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In recent times the science world has invented computers that can use human neurons. And apparently, this greatly augments computer capacity. In addition, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has done the same - in particular, by augmenting the realism of images and humanoid apparatuses.

In Revelation 13:15 appears the phrase, *“he had power to give life unto the image of the beast”*. (13:15) So it is thought that these new technologies provide evidence for the rise of an AI activated and/or human-neuron activated robot idol or image of the final *Beast* (the Antichrist). Although this sounds reasonable, there is good reason to interpret this phrase in Revelation 13:15 in an altogether different way.

Okay, so let’s explain what this all about.

First of all, the *“image of the beast”* has to be an image, not a computer. Not even an AI-doctored image of the Beast, the Antichrist, will work. Why is that? Because few people would want to worship an image they suspect could be fake. And who would want to worship a robot idol? In fact, the more lifelike they are, the creepier a humanoid becomes. This phenomenon is known as the [“Uncanny Valley Syndrome”](#).

Still, the question comes up, could the use of human neurons be used by evil spirits to possess a computer and thereby bestow aspects of human life to a computer-driven humanoid? This could be, but there seems little point in using AI-powered or neuron-activated robots or images as objects of worship. And why is that? We forget that the needed technology is already here and has been for years.

So what on earth are we talking about here? Broadcasting technology. It has the extraordinary capacity to create real, live, speaking images and distribute them into every corner of the world, and do so in a moment of time. Broadcasted and real images of a charismatic leader will generate worship far more easily and effectively than any kind of AI-activated image could ever hope to do. And the reason is quite simple: the world will know they’re beholding the Antichrist himself, not some fake, crafted

version of him.

If we lived in a non-scientific, superstitious culture (as in ancient times), it would be possible to get away with that sort of thing. But not nowadays. In our modern scientific secular culture, the lack of superstition and belief in supernatural agency demands that whatever image is used to promote worship of the Antichrist must be completely real. What better then than a broadcasted image?

Sometimes a little historical hindsight is helpful. And we could ask, have we seen anything in modern times that foreshadows the use of broadcasting technology as a means of engendering worship of a political leader? Even before television, during the era of radio transmission, the power of broadcasting technology to sway public sentiment on a broad scale was being felt in full force for the first time.

In Hitler Germany people only had to switch on the radio to get, at least, a live “voice image” of Hitler. Nazi Germany fell under the spell of the Hitler demagogue due to the “magic” of radio broadcasting. At last, a device had been invented that could convey over vast distances the personal presence, charisma, and dynamic personality of a political leader.

And this captivated the hearts of the German people for a time. Without realizing it, they were engaging in a form of worship. They were as devoted to Hitler as any “religious” person might have felt towards their god or divine emperor. But, in this case, the object of worship (Hitler) was cloaked in the garb of secular adulation rather than the ancient one of superstitious adoration.

Radio was the first medium to demonstrate this uncanny ability to convey to the public the dynamic presence of a political leader. For the first time in history, the barrier of physical distance was overcome; a whole nation became a public auditorium, as the personal presence, charm, and charisma of the Hitler demagogue traveled beyond the podium straight into every German household. How much more can TV - with its ability to convey, not just audio, but visual features of a person - be capable of doing the same in the near future with the Antichrist?

Next question: Revelation 13:15 states that *“the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”* So how can a broadcasted image carry out such a task? Very simple. As the Beast rails against those who won’t swear their allegiance to him, his aggressive propaganda, broadcast via television, will generate a hostile climate and unleash persecution against the non-worshippers.

Or, to view this from a different angle, what is the remarkable feature about modern image-making that makes it so effective? Answer: there is no separation between person and image.

To understand this, consider how, if you see yourself speaking into a mirror, you know it is not your reflection that is speaking; it’s just you. Although John the apostle says that the image causes those who don’t worship it to be killed, it is in fact (without his knowing it) the Beast who is causing them to be killed (if it is a broadcasted image).

John apparently saw the Beast’s image causing the non-worshippers to be killed. If this was a broadcasted image, then in his mind he would have assumed that the reflected (broadcasted) image he saw had its own separate, independent existence apart from the Antichrist. But what is a reflection? It’s nothing more than the person himself. Broadcasting technology is nothing more than a technological way of casting mirror-reflection images (that can speak) over great distances.

We forget that Revelation 13 was written through the mind’s eye of a person from the 1st century. It is in a sense a time-travel experience. John’s perspective was born in the image-making practices of ancient times when stone and wooden idols or paintings were the norm in the art of religious idolatry. In his mind, the image had to have a separate existence apart from the Beast. He couldn’t know that image-making in the future would have this astounding capacity of behaving like a reflection.

The image IS the person, in other words – by the magic of broadcasting technology. And not only that, but an image’s creation, worldwide distribution, “life” and speaking ability are all rolled into one simultaneous operation that takes place in just a moment of time. But

John could not have understood this and would describe the image’s creation in cumbersome fashion as if the process required separate stages: its creation and distribution, and the giving to it of life and speech.

Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast... and he [the False Prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast... (13:14-15)

Probably we get thrown off by that phrase about giving “*life unto the image*”. (13:15) It has been theorized that evil spirits could possess the computer circuitry in a humanoid, especially if it is using human neurons. And this is a possible scenario that could explain how a humanoid might come “alive” and ascend to human, even superhuman, capacities. Nevertheless, it is wise to be open to other possibilities of how to interpret this particular phrase about giving “*life unto the image*”.

For it is possible that the real issue is our difficulty in perceiving John’s 1st century perspective about image-making, coming through his written words. And they are John’s words, not those of an angel or the Lord; nor is there an angelic helper to assist him in getting the right perspective (as in [Revelation 7:13-14](#) and [17:6-7](#)). And if this is the case, then we don’t have to take the passage so literally.

Or maybe better to say, we can take it literally once we’ve taken into account John the apostle’s point of view. It could well be that the Lord left the passage in John’s own words, without any further elaboration, to be there as an intriguing example of a time-travel experience, how someone from an ancient time and culture would try to describe a modern-day invention.

In his book *The Case for Faith*, Lee Stroebel recounts his interview with renowned Bible scholar Norman L. Geisler - who taught Stroebel that a common misunderstanding in Scripture results from “forgetting that the Bible is a human book with human characteristics.” The apostle John had his human outlook and particular slant on how to explain the vision of the image that he saw. Taking this into consideration helps us to “*rightly divide the word of truth*” (2Timothy 2:15). John’s account in Revelation 13 is simply an example (as Geisler goes on to say) of how “the Bible, like

Christ, is totally human, yet without error".

Without taking into account John's point of view, we could make the mistake of interpreting his words too literally, as if what he writes is absolute truth. Well, it is absolutely true that he was describing a modern invention. And if so, then he would have been doing it from the point of view of someone from the 1st century.

It was common enough in those superstitious days for false prophets and priests to encourage faith in their dead idols by making them appear to come alive in some way - even by miraculous means in some cases. (See [Appendix](#) on this subject.) So that would be John's "template" of how to describe a modern invention like TV broadcasting. He would use terminology and concepts that would have made sense to him.

Another question that may come to mind: what about the phrase "*make an image*"? We don't "*make*" TV images; they are sent to us; and what does it mean that there is only *one* image?

In John's day, images had to be "made" or crafted. There was no such thing as instant creation of images through photography or video production. And the more perfect an image the longer it would take to "make". So how else could he describe the process of image creation, other than by saying it had to be "made"?

As for the singular word "*image*", we need only compare this with other Scriptures that have a plural subject followed by the singular word "*image*". Even though singular, the word "*image*" in these Scriptures actually refers to a plurality of images:

"THEY glorified him not as God." People who have not known God, or worse, have refused to glorify God, have made countless images (not just one) that fall into the category of "*an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*" (Romans 1:23)

"And as WE have borne the image of the earthy." Millions of people (not just one) love God and "*have borne the image of the earthy*" and "*shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" (1Corinthians 15:49)

"But WE ALL with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" means that millions of people (not just one) "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2Corinthians 3:18)

It shouldn't be any problem then to understand that the phrase ***"THEY should make an image"*** - with its plural subject and singular object - is simply explaining that each household will have its own (broadcasted) image of the Antichrist. Millions of images all over the world - but the same single image of the Antichrist appearing worldwide on our TV and computer screens. It's the same pattern of emperor-worship, replicating itself in the present.

In ancient times, to facilitate worship of the "divine being" of Caesar, who sat in Rome, stone idols of him were scattered throughout the empire. In modern times, to facilitate worship of the "divine being" of the Antichrist, who will sit in Jerusalem (according to Daniel 11:45), his broadcasted image will be scattered all over the world.

So where do AI- and neuron-activated computers fit into the picture? Well, this technology could be the crucial factor in carrying out such mammoth tasks as administration of the worldwide empires of the Beast and False Prophet, activation of the worldwide buying and selling system, upgrading of broadcasting transmission networks, spread of the vast surveillance network that will be needed to keep track of the world's citizens and see who has given their allegiance to the Antichrist and who has not.

But if those new technologies are used on the image itself, to doctor it up in some way, that is more likely to be detrimental than helpful. Again, it comes down to the question of why would people in a scientific age want to worship an image that is not real, or what they suspect could be fake, counterfeit, or doctored up?

Conclusion? Could it be that the technology needed for the appearance of the Revelation 13 image was already invented a few decades ago: broadcasting technology? The only change or improvement that might yet come along would be to use holographic images. But these are also broadcasted images, similar to what is being used now in TV transmission.

For more information on this subject of the “*image*” in the *Book of Revelation*, see the series of posts [Unraveling the Mystery of the Image](#).

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APPENDIX: Quote from *NLT Study Bible* commentary about Revelation 13:13-15. (This, by the way, does not mean to endorse all of NLT’s commentary on the *Book of Revelation*.)

“13:13-15 In NT times, false prophets astounded people with reports of divine visitations and of idols speaking for the gods they represented (see Acts 16:16-18; 1 Cor 12:2-3). Such practices involved worship of demons (see 1 Cor 10:20-21) and were epitomized in the Roman emperor cult. Those who refused to conform were put to death.”

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