

**1 - Introduction**

**2 - Worldwide Worship (Adulation) of the Antichrist**

**3 - “Miracles” that Don’t Work and Those that Do**

**4 - How does Singular Change into Plural?**

**5 - Seemingly Miraculous Nature of the Image**

**6 - Destructive Power of the Image**

**7 - A New Initiation Rite**

**8 - Conclusion**

### **3 - The Apostle’s “Explanation”: *Miracles* that Don’t Work and Those that Do**

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Image-3.mp3>

#### **The “*miracles*” that don’t work**

**Revelation 13:13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.**

John starts off by saying that the False Prophet does great wonders, calling fire down from heaven in public – “*in the sight of men*”. This could easily be a “*miracle*” of modern science. There are many ways nowadays that we can “*make fire come down from heaven*” through the use of Direct Energy Weapons (such as laser beams). Even a simple fireworks display might fall into this category. (But from John’s perspective any such modern invention could only be explained in terms of “*miracles*” – a supernatural phenomenon.)

This fire from the sky may be supernatural too – we don’t know – but, whatever the case, the main point here seems to be that these spectacular in-the-sight-of-men miracles don’t really do the job of deceiving the world. Perhaps modern people are too skeptical and scientifically minded to be much impressed by any dramatic displays, even supernatural ones. We’ve become too rational to believe in such things anymore, too confined to seeing reality in a one-dimensional, naturalistic plane.

But then in the next verse, along comes a different category of miracle, and these are the ones that actually do the job of deceiving the world.

### The “*miracles*” that do work

**Revelation 13:14** *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power [was granted – NKJV] to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

The apostle may have wondered why the spectacular fire-from-heaven miracles did not contribute towards deceiving the world. After all, in Jewish history it was well known that such dramatic displays had once convinced the people in Elijah’s time about the power of their God. Instead, in this glimpse of a future age, John notices that it is “*those miracles*” done out of sight of the public and “*in the sight of the beast*” that do the job of deceiving the world into following and worshiping the Antichrist. So what can we make of this?

First of all, let’s delve a bit into the question of how are images made? Usually, an image of someone must be created “*in the sight of*” the person who’s getting an image made of himself. Especially for TV images, it’s essential. A crafted image, of course, doesn’t have to be made “*in the sight of*” the person whose image is to be made (although it helps).

So that’s intriguing. For judging by this “*in the sight of*” phrase, the vision was showing that some peculiar kind of picture creation involving the Antichrist was going on. According to the next verse 15, these “*miracles*” were to give “*life*” to an “*image*” of the Antichrist. So that clues us in to the fact that these in-the-sight-of-the-beast “*miracles*” are connected in some way with the creation of this mysterious and powerful “*image*”.

From John’s viewpoint, it appeared as though the life-power of the Antichrist was getting transferred into the images that people had. It is true about television broadcasting that it has that remarkable capacity to transmit a person’s “*life-power*” via the air waves into the TV “*shrines*” of every household on Earth.

The only thing is, John had the peculiar idea that the images in people’s homes were already there, and it was the False Prophet’s “*magic*” which

**brought them to life. And of course, we know this is not how television broadcasting works.**

**But then also, we know that John's understanding of the art of image-making was limited. And for him his explanation for how the living images would arrive in the homes of “*them that dwell on the earth*” (by making them first) seemed reasonable enough. (13:14)**

**Again, we must remember that Revelation 13 is nothing more than John the Apostle's record of what he saw; these are not the words of God or of an angel. The visions, of course, came from God, but the reaction to those visions came from His apostle. And his reaction is a rather interesting (and amusing) example of what happens when someone from an ancient time suddenly lands into a future reality (after being transported there by the power of God). Since he still had his old mindset (the cultural background of someone from ancient times), it would be quite natural for him to understand the modern world from a very different perspective.**

**For example, the “miraculous” nature of this process: In the mind of a man from the 1st century, how else would he explain this strange technology? Only “*by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.*” (13:14) As far as John was concerned, that would explain how the image got its “life”. (13:15)**

**At this point it's worth noting that in ancient times science and magic were both considered as part of the same profession. A scientist or doctor was expected to have more than just technical knowledge. He was supposed to know something about creating magic potions, spells, and incantations, and conjuring up the help of the spirit world. It is only in modern times that a big division has come up between science and the supernatural. So for John it was normal to think of this advanced technology that he saw in vision as a manifestation of supernatural power.**

**And so we might paraphrase the first part of verse 14 thus: “and he deceives those who dwell on the earth by the means of those technological miracles which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.” In this case, the “*miracles*” are the modern day wonders of science that have enabled humanity to perform feats which, to the mind of**

anyone from an ancient time, could only be categorized as “miraculous”.

## 2 Types of Miracles

(1)

Great wonders in the sight of men



Fire down from heaven



Result? None

(2)

Miracles in the sight of the beast (cameras rolling)



Give life to the image of the beast (TV broadcasting and reception)



Deceives the world into worshiping the Antichrist

Now what about this “make” business? We don’t “make” TV images; they’re simply broadcasted to us, and we receive them. To answer this, let’s consider how the words of God came to the prophets in the Bible. In prophecy it is very easy for messages to be “colored” by the channel’s own thoughts and personality, his way of looking at things. This does not mean the prophecies are wrong, but they will have an almost unavoidable slant to them that must be taken into account in the interpretation of them. (See [Appendix 4](#) for some examples of this sort of thing.)

So then, if it’s possible for a prophet to “color” his prophecies, then how much more likely will it be for him to do the same when it’s an

**interpretation – his own thoughts about a prophecy, revelation, or vision.**  
**And in this case, that is what we have here in Revelation 13.**

**As mentioned before, this is not a prophecy, or an angel speaking, but it is John the Apostle's words as he tries to figure out and describe what he saw in vision. The vision itself, of course, came from God, but the interpretation of it was filtered through the mind of someone who lived in the 1st century A.D., someone who, of course, had a very limited (non-existent actually) understanding about the process of image-making as we know it today.**

**In this “image” vision, John could not grasp how mankind could one day fashion the peculiar kind of image he saw. He could only think in terms of how images were made in his day, which usually entailed an arduous process of sculpting, painting, or some other form of craftsmanship; and the more perfect the image, the longer it would take to craft.**

**So, as far as he was concerned, you had to “make” the image first. Then by some hocus-pocus, it could be brought to life in some way by a “false prophet”. And that sort of thing did happen back then, and even happens nowadays on occasion. (See [Appendix 5: Hindu Milk Miracle.](#))**

**We can look also at the example of Pharaoh's magicians who, like Moses, could change their rods into serpents. From this account in the *Book of Exodus*, we understand that it was a known practice in ancient times to bring dead things to life through the use of magical powers.**

**In John's mind, this was how he understood the creation of this peculiar “image” that had “life”. From his standpoint then, it would be necessary for everyone to make or get their own image of the political leader or divine being (since he couldn't understand how it could be cast abroad, or broadcast, to them). Thus he writes that the False Prophet will “say to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast.” (13:14B) Then it would be the job of the False Prophet to bring those images to life.**

**In reality though, the only thing to get or make will be the TV or computer/cell-phone screen. That is the modern day “shrine”, which can house the only kind of image that people today will truly worship – the**

live, broadcasted image of the Antichrist.

Still, one might wonder, “Doesn’t it say, ‘*they should make an image*’, only one? If we’re to interpret this thing in terms of television, how do we account for such wording, since the use of television would automatically lead to the creation of a multiplicity of images, not just one?” The simple answer: The phrase “*an image*” means there will be only one type of image – that of the Antichrist – but it doesn’t mean there won’t be untold numbers of exact replicas of that one image.

For example, imagine this scenario: a car manufacturer advertises, “We are going to produce a certain model of car.” Now he only said “car” – singular. Does that mean he is going to make only one car of that model that everybody has to use? If he did, that would utterly defeat the purpose of supplying the people’s need for cars, and his own need for making a profit. So of course he builds many many cars of that one particular model.

We know the world is already prepared with multitudes of TV and computer screens; so, when the Antichrist appears, there will also appear along with him countless “*images to the beast*”, one in each household of the world; but they’re all the same image. And having live images like this in every household of the world will be far more effective in generating worship than if there is only one image.

The one-image-only idea arose, probably because of the statements by both Jesus and Daniel, predicting that, in the very End, an “*abomination of desolation*” would sit in the Jerusalem “*holy place*”. Since the “*abomination*” will sit in a house of worship, and since the “*image*” is an object of worship, it is easy to conflate these two, to think that they are both the same thing. However, this viewpoint glosses over several details in the Scriptures that would point to a much different conclusion – that the “*abomination of desolation*” and the “*image*” are two entirely different inventions of modern technology.

But that is a major study beyond the scope of the present discussion. (See [“Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination”](#) for more information on this intriguing topic.)

**Continue to Chapter 4: How Does Singular Change into Plural?**

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**Appendix 4: “Colored” messages in prophecy**

**Are prophetic messages completely pure without any “coloring” from the prophet’s own bias and cultural background? Not necessarily.**

**For example, in Ezekiel 38 the prophet is communicating a message about the future wars of the Antichrist in the End Time, and he mentions several place-names that are involved in the conflict. Some of those names obviously refer to modern nations, but other place names sound as if they are referring to territories and tribes that existed only in ancient times; and in this way the prophecy was “colored”. But if we give the prophet some leeway on this score, we can see that he was simply trying to refer to modern territories, unknown in his day, and so had to use terms and names that were familiar to him in his own day and age.**

**Another example too is the Jewish flavor of many prophecies. The Jewish people naturally tended to think they were the one and only people of God. As a result many of their prophecies about the future of God’s people sound as if they’re talking about the Jewish people only and Israel. That was their point of view, but again, giving a little leeway here, it is not difficult to see that these prophecies were intended to apply to the people of all nations who had become “God’s people” through faith in Christ.**

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**Appendix 5: Hindu Milk Miracle and Magic Idols**

**To understand better where John is coming from, imagine, in the Roman world of his time the following scenario: A “prophet” arrives in a certain district to promote the worship of the new Caesar. He begins by proclaiming to the people of the region that it is their religious duty to make an image to the newly installed “divine being”. The people, knowing that the Roman garrison is stationed just over the next hill, figure it’s in their best interest to do so, and each household dutifully gets or makes its own image. To encourage more devotion to Caesar (and bring in more**

revenue), our “prophet” might use magical powers, or simple tricks, to make the images appear to be alive in some way. And thus, a wave of interest in the new god has begun. Likely, that kind of thing did happen in those days.

Even in modern times, such things have been known to happen. There are the weeping images of Mary and other manifestations, which God seems to have allowed in the Catholic world. Another example: In India a few years ago (1995), there arose a wave of interest in one of the Hindu gods. The furore was sparked, it seems, by reports that Ganesh idols in different places had been observed to be drinking milk by some miraculous means. And newspaper headlines about it appeared all over India, and even in England. If something like this could happen in modern times, chances are it must have happened, probably more frequently, in ancient times. The priests of old would have had many peculiar ways of persuading people to worship their gods and demagogues. And these occasional “miracles” – whether real or imagined – where idols could demonstrate limited lifelike powers on a wide scale – must have done a lot to prop up the faith of the people in them. So, this ancient practice may have been John’s reference point and basis for explaining how the image he saw in vision worked.

One interesting point about the Hindu idol mentioned above: The people who still had faith in that kind of worship believed implicitly in this “miracle”. But those who were influenced by modern, scientific thinking were completely skeptical. In our modern world, for any image to have “life”, if it comes about by supernatural means, it may not have any impact; people are more likely to brush it off than be inspired to worship. Nowadays, the only thing that will convince people is seeing the real live thing (via broadcasting technology).

That is not to say there won’t be any miraculous manifestations performed by the Devil’s people. *“False christ and false prophets... shall show great signs and wonders.”* (Matthew 24:24) The forces of Darkness will pull everything out of their bag of tricks. But likely, the “miracle” of being able to spread the Antichrist’s live image far and wide through technological means is the best way of explaining how he persuades the world to worship the Antichrist.

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**Continue to [Chapter 4: How Does Singular Change into Plural?](#)**