



The Prophet of a False Faith

PART 29

Introductions

Let's get started by sharing our names and answering this question: [Choose your own question].

Songs of Praise

Let's begin our time singing to the Lord. [Sing additional songs if you prefer. Contact the church office for copies of our church songbooks.]

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts, 1707

Church News

- Women's Retreat, February 26-28, Sign-up online.
- Men's Breakfast February 21, 8:30AM

Study

[This guide utilizes the Sunday sermon notes, please [click this link](#) to access them.]

Q: Would someone read Revelation 13:11-17 aloud?

The beast from the land is referred to, on three separate occasions, as "the false prophet." What John sees is a blasphemous false trinity: The dragon (Satan), the beast, and the false prophet. Last week, we saw that the first beast wields a satanic perversion of the civil or political sphere.

Q: What does the second beast accomplish?¹

Q: What would John's original readers have easily perceived as a real-life illustration of the second beast?

Q: In what way do you see the deceptive power of the second beast (false prophet) in this text?

Let's read a few passages to highlight Jesus' teaching regarding false prophets and false teachers:

- Matthew 24:24 (see also 7:15; 24:5; 24:11)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10
- 2 Peter 2:1-3

We learned on Sunday that the false prophet promotes a false faith. This agenda has historically involved using images. Consider this quote from Sunday, "False religion always promotes the use of images as a violation of holy worship and an on-ramp to idolatry."

Q: Do you agree, why or why not?

Q: What are examples of images used to promote false religion and/or idolatry?

Q: What are examples of assertions today that happiness and fulfillment exist only in offering allegiance to something or someone other than Christ?

In verses 16-17 the false prophet coerces unbelievers to receive a mark. There has been a great deal of unhelpful speculation about the mark John sees in his vision, but it's best not to think of the mark as a barcode, credit card, or implant, none of which would have made any sense to John's original readers. Instead, the mark is a parody (a mockery) of God's command to fix his law upon the right hand and forehead (Ex 13:9; Deut 6:8). A symbolic stamp with the 'image' of their respective leader undermines the authority and rule of God. This mockery of the mark blasphemes the sealing work of the Holy Spirit (Rev 7:3). The mark of the beast mocks what Christians believe and how they live.

Q: In what ways do you see this mockery and marginalization of Christians today?

Q: Have there been ways you have been marginalized as a follower of Christ?

Verse 18 calls Christians to have wisdom. We are to discern the difference between truth and lies.

Q: What are ways in your life God has called you to examine your loyalties, or exposed your compromises, and/or challenged your faithfulness

Notes...

¹ The second beast wields the perversion of religion as it directs worship to the first beast. Again, as so often in Revelation, it seems best to take this beast or false prophet as a power at work in the world throughout history. This does not preclude the possibility that a particular figure will arise at the end of the age who sums up all the wickedness of the beast.

to Christ? How did this prove God's kindness toward you?

Q: Are there any further questions or comments before we break for prayer?

Prayer

[Take time to pray - men with men, and women with women.]