Satan..

And then as the world begins to turn against this Muslim political leader, someone apparently kills him and he comes back to life...

And the Pope begins to point the world to this man from God...

So with possible scenario offered to you, let's move from the false prophet's person to...

II. The False Prophet's Power (13-15)

Verse 13...

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

So, we have this second beast who is apparently as humble as a little lamb even though he speaks like the devil behind the scenes...

WE have this second beast who points others to the first beast..

But we also have a very powerful second beast as well..

God simply allows him to have powers to call down fire from heaven...

Which he will do to establish his credibility even more...

And as he does this wonders, he uses them to deceive the world even more...

Verse 14...

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform [k]in the presence of the beast,....

This is the game plan of Satan....

Use signs and wonders to lead people in more deception....

This is why you are careful about what you hear and even more careful about what you think you see...

Satan has always had a way of making our eyes the source of truth...

Do you remember what he did in the garden of Eden?

He made the fruit of the tree look more appealing to Eve than the truth of God's Word...

The Bible says that when she saw the fruit, she acted in sin...

In the same way, Satan will be working in the very end of time making people think that what they see is the only thing that matters...

So, this false prophet will point to this apparent resurrection of the Antichrist and use it to lead people into sin...

Look at the end of *verse 14*...

...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.

As the Antichrist rises from the dead, the false prophet begins to point people to the miracle of what just happened....

And then he points them to make an image of the resurrected Antichrist...

Which is a sin of idolatry...

But the world will jump on board and begin to build a statue or something of that sort in honor of the Antichrist...

Similar to the way that the world came together to build the tower of Babel all the way to heaven...

Or how Nebuchadnezzar had a statue of gold built in honor of him and then told everyone to bow and worship it..

This will be the plan of the Devil in the end of time as well as he tells the false prophet to encourage the world to construct a likeness of the Antichrist...

But then get this...

Verse 15...

15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even [l]speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

As the image of Antichrist is completed, the false prophet is granted the power to make it talk..

Well, this will send the world into an uproar..

People will be watching on TV and fall down at the their TV sets and worship the Antichrist's stature right there in their living room...

It will be a worldwide spectacle and the false prophet will be pointing the world to Satan and his right hand man the Antichrist....

And he will be using his power and influence to lead the world to follow the dragon and the beast...

But that is not all he will be doing...

Let's finish up our look at the false prophet with...

III. The False Prophet's Program (16-18)

16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, [m]to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

In one of the most talked about passages of the book of Revelation, we see that the false prophet will begin to take control of the world economy as well...

This is where the political, religious and economic world will come together in the end time...

This political leader will demand religious worship and if he doesn't get it, your money will be cut off...

You see the false prophet will tie religion and politics and money into one evil relationship...

Because if anyone refuses to bow down to the image of Antichrist, his whole world will change...

Now look, for centuries this was rather mysterious to those who studied the Bible...

How could a man control the the politics, religion, and money supply of the world?

That never seemed possible even a 100 years ago as the world was so disconnected...

But now, all of us see how possible this is...

We talked about it earlier but imagine a strong Muslim leader getting control of the world...

And the Pope and the Catholic church showing support for him...

Then imagine that he is apparently killed and rises from the dead...

The news networks will have no answer for such an act, so they will turn to religious leaders...

And the Pope will lead the parade of religious leaders who point to the divine nature of the Antichrist...

They may even say that the Antichrist is Jesus come back from the dead...

The world will buy such an explanation because it is ignorant of the Bible...

And then as the Pope points people to worship the statue of this man, everyone who refuses will have their money supply cut off...

And how is that possible?

Well, 50 years ago it wasn't possible, but now the money supply is pretty much all electronic...

I can go to an ATM machine in South Dakota and swipe my Bank of America card and it will call me by name and then ask me how much cash I want...

Then it will ask me what am I doing bring Today and my 3 kids all the way to South Dakota...

You understand that our world has moved to be smaller and more consolidated...

And look I love it and it is convenient for me...

But that ease has also created an environment where my money supply could be cut off at the drop of a hat...

Call Bank of America tomorrow and tell them that your neighbor is a terrorist and I bet they will have trouble using their bank card the next day...

It is just the world we live in, and I not here to tell you to fight against it...

You aren't being Satanic to use a credit card or debit card..

But they are reminder that the possibility of verse 16 is easier than ever...

So, everyone who refuses to worship the Antichrist will not be able to buy or sell..

But the rest of the world will..

They will worship and then be given a mark of the beast, which is either his name or number..

And this mark will allow them to keep on keeping on...

Now, he we go again with another copy of the real thing...

When we get saved, the Bible says that we are marked as well..

We get the mark of the Holy Spirit to identify us as believers in the world...

The false prophet, who is Satan's counterfeit Holy Spirit marks people too...

He marks them with the name of number of Antichrist...

And then we get this bit of information to close out the false prophet's program in the end times ...

Verse 18...

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is [n]six hundred and sixty-six.

The famous 666 combination is found right here in Revelation 13....

Now, what is this concerned with?

First of all, I think it is useless information to us...

The Antichrist is not on the scene yet acting as Antichrist in the world...

He may be alive today, but he isn't identifiable until his time comes...

So all this work people have put into taking 666 and finding a name of someone famous is really not helpful...

In fact, there has been a study done of this passage which says that nearly any name can be maneuvered in a way to get to the number 666...

The study suggests that if you can't convert your name into the number 666 in your native language, try a foreign language or an alternate spelling of your name...

And people have done that with all sorts of celebrities who turned out not to be the Antichrist....

So first of all, I don't see this as helpful to the church who had no need of identifying Antichrist since we will be out of the way for his evil actions...

But second, I don't know if this bears a lot of attention due to the fact that this may simply represent this unholy trinity that we have talked about...

6 had always been the number of man...

We were made on the 6th day...

God alone had the number of perfection which was 7 and man always falls short...

So, the first member of the group of 3 evil personalities will be the devil who falls short of the Father...

The second member of the evil trinity will be the Antichrist who falls short of Christ, and the 3rd member the false prophet falls short of the Holy Spirit...

And maybe 666 is just a representation of this counterfeit trinity...

But maybe there is something to be figured out here since John writes about the need to have wisdom and calculate the number...

And all I would add is this...

The people who come to faith in Christ during the tribulation will still receive the Holy Spirit and HE will direct their hearts to understand this number....

And to stay away from the one who possesses it...

For us, I don't see a great significance to the number...

I don't avoid the number when it comes up in my life...

I would answer a phone call that contained 666...

I will go to a house with a 666 address..

And if you have \$666 in your pocket to give to the church, we will take it...

I think we simply see another verse that will be helpful for a future group of people who get saved at the end of time...

Conclusion

So, what can we draw from Revelation 13's description of this false prophet?

#1 - False prophets look like lambs but speak words of the devil.

Let me remind you all of something that really disturbs me and saddens me in 2017...

And that is all the Christians who refuse to acknowledge that there are false prophets around the church today...

So many Christians never call out preachers who don't speak the truth...

I probably make y'all nervous when I call out the names of men and women today who are false prophets...

But that is ok...

I would rather warn and awaken you to the fact that all churches aren't true church and all preachers aren't true preachers...

It is past time for the church to be discerning...

The early church wouldn't even take the words of Paul until they checked them by the Scriptures...

Nowadays, the church takes everyones word and never opens the Scriptures...

Why is that?

Are we too lazy to open our Bibles?

Are we too ignorant of what the Bible actually says?

If a stranger came up to your kid and offered them a plate of food, none of you would even allow your kids to touch the food unless you really examined it..

Yet, so many in the church today will eat up the words of anyone who claims to be a Christian...

Stop doing that church..

Be discerning and careful of what you allow to feed your soul...

Now, I'm not saying "let's discount every Christian voice in our life."

But I am saying that the church today would be much better served to open their Bibles more often and read what is inside...

#2 - False prophets amaze your eyes but deceive your minds.

Be very careful of what you see in relation to whether something is true or not...

Joel Osteen packs out a church every Sunday morning in Houston TX..

Yet, he is false prophet who has said that there are ways to get to heaven apart from faith in Jesus Christ ...

If you believe that, you aren't a Christian and you certainly aren't qualified to be a pastor...

Yet thousands of people line up every Sunday to hear him preach...

And people tune in and see that crowd and assume that what he preaches must be truth...

You see, our eyes can fool us....

Number of people in attendance is no indication of the truth of preacher...

Satan uses all sorts of tricks to make us think our eyes are our sole source of truth...

So be very careful...

Seeing is not always an indication of what you should be believing...

Final truth...

#3 - False prophets come but they will all eventually go.

Though we will see more activities of this evil religious leader, the end of him is certain...

When Christ returns, he finds his way into the lake of fire...

In fact, he and the Antichrist are the first two entries into the lake of fire that burns forever and ever...

Though false prophets are on the rise even in 2017, we have the Holy Spirit who guides us to all truth...

And we need to depend upon Him more and more as the time of the end approaches....

Let us pray...