The Final False Prophet, Part 2
Revelation 13:15-18
66-48

And we now come to a time of examination of God's revelation in Scripture. And I draw your attention, as you know, to Revelation chapter 13...Revelation chapter 13. We are looking at the last half of the chapter beginning in verse 11 and running down through the eighteenth verse which describes the final false prophet. And we began to examine this text last time and we'll finish up what we didn't cover in our message to you tonight.
As I told you last week, the most significant and the most dominant weapon in the arsenal of Satan is deception. Above all else he is a liar and a deceiver. And Satan spends ninety-nine percent of his time and energy trying to confuse people by covering up divine truth with lies. He is disguised as an angel of light, barrages the world with demon doctrines from seducing spirits through hypocritical false religious leaders, teachers and prophets.

Warnings about this deceptive enterprise of Satan are replete throughout Scripture from really the very beginning to the very end of the Bible. False prophets have always abounded and they continue to abound. And as we get closer to the return of Christ, they will escalate. Satan will increase the level of his evil enterprise and his deception as the world moves closer to the return of Christ. And finally, there will come the ultimate deceiver, the ultimate human hypocrite espousing demon doctrine energized by seducing spirits. And he is described and introduced to us in this text.

For those of you who were not here, let me just read it for you, follow carefully along, starting in verse 11. "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the authority 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. And he performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 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. There was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast might even speak and causes many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the free men and the slaves to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or sell except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom, let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man, his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

Here is the world religious leader who aids and abets the Antichrist. Remember in the first ten verses you have the picture of the Antichrist, the first beast and here is his cohort, the second beast, namely the false prophet as he is called in chapter 16 verse 13, chapter 19 verse 20 and chapter 20 verse 10.

So together the Antichrist who I believe is controlled by a demon who rises out of the abyss, out of the pit, and the false prophet who likely is controlled similarly by demonic powers, will work together on behalf of Satan like some counterfeit satanic trinity, using political and military power, as well as religious influence to capture the minds and the hearts of all those in the world who are locked up for the kingdom of darkness.

Now remember, while the Antichrist is building his world empire, right through the first half of the seven-year period known as the Tribulation that proceeds our Lord's return, as the Antichrist is building his world empire on military and political power, at the same time the false prophet is building a worldwide religion and according to chapter 17, they coexist. In fact, the harlot which is the false system, the false church, the false bride, not a true bride but a harlot, rides...says 17...on the back of the beast. And so they coexist until the midpoint, the three and a half year point. At which time the Antichrist declares himself to be God, devours or destroys the world religious system and demands that the whole world worship him. The false prophet then leads the world in affirming that indeed the Antichrist is God. And by that midpoint, as I've been pointing out to you, there will be such devastation in the world, the unfolding of the judgments of the wrath of God that precede the day of the Lord, the natural cataclysms that take place, the supernatural things that are going on are going to raise the level of desperation among men very high. The absence of the restraining influence of the Spirit of God in the church, the absence of the church for that matter, the terrible things that are going to go on across the world are going to make people look for some deliverer. Remember it starts out with a false peace, a peace that lasts very, very briefly and then comes wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famines and pestilence and death and all of that is going to cause the world to be searching for a deliverer.

Here comes the Antichrist with military and political clout. Here comes the false prophet putting together a worldwide ecumenical system of religion that embraces every religion in the world in one form. And finally that all blends into the worship of the Antichrist.

Now this figure, the second beast who assists the Antichrist here, is identified to us in verse 11. And we saw last time his person. He comes up out of the earth which shows that ascends, as it were, from down in the underworld. He comes up, as it were, out of the inferno that is at the core of the earth. He comes up out of the darkness and the blackness representing his demonic influence.

He has two horns rather than having the multiplicity of heads and horns of the Antichrist which show us power and might and fierceness, he comes with the two little bumps like a lamb, two little tiny bumps on the head of a lamb is all he has. He is not coming with an overpowering domineering ferocious and deadly character like the first beast. He rather comes winsomely, persuasively, even making himself beloved. He comes as a tender gentle lamb that elicits sympathy and kindness. However, it says he speaks like a dragon. His message when he opens his mouth is not the message of a lamb, it's the message of a dragon. And the dragon takes us back to chapter 12 verse 9 where the dragon is identified as the devil and Satan.

So here is one who looks like a lamb. Here is one who comes peacefully and gently, but he speaks the very words of Satan. And I remind you of what I said last week, Satan's false prophets are generally meek and mild, lamblike preachers whose words are really the deadly words of damnation. And so comes this one who is a very gifted speaker. It may well be the greatest orator and preacher the world has ever known. He is able to sway the mass of humanity from one end of the globe to the

other in all their diverse religions to come together in one religious unit. That kind of persuasive power is amazing. And, of course, he gets the cooperation of all the demons and the kingdom once divided now becomes united. He tells the devastated world that Antichrist is now their only hope and from the midpoint on they are directed to worship the Antichrist.

We saw then his power in verses 12 through 14. Verse 12 says, "He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence." He is in the presence of the first beast. He is there with him. He stands alongside of him. And he exercises all the same authority the first beast has because the first beast has delegated authority that is delegated from Satan and the second beast has the same source of delegated power. He uses the satanic energy, the very plan and power of Satan just like the Antichrist.

And verse 13 says that with this authority he performs great signs. And we don't know the nature of these but they will be very convincing, very potent, very powerful. If you want a little illustration, you can go back to chapter 8 of the book of Acts and remind yourself of the story of Simon. Simon, it says, a certain man was formerly practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great. And they all from smallest to greatest were giving attention to him saying, "This man is what is called the great power of God." His power was from Satan but always Satan masquerades as God. And verse 11 says the people were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.

He will be able to do things, this coming false prophet, that will far exceed those of a small time operator like Simon. He will do wonders that point to his supposed divine origin and that give him the credentials as a true prophet pointing to the true deliverer, the true Savior, the true Christ, namely the first beast.

Verse 13 says he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. He can do some amazing and astounding pyrotechnics. No doubt, trying to at least match what the two witnesses did as described back in chapter 11.

Then in verse 14, here's the key, the key word, "He deceives those who dwell on the earth." Always, always, always Satan goes for deception. He wants to lead astray...there's that word planaoagain from which we get the word planet, which has to do with wandering bodies. He causes people to wander away from truth. Considering the vulnerability of people, disaster after disaster, making them desperate, mystical world religion already formed, probably around the concepts of the New Age, things like reincarnation and various forms of old mysticism, the whole world has been pulled together and now you've got the Roman system involved, you've got what's left of a non-Christian charismania and mysticism involved in a world religion. They've all been sucked in to satanic wonders and signs and there has been a fabricated resurrection of this Antichrist as if he died and came back from the grave. The people desperately need hope. They're eager to believe. And all of hell's hosts, all the demons of the pit are in on the deception and the world in its vulnerability is universally victimized. It says there in verse 14, he deceives those who dwell on the earth. There is that technical phrase used in Revelation, always to denote the unbelieving people of the world.

Paul discusses this same thing and it's important for us to note. In 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 10, it says that the Antichrist comes with the power of Satan with all this power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness, listen to this, for those who perish. They will not deceive the elect. They will not deceive the redeemed. They will deceive those who perish because

they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false. Now you've got another component. Antichrist is deceiving. The false prophet is deceiving. Satan is deceiving. The demons are deceiving the whole world. And according to 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 11, God is also sending them a deluding influence.

God is even in on the delusion in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness. No wonder the whole world is deceived. Satan is doing the deceiving. His demons are doing the deceiving. His Antichrist and false prophet are doing the deceiving. And on top of that, God is sending a deluding influence.

The result of all of this is that everybody on the earth, everybody who is not saved, who has not believed the truth, everyone who is perishing is going to believe and be deceived. Verse 14 again reminds us that the signs which it was given to him to perform in the presence of the beast involved 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.

In escalating this world religion, Satan wants an idol made. And he wants the people to make this idol of the beast or the Antichrist who supposedly was raised from the dead. It will be some kind of an image, some kind of a replication of the Antichrist, and it will be set up in Jerusalem. Once again Satan is imitating and counterfeiting what is predicted in the prophetic Scripture for Christ. Christ is to come back and reign on Jerusalem's throne and to have the worship of the world. So here he brings his false Christ, establishes a throne, as it were, an image in this case which I believe is the abomination of desolations, or connected to it, it's part of it. I think when the abomination comes as a part of that which starts in the three and a half year period, the setting up of this image follows. I believe it's in Jerusalem and it's associated even with the temple ground. And again the convincing sign of the Antichrist's supposed resurrection is given at the point of his...of his public exposure. We don't know exactly where it is that he supposedly dies and rises, but it's somewhere in a very public way exposed to people, at some crisis point in the establishment of his universal authority.

So we saw his person and his power. Now let's go down to verse 15 and pick up his program. And this will take us to the end of this chapter. His program.

The idols of the heathen are silver and gold. They have mouths but they speak not. That is a very firm Old Testament statement. In fact, it's repeated several times that idols are dumb and idols cannot speak. In Psalm 135, for example, verses 15 and 16, "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, they have ears but they do not hear, nor is there any breath at all in their mouths."

The prophet Habakkuk affirmed the same thing, that an idol is a dumb thing that cannot speak. Chapter 2 verse 19, "Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, `Awake.' And to a dumb stone, `Arise.' There's no breath at all inside it." Why would you talk to a dumb rock or a dumb piece of wood?

But contrary to what is normal, this idol can speak. Verse 15, "And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak." Now this is amazing. This powerful Antichrist, this world leader is established as the focus of world worship and

the false prophet is given somehow the power to give him breath in the very form of that image so that the image can speak.

Please notice the word is breath here, it's not life, it's not zoe, it's not bios, the two Greek words for life. It's pneuma. And I believe what you have here is the presence of the appearance of some kind of phenomena that looks like life but not biosand not zoe, not life. Some would like to say that this image comes to life, but I don't see that. Satan cannot give life. I don't...I don't even feel we need to believe that the beast was actually genuinely resurrected. I think his resurrection was a fabrication and I think the speaking of the image is another one of Satan's deceptions. And I remind you that if Pharaoh's magicians could throw their sticks to the ground and turn them into snakes even in those days, with all of the technology of today and all the amass satanic power this kind of thing would be very readily done. Today's amazing technology along with people's desperation to have someone to believe in, makes this ruse very, very believable. The incredible things they're doing today with technology, the amazing special effects that they can effect in terms of film and all of that will be in place in that time with the added dimension of Satan's magic, and he will animate this statue so that it literally appears to come to life.

The whole world will fall into line as Revelation 17:17 says because God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose and by giving their kingdom to the beast until the words of God should be fulfilled. It is God's purpose to bring the two, the religious and the political together, give them a common purpose, push them right down this very path of world rule and worship until Jesus returns.

Now, back to verse 15. Everybody is going to get sucked into this. And it says in verse 15 the Antichrist, the beast and, of course, his cohort the false prophet, will also cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Now we don't know how that's going to work, but it isn't hard to imagine that worldwide television will keep that image in everybody's home all the time. Speeches will come off of this image. People will be staring at this image, watching the phenomenon of its movement and its speech and they will be brought to their knees in worshiping this image, the image that is the reflection of the Antichrist. Much as ancient kings set themselves up as gods, built idols of their own design and then demanded that people bow and worship those idols as symbols of worshiping them, so it will be in that day and anybody who doesn't comply, says verse 15, will be given a death sentence. As many as do not worship the beast are to be killed.

And we know this is going to happen, these executions will take place, there will be believers killed. Back in chapter 7 we remember reading about believers who will be executed for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must also be said and carefully noted at this point that not all believers will be killed. The sentence of death will go out but not all believers will be killed. Obviously the ones who don't worship the image of the beast are going to be the believers and they're not going to die, not all of them. Because it is essential in the kingdom of Christ after He returns and sets up His earthly kingdom that there be people from every tongue and tribe and people and nation to populate the kingdom because it tells us clearly that all the nations will be represented in the kingdom. So some will be spared. The Antichrist will not be able to find all the believers and execute all the believers. God will protect them.

Secondly, there will be Jews who will be spared, rescued from this. We read about them very clearly back in chapter 12. And I'm sure it's been a long time since we studied that and you may have forgotten some of it, but you would want to remember that in chapter 12 while the serpent comes

after the woman who is Israel, very clearly at the end of the chapter verse 14 says, "God's going to provide a great eagle to take the woman, fly her into the wilderness and protect her for three and a half years from the presence of the serpent."

The earth is even...verse 16...going to help the woman and open its mouth and drink up the flood, really the river, meaning the force of Antichrist and Satan which comes after the Jews. The dragon is going to try to make war but God is going to protect Israel. Not all Israel. We remember, don't we, that two thirds of the Jews will be purged out because they are rebellious, but the remnant will be saved. So there will be a remnant of Gentiles preserved from the killing machine, and there will be a remnant of Jews preserved from the killing machine so that the kingdom might be populated by Israel and the other nations.

God, of course, is going to retaliate. If you go over to chapter 16 I'll give you a little hint. When you get over to the next series of judgments which happen rapid fire at the very end called the bowl judgments, the first one is in verse 1 of chapter 16, "The first angel went, poured out his bowl into the earth. It became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image." In chapter 13, anybody who doesn't have the mark is to be killed. In chapter 16, anybody who does have the mark is given some malignant kind of disease. God will retaliate.

Now the subject all the way through here, just to keep you in focus, is the false prophet. Wherever it says "he causes," verse 15, "and causes," verse 16, "and he causes," it is taking us back to the false prophet. He is the one who somehow causes the world to worship the beast. He causes the beast, the image of the beast to be able to speak. He causes this killing machine to move into motion. He is the subject. And I just note for you there so you're not confused that God is going to spare Israel and He is going to spare many Gentiles.

By the way, if you go back to chapter 11, you don't need to turn to it, you will remember that there was a measuring rod and a measuring out, measuring indicated possession and protection. And God again is saying there will be a protection for people who belong to Him, particularly there in measuring out Jerusalem.

Then in verse 16, this false prophet, it says, causes all, the small and the great and the rich and the poor and the freemen and the slaves. Now this remember is the all-qualified by 2 Thessalonians 2, all who do not have the love of the truth so as to be saved, all who are perishing, all who are unsaved. He causes them all to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.

Now this is a very, very interesting thing and there's much that is written about this. In fact, it goes ad infinitum, ad nauseam, but what is the mark of the beast and what is the number? And I'm not going to drag you through all of that. But in ancient times in Rome, a citizen had to make some kind of an overt offer to Caesar to demonstrate that he saw Caesar as deity, as a token of his loyalty to the Caesar cult. It was pretty simple in those days. What he needed to do was simply offer to Caesar a pinch of salt on an altar. Christians, of course, refused to do that and were massacred. That's what fomented the killing of Christians under the Caesars.

Now Antichrist has a requirement also. His requirement is a mark, an identifying mark, a mark that is visible, either on the forehead or on the hand. Obviously in ancient times they wore robes, women

were fully covered, or nearly fully covered and the part of them that would be exposed would be the forehead even if they wore a veil and the hand. Readily visible then would be the mark. Antichrist wants an identifying mark. And that mark signifies that this is a worshiper of the beast. This is one who submits to his rule.

In the ancient world such marks were known. While not everybody in the Roman Empire had to bear such a mark, slaves did. Slaves, in fact, were branded just like animals. Another group were branded, soldiers. I think Paul may have this very thing in mind when in Galatians chapter 6 he makes this statement, verse 17, "I bear on my body the brand of Jesus." The people who were slaves had a brand just like a cattle brand. The brand of a slave identifying him with a particular master, a particular estate. Paul said I have a brand and my brand shows that I am a slave of Jesus Christ. So it was not uncommon to brand in the ancient world and it will come back again. And all the slaves and all the soldiers of the Antichrist will be branded.

Further in ancient times, many of the cults, many of the mystical forms of religion delighted in such brands. And they would take a brand on themselves, an emblem being displayed on their bodies that would identify them with a certain form of worship. In fact, for example, the cult of Cebele had all of its members tattooed with a unique tattoo all in the same way.

Now we have tattoos today and we see those, in fact, as some kind of brand of something or other, varying from person to person. But in that coming day to be unmarked, to refuse to take the brand of Antichrist, means you're a traitor and results in a sentence of death.

So, he causes everybody to be given a brand, a brand that is readily identifiable. We learn more about it in verse 17. "And he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell except the one who has the brand, or the mark." In other words, you can't be involved in daily commerce, you're going to starve to death frankly. You can't buy anything and you can't sell anything. You can't get any food, you can't go to the source of food and buy it because you don't have the brand. And you can't get anybody to buy it from you because you don't have the brand and you can't get any money, you can't involve yourself in daily commerce, the needs of life are therefore cut off to you. Except the one who has the mark.

Now you get the picture. One world power ruling the globe, one system of economic operation, one central controlling computer with the name of everybody. Very likely currency is gone. Controlled credit takes over. And rather than a card, which can be stolen or lost, you have a mark...a mark which identifies you as a part of the system. The mark is in your forehead or the mark is in your hand.

What is this? Well we already have it. You use it all the time. You've seen the little black strip on the back of your credit card? That contains all the necessary data to let the computer know you're in the system. And you see on everything you buy a little bar code. That's another way that the computer identifies what is passing in front of the scanner.

I have received in the mail a most interesting packet of information and discussion of where bar coding is going and I have some little samples of the sophistication of the newer kinds of bar code devices. It was sent to me by someone who wanted me to kind of understand how this fits in to prophecy, and I responded to the individual.

What it is is a little bar code system encased in a little plastic container that is designed to be embedded under your skin. It is already being used by dog owners. People who worry about losing their dog when a dog is found, the scanner exists at the pound, you pass the dog under the scanner. He's got this little bar code underneath his skin that causes him no problem at all, but it indicates immediately what dog it is and who he is and where he lives. Very simple device to us because we're used to this. Incomprehensible in ancient times. Without a global ability to identify everybody, such as you have today, the whole operation of Antichrist couldn't happen. Now it can happen, folks, you're all in the computer...all of you.

It never ceases to amaze me that I go to some city, some other part of the country and walk up to some obscure wall and stick my little card in to get cash, and it says, "Good morning, John MacArthur, what do you want? Do you want money? How much and from what account? Would you like more information? Would you like another transaction?" And you feel like saying, "Yeah, how's my wife and kids?" "Fine." And you know they know everything because systematically you've given it all to them. And when it reduces itself to the absence of credit cards and you've got to put your hand over there, or pass your forehead by the scanner and there isn't any bar code there, you don't exist. And when you can't function and you can't operate, the death sentence is on you. We are capable of doing every bit of that and having a cashless society where you never have any money, it's just a debit/credit system, you work and your employer from a computer puts into your bank account a proper figure called pay and when you buy it is deleted. And life will depend upon the bar code, the mark.

A man from Bulgaria under communism wrote some very interesting words. This is what he wrote, "You cannot understand and you cannot know that the most terrible instrument of persecution ever devised is an innocent ration card. You cannot buy or sell anything except according to that little card. If they please, you can be starved to death. If they please, you can be dispossessed of everything you have, you cannot trade, you cannot buy, you cannot sell without it," end quote. The tragic testimony of a man caught in the communist takeover of Bulgaria.

So, you see, there's a compelling reason to worship the Antichrist, isn't there? It's not just a matter of religious deception, it's a matter of life. And so they will make the choice to follow the beast not only because they are enamored by him, not only because they are deceived by the false prophet, not only because they fear death, but they don't have any choice. But the choice is wrong, as we shall see.

Now notice, when they take this code, this mark, the end of verse 17 says, they can take either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Now this is very hard to interpret, frankly. I can't know anymore about it than what I can see and you can see as well. They have the mark and then he says literally, "the name of the beast or the number of his name." It is an identifying name and number system. The beast has a name but inherent in his system is a numbering. Impossible to know exactly what his name is and impossible to know exactly what the number significance is. But people will take the mark and somehow it is the name of the beast or the number of his name. And John in seeing the vision may be having as much trouble sort of discerning it as we are understanding it.

But then is added verse 18. "Here is wisdom," that is to say people who are alive at that day need to be wise. You want to recognize what's happening and you want to be able to identify this number when it comes down the line, cause we live in a world of numbers, right? They're always giving us

numbers and asking us for numbers. How do we know if we're living at that time, how does a person know living at that time that's what coming to him is the Antichrist's number? How does he know that? "Here is wisdom, let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, the number is that of a man, his number is six hundred and sixty-six."

Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast. People living in that time are going to have to be discerning in order to identify the Antichrist when he brands. Apparently this is some way that they can recognize him for who he is. It's very difficult to interpret and yet it's suppose to be wisdom, and it looks to me like a complete mystery. But I'm quite confident that in that day and in that time the significance of this number, six hundred and sixty-six, will come into clear understanding. For many, many years, every taxi cab in Jerusalem started out "666." And people used to say if you work for the Jerusalem Taxi Company, you've taken the mark of the beast. If you ride in a Jerusalem taxi, you've taken the mark of the beast. That's ridiculous, some of them have changed their numbers now. But somehow in that time that kind of number is going to signify the Antichrist.

He says the number of the beast is the number of a man and his number is 666. Now in ancient times, I'll give you a little insight into this, in ancient times it was common for language to be connected to numbers. In English we don't do that. We have letters and numbers, right? But in Greek, letters were numbers. And in Hebrew letters acted also as numbers. And in latin letters acted also as numbers. You know that from Latin, right? V's and C's and I's. So it was common in ancient times for language to be connected to numbers. The letters, certain of the letters had numerical equivalent.

Now this may reflect something of that, that when the Antichrist comes his name will have some numerical equivalent that adds up to six hundred and sixty-six. People have based their...their study of this on that kind of thinking and they have given us so many things, I couldn't even recite them to you. They have taken every conceivable personality of any prominence in the world that looked like he might be a potential Antichrist and figured out a way to make his name add up to 666, in some language and by some concoction...everybody from the pope, Martin Luther...depending on whether you were a Catholic or Protestant on that one...John Knox, Napoleon, Nero, Hitler, Mussolini, Kissinger, Stalin, etc., etc., etc. In fact, if A equals 101, and B equals 102, and C equals 103, and you go all the way through the alphabet...the letters of Hitler add up to 666. A lot of people were sucked into that one.

The name Caesar Nero spelled Kaiser Neron with Hebrew endings has a Hebrew numerical value of 666. The truth is, we don't know the significance of it, but we know it isn't Caesar Nero, or Hitler.

Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, took the Greek letters which had numerical equivalence and said 666 makes the name Uanthus(?) and maybe Antichrist's name will be Uanthus in Greek. Well we don't know...we don't know.

But would you notice one thing? It is the number of a man. What does that mean? What is the perfect number? Seven, God's number. Man's number is six. The slave was forced to be free after six years unless he demanded to stay. Fields were sown for six years. Man was made on the sixth day. Six...six...six...man...man...man. God's number is seven, the number of perfection, the best man can do is always six, he always falls short. The number represents human imperfection. A man at his best at the ultimate of all human power is only a six, he's never seven, he is a six, his government is

a six, his laws are a six, a deafening, defeating, discouraging, damning six. And so I believe God has identified the final form of man's government in the world as just six, six, six. And somehow that thrice repeated number of a man, much like the thrice repeated statements about God...holy, holy, holy...is intended to reiterate the identity of man. God is holy, holy, holy. And man is always six, six, six...short of perfection. He can't quite pull it off. And somehow when this final Antichrist comes there will be some way to identify him and his mark with an understanding of this, the number of man. Specifically what that is, I don't know...and nor did John have anymore to say to us than this.

But this will be the mark that men and women have to have or else they cannot eat, they cannot live, surely they will die. So we see the person, the power, and the program of the false prophet. There's a last point, it's not in the chapter, but I have to give it to you, it's his punishment...his punishment. His person, his power, his program, finally his punishment. For this we go to chapter 14 verse 9, and we'll look in this section in more detail coming up. But in verse 9, "Another angel, a third one, followed them saying with a loud voice, `If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he will also drink of the wine of the wrath of God.' And when it comes it will be mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.'"

So here's a warning to the whole world, you take that mark and you are going to receive the wrath of God. Now you can make your choice, you can refuse the mark and get the wrath of the Antichrist, or you can take the mark and get the wrath of God. The wrath of God means torment with fire and brimstone and it says in verse 11, "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name." You take it and you will suffer torment forever.

Go to chapter 19 and see what happens specifically not to the deceived but to the deceiving Antichrist and false prophet. Verse 20 of chapter 19, "And the beast was seized...this is when the Lord returns, you have the picture of His coming from verse 11...the beast was seized and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image, these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone." And that's the end of the false prophet and the Antichrist.

The counterfeit world religion is coming led by the final false prophet, the greatest of all false prophets. If you look carefully, beloved, you can see it forming right now. Hell's religion is coming together. The house divided is being united against God and against Christ and against Christianity. This false form of religion that's coming together says what people want to hear, it rejects biblical truth, it deceives with lies, it supports its deceptions with demonic power. This is the final world deception...the final apostasy. In our life time I believe we're seeing this all form and we must not be led astray by the false prophets who are small-time deceivers, compared to this man we've read about tonight. They abound and they are moving toward this final satanic kingdom. We have to be faithful to proclaim the saving gospel of Jesus Christ while it is still possible. What a tremendous responsibility we have to rescue the souls of men and women from this coming disaster.

Lord, we are so overawed by this truth. We are amazed that You have given us a clear glimpse of the future. Nowhere, absolutely nowhere except in the pages of Scripture is the future revealed, only here and so clearly. We know where the world is going, rapidly Satan is already moving toward a one-world religion, toward a one-world government, setting the stage for the Antichrist and the false prophet. In that day, millions and millions, billions will perish. While it is still day before the night

comes may we be faithful to proclaim the saving gospel of Christ and see men and women, boys and girls rescued from the wrath to come. We thank You that we do not look forward to such an event but rather we wait for Your Son from heaven whom You raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. It's in that hope that we live and rejoice. And it's to that hope that we call men and women that they might enter the same joy that we have found. Makes us ever faithful to that calling, in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org

COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).