

The seven-headed beast with ten horns had been wounded by the sword,<sup>1</sup> which is a reference to the word of God.<sup>2</sup> We saw the first wounding of this beast by the death of Christ on the cross, and the subsequent coming of the gospel of the Kingdom and the propagating of the gospel of the Kingdom. The beast managed to reconstitute itself by luring the church that had begun to drift away from the truth early after its formation; the church reconstituted itself around grants of power, primarily from the Roman government. But, historically, churches have sought to align themselves with governments and with kings to obtain certain benefits. Even here and now in the United States, the biggest move in the evangelical church has been, of course, to align itself, first with the Republican Party, and then with Donald Trump in particular, as a way of gaining power. So this principle of harlotry has been generally the pattern of the church. Eventually, of course, the beast reboots itself because that which is supposed to oppose it has become complicit with it.

So the Word, the person of the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, has a sword, a sharp sword, coming out of his mouth,<sup>3</sup> which is to say that the word of God is quicker and more powerful than any two-edged sword and can destroy falsehoods.<sup>4</sup> The entire *kosmos*,<sup>5</sup> you will remember, is based on falsehoods—a lie that you can be as gods if you separate yourself from God and rely upon your own understanding. Which is why there is the admonition that we should trust in the Lord with all of our hearts and lean not to our own understanding. But instead, be obedient; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path (cf. Proverbs 3:5-6).

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All Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Bible, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> See Revelation 13:3: “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.” See also Revelation 13:14 BSB: “And he deceives those who dwell on the earth 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 who was wounded by the sword and lived.”

<sup>2</sup> See Ephesians 6:17: “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”

<sup>3</sup> See Revelation 1:16: “In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.” See also Revelation 19:15a: “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”

<sup>4</sup> See Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

<sup>5</sup> See *kosmos*, Strong’s Greek 2889 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm>

But the search for relevance in the church has routinely led it back into the arms of kings. It is the common form of deception. Even when this great wound had been inflicted, the beast reconstituted itself over time and appears to have been healed. This second beast that comes up out of the earth is now acting on behalf of the first beast,<sup>6</sup> so you have a direct contention between those who live the truth and are speaking the truth and the beast itself. It is no longer content just to invade the House of God; it is now of sufficient strength in its own perspectives that it is able to mount a direct challenge to the remnant of believers. It is sufficiently confident of its domination of the airwaves—its domination of the popular mindset, the domination of the cultural war and the cultural ideas—that its move is to create an alternative to the truth.

It has always been that in practice, but it has been invisible. Now it is emerging in a strident, argumentative, confrontational posture. Because the goal, you see, is to extinguish the truth. It has always had that goal: to kill that which represents the truth. Whether it was Moses who was bringing forth a people who carried the Deliverer amongst them in the line of Judah, or Christ who was and is, in fact, the promised Messiah, the intent of the enemy ultimately is to extinguish the truth. This is his big plan.

Keep in mind, God intended to create a man in the image and likeness of God.<sup>7</sup> For what purpose? For the purpose of putting the nature of God on display. The enemy intends to create systems that may capture the souls of men and put on display that which is in the heart of the enemy. It, of necessity, begins invisibly, but at some point it has to take on visible and tangible focus in order to extinguish the truth, so it does in this form. This is the one known in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, as the man of lawlessness.<sup>8</sup> You remember Paul saying to the Thessalonians that the return of the Lord—which is the *Parousia*,<sup>9</sup> the Day of the Lord—will not come unless there is a great falling away by which the man of lawlessness is revealed.

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<sup>6</sup> See Revelation 13:11-12a: “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, ...”

<sup>7</sup> See Genesis 1:26a: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;’”

<sup>8</sup> See 2 Thessalonians 2:3 NIV: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [“lawlessness” in NIV] is revealed, the son of perdition, ...”

<sup>9</sup> See *parousia*, Strong’s Greek 3952 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/3952.htm>

Now pause for a moment. Do you suppose that the man of lawlessness is revealed to those who have fallen away? No. He is the champion, he is Christ, or he is the savior to those who have fallen away. And to those who never were saved, he is the peacemaker that everybody has been looking for. To whom is he the lawless one? To those who have the standard of Christ. Because the term “lawless one,” found in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, corresponds exactly to the activities of this second beast, the one with the two horns and the dragon breath; this one does things that deceives everybody. When you are deceived, you think that the counterfeit is the real thing. If you continue to know what the real thing is, then you may be intimidated by the counterfeit, but you will not be deceived by it.

The only ones who will not be deceived by this one who appears to be like the Lamb—he has all the right credentials, he has all the right appearance, he looks like how a savior should look. Just like I, in a sense, jokingly said about so many of these television prophets who have taken to growing Old Testament styles prophetic beards, it is an item of costume designed to trap the unwary. Do not be focused on how they look. Hear what they are saying and see if God is speaking through them. You know, these things are pretty measurable and pretty objective. If they say God said, “XYZ,” and it did not happen, then they are not speaking for God; that is dragon speech. It does not matter what the beard is, and it does not matter how they dress. It is what it says because the true nature of anything is what is in the heart, and it is revealed when you open your mouth. Anyway, I do not want to relitigate that point.

I was saying that the lawless one performs great signs.

*He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast... (Revelation 13:13-14a NKJV).*

In other words, he is fully cuddling up to the beast, fully aligning himself so that people could see—*enópios*<sup>10</sup>—that he was the representation of the beast. He does everything to make sure that

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<sup>10</sup> See *enópios*, Strong’s Greek 1799 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/1799.htm>

he has the imprimatur of the beast and that everybody sees that. What does that mean? It means he is the most articulate of the philosophy of the *kosmos*. He is the most convincing of the representations of that godless diatribe. And so convincing, in fact, that he is a primary instrument for the winning of the polemics war—the war of words, the very war by which the saints are overcome.<sup>11</sup>

He then performs great signs. It is interesting to me the signs he performs. You will remember that the prophet Elijah, confronting the prophets of Baal, called down fire from heaven in the view of all.<sup>12</sup> In fact, Elijah had the sacrifices that he had prepared to offer to God doused with water. They dug a trench around the altar, and there was enough water poured on the sacrifice that it gathered in the trenches. When fire came down from heaven in the sight of all, it licked up the water in the trenches in addition to consuming the sacrifice. What does this tell you? This is an intentional effort to replicate that which gave Elijah credibility as the very essence of the prophetic in the Old Testament.

What do I mean by that? When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, there appeared together with Him, Moses and Elijah<sup>13</sup>—Moses representing the Law, Elijah representing the Prophets. Moses was taken away, representing the law finding its fulfillment in Christ, and Elijah was taken away, representing all the prophecies concerning Christ being fulfilled in Christ; and Christ stood alone, unrivaled in all of His glory.<sup>14</sup> So Elijah is the very picture of the prophetic, the very picture of those who speak for God. In fact, when John the Baptist came, he is described as the greatest of the prophets under the law.<sup>15</sup> Why would that be so, and why is it that Elijah would also be considered the very essence of the prophetic? It is simple: John the Baptist came in the spirit and

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<sup>11</sup> See Revelation 13:7: “It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Kings 18:20-40.

<sup>13</sup> See Matthew 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36.

<sup>14</sup> See Luke 16:16: “The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”

<sup>15</sup> See Matthew 11:11 (Jesus speaking): “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.”

power of Elijah, according to Jesus Himself.<sup>16</sup> So the spirit of Elijah is that which stands astride the prophetic.

It is no wonder that so many claim to be associated with Elijah to clothe themselves with the credibility of the prophetic—names like The Elijah List, and so on. But play close attention because these are the very prophets who prophesied the second inauguration of Donald Trump as president, and they were wrong. God did not say so. And this is not just an attempt to take a swipe at false prophets. It is to say that Elijah is the standard of the spirit of prophecy in the Old Testament. We could delve into the name, Elijah, and where he lived; my friend, Thamo Naidoo, has done a wonderful job of deconstructing the name, Elijah. I am focusing, for our purposes now, on what was one of the most famous of the demonstrations of the spirit of the prophet that was credited to Elijah.

You will notice that when it says,

*He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, ... (Revelation 13:13-14a).*

Now I want to go very quickly to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, and read you something. This is what it says about that this man of lawlessness and something that he will be able to do. I recommend that you read from verse 1 of chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians.

*Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [the Parousia] will not come unless the falling away comes first, (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3a, comments added in brackets).*

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<sup>16</sup> See Matthew 11:13-14: “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come.” See also Matthew 17:11-13.

He is saying, “I do not want you to be deceived to think that the Day of the Lord has already come,” because only a remnant will be able to discern the activities of the rising of the man of lawlessness. His description here is an identical match to his description in Revelation 13:12. So I will just read it to you: “...will not come unless the falling away comes first.” Which means what? People are deceived. A falling away is not when people are walking in a manner consistent with the truth. A falling away occurs when a people have been deceived. Falling away, here, is not the world falling away; they are condemned already. Falling away is when the church moves from the woman in the wilderness<sup>17</sup> to the harlot<sup>18</sup> who is deceived and leads astray those who are led by their own lusts. But let’s go on. It is so rich here.

I do not understand how it is possible for people to speak about the mark of the beast, his number, and his name without seeing the setup: this is the one who has the image, the number, and name. It is not the horn, and it is not the beast; it is this one because he is the one who is primarily responsible for people being led astray. Now who is it who can lead church people astray? You have to be able to look like a lamb even though you are speaking like a dragon. This is this one who arises out of popular theology, out of popular culture, out of popular imagination. He brings together what people think God ought to be into public policy and public forums, and he is a deceiver. He says,

*...unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, [Here is his description:] who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, ... (2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4a, comments added in brackets).*

He opposes God, but does it sound like he is opposing God? No. That is the deception associated with dragon speak. Because if he obviously sounds like he is opposing God, why would not the church people figure it out? The point is, in his opposing God, he does not sound like he is opposing

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<sup>17</sup> See Revelation 12:6: “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” See also Revelation 12:13-17.

<sup>18</sup> See Revelation 17:1b-2: “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

God. He “exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped.” So, he resets the boundaries. He removes the ancient boundaries and resets the boundary lines to popular opinion, popular views—what is consumable, even by church folk. I can understand why the doctrine of getting out of here, the doctrine of the rapture, is so popular. Because they would avoid this, the great falling away, the great deception by this beast that comes up out of the earth.

*...so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:3b).*

I am exasperated at the way that religious leaders and teachers think about the Scriptures so domestically. For them, the temple is the temple in Jerusalem. Have we not remembered, has it been so distant from our memory, Jesus speaking of Himself said, “Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days” (cf. John 2:19)? Or Paul, “Know you not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you? And whoever profanes the temple of God, him will God destroy.”<sup>19</sup> We have spoken so much of the *naos*<sup>20</sup> of God, the dwelling place of God. What makes a temple a temple is that the god to whom it is dedicated lives there. But evangelicals keep insisting that God has to restore the temple in Jerusalem, and so that is why they want the Jewish capital to be moved to Jerusalem. They have this domesticated view, and none of it is going to happen. But in the meantime, it will be the source of much conflict and chaos among the nations, and it will make it easy to persecute people who are so obviously wrong, who have caused so much trouble in the world.

Do you realize how much trouble the church, the evangelical church in particular, has caused the nation right now? Because of the evangelical church, the nation cannot be governed. Because of the evangelical church, the nation is so divided that ultimately it will fall. I am telling you that the evangelical church will be blamed for it. And they should be because they are the ones who, in understanding the Scriptures falsely and domesticating it, have created these frictions and tensions

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<sup>19</sup> See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.”

<sup>20</sup> See *naos*, Strong’s Greek 3485 - <https://biblehub.com/greek/3485.htm>

within the nation. They have insisted on the nation being the Kingdom, rather than that the Kingdom is the Kingdom. Listen, America has never been, it is not now, nor will it ever be the Kingdom of God. How on earth could we have become so deceived? So much so that one of the most eminent of this prophetic type considers that because politics has shown a division between the nations, that the church is fighting a cultural war. Give me a break. We are not in conflict with any culture. We are our own culture. We stand or fall on the basis of whether or not we believe the truth. Trying to get society to agree with us has never been the mandate of Christ. The mandate of Christ is to call you out of one kingdom into another,<sup>21</sup> not to make the kingdom of darkness the Kingdom of God by an infiltration. This is the error of such doctrines as the seven mountains. They have led the people astray because they do not know the Scriptures. The people are being led astray, and it will lead to the man of lawlessness coming forth, dwelling in the temple of God, showing himself to be God.

But then, let me finish this very quickly. It says,

*The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.)*

The same exact things are said about the lawless one, as of the second beast in Revelation 13:13.

*He performs great signs, [he acts like Elijah] so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth 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 who was wounded by the sword and lived (Revelation 13:13-14, comments added in brackets).*

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<sup>21</sup> See Colossians 1:13: “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ...”

He tells those who dwell on the earth that they need to make an image of the beast. That is where I want to go the next time. Continue this study with me as we look at the image of the beast—forming the image of the beast.

I am Sam Soleyn, and I will see you then. Bye-bye.