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5 - Seemingly Miraculous Nature of the Image

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Image-5-1.mp3>

Then the next phrase: **Revelation 13:15A And he had [was granted - NKJV] power to give life unto the image of the beast. . .**

As far as the Apostle was concerned, here is where the earth-Beast’s magical power manifested itself. In an ancient culture, the best way to encourage worship of a god was to make its idol come to life in some way. This was the aspect of the “*image*” that stood out to John. And so he puts much emphasis on it, explaining it according to how he imagines the image’s “*life*” came about - by those “*miracles*” done “*in the sight of the beast*”. (13:14-15) He might have figured that was the False Prophet’s main role - to do the seemingly impossible job of giving “*life*” to the image. After all, what did he know about TV broadcasting, electromagnetic wave transmission, or even electricity?

In reality though, it’s all just technology, and that “impossible miracle”, in John the apostle’s mind, would be carried out by the *Earth-Beast* (also known as the *False Prophet*) - the one whom he had just seen causing “*the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast.*” (13:12) As far as John was concerned, the one who promotes the rise of the Antichrist would surely be the one capable of doing such an amazing “miracle” - of giving “*life unto the image of the beast.*” (13:15)

Now, it is true that the “*life*” of the image - the fact that it’s the real thing - is the crucial factor that engenders worship amongst the masses of the world. From John’s viewpoint and according to his explanation, there was some kind of connection between the miracles done “*in the sight of*

the beast” and the images of the Beast that were springing to life all over the world; somehow the life-power of the beast was getting transferred into the images that he figured people must have “made” for themselves.

Could this be a crude explanation then for the power of modern broadcasting? Could it not be how someone from the 1st century might attempt to explain how the Antichrist’s life-power, even spiritual power, will get transmitted via the air waves into every household in the modern world?

Of course, what John didn’t understand was that those “*miracles*”, those technological miracles, did a lot more than just bring the “*image*” to “*life*”; they also created the “*image*” (in “*reflection*” form) and distributed it into every corner of the world. The whole process was simultaneous and instantaneous - what we call broadcasting a TV image. But for him, it was impossible to grasp this, to realize how streamlined the whole process was going to become. So he separates the different aspects of the process, explaining it in cumbersome fashion according to his understanding of what the process of creating, distributing, and giving life to an image would entail.

Another point to remember: It isn’t necessarily the person, the False Prophet, who gives “*life*” to the image. The “*he*” in this passage refers to the “*beast from the earth*”, the system that operates under the leadership of the False Prophet; the actual term “*false prophet*” doesn’t appear until chapter 19. Like the other “*beast from the sea*” (the Antichrist), these “*beast*” terms describe both the person and the system that the person is the head of. And it is sometimes difficult to tell in a passage whether it’s the person being referred to, or his empire, or both. (See [Appendix 6](#) for a discussion about the personification of the term “*beast*”.)

Now indirectly, the False Prophet does perform the miracle - by influencing the media systems to give favorable coverage to the Antichrist. But it’s not as if he himself is doing any kind of hocus-pocus to make images come alive. That “*miracle*” gets delegated to the TV broadcasting systems to perform. But for the apostle, this “*life*” feature of the image looms in his mind as something extraordinary and, not knowing how else to understand it, he describes this modern wonder of technology as a miraculous occurrence.

An interesting sideline here worth noting: From the vision John understood that the earth-Beast had a great deal of power, which, in his clumsy way, he expresses as the ability to get everyone in the world to possess an “*image*” of the Antichrist and then to “*give life*” to their images (verses 14-15). What this suggests, when we apply these words to modern reality, is that the *Earth-Beast*, or *False Prophet*, will have control over the world’s broadcasting industry. This great domain of media power comes mostly under his control, which would, of course, ensure widespread proliferation of the “*image*” - the broadcasted image that will exert enormous influence over the world of the future. Furthermore, if he controls the world’s media networks, then he probably owns them. And if he owns them, then he must be fabulously wealthy.

The same can be said about this Beast’s power to cause everyone to receive the “*mark*” for buying and selling (13:16-17). If he’s capable of doing that, then it implies that he must control and own the computer credit systems of the financial world, pointing again to the fact that he must be fabulously wealthy. We can understand then why verse 11 of this chapter says about the *Earth-Beast* that “*he exerciseth all the power of the first beast. . . and causeth the earth. . . to worship the first beast.*” (13:12)

(This feature about the False Prophet’s dominion over the world’s material wealth is covered more thoroughly in [post 4](#) and [post 7](#) from the *Shape of the Future* series.)

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Appendix 6: Personification of the Beast

Revelation 13 starts with a description of the world’s final empire as a horrific-looking “*beast*” with horns and heads and features of a leopard, bear, and lion. As the passage continues, the “*beast*” seems to transition from empire into person:

- 1) “*They worshiped the beast.*” (13:4) In the ancient “*beast*” empires, it was common for emperors - persons - to be worshiped.

2) ***“A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.”*** (13:5) Hitler, an example of an Antichrist-type person, had great speaking ability.

3) ***“Worship the image of the beast.”*** (13:15) If the *“beast”* actually looked like a beast, instead of like a person, who would want to worship an *“image”* like that?

This does not mean to say that the government system, the state (along with its leader), could not be worshiped (as long as the citizens are not aware of that state’s beast-like nature). In modern times we have seen this sort of thing firsthand. According to communist doctrine, for example, the transformation of the state into utopia is held up as the ultimate ideal and goal of history; and its leaders (Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao) became objects of worship. In Hitler Germany, it was the same: the Fatherland and the man who would lead Germania into its age of glory were both objects of worship.

Further ahead in chapter 17, we read, ***“The seven heads are seven mountains. . . And there are seven kings.”*** (17:9-10) The ***“seven heads. . . mountains”*** are the seven empires that have ruled and will rule over the land of Israel - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the final Antichrist empire. The word ***“mountains”*** symbolizes empires/governments. (as in Daniel 2:35,44, Isaiah 2:2-3, Micah 4:1) Then the passage states, ***“There are seven kings.”*** So ***“king”*** and ***“mountain”*** are inter-connected.

It is as if the one cannot do without the other. A body without a head isn’t going to get very far; an empire needs to have a dynamic and strong leader to unify and give it direction, plus be the head that people can look up to, or even worship. And vice-versa, a head without a body won’t get very far; an emperor cannot call himself that unless he has an empire behind him. In effect, both empire and emperor have to become objects of worship.

The use of the ***“beast”*** symbolism to represent specific persons, not just their empires, started in the Book of Daniel. In chapter 7, Daniel had a vision in which ***“four great beasts rose out of the sea.”*** (verse 3) He describes the first ***“beast”*** thus: ***“The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart***

was given to it.” (7:4) Here we have an obvious reference to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar whose *“heart”* was changed. Because of his cruelty and misrule, God had to curse Nebuchadnezzar with a *“beast’s heart”* - some form of insanity. The king eventually returned to his right mind after seven years and *“blessed the Most High”*. (4:16,34) *“A man’s heart was given”* to him. (7:4)

In another example (chapter 2), as Daniel was interpreting king Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, he tells the king, *“Thou art this head of gold.”* (2:38) Nebuchadnezzar, the person, was the *“head of gold”* in that dream of a *“great image, whose brightness was excellent”* and its *“form. . . terrible (awe-inspiring)”*. (2:31) The *“great image”* in the form of a person draws attention to the fact that emperor-worship was the feature of those empires that the coming of the Messiah (the *“stone”*) would change. But lest we think the *“image”* symbolized only the kings of empires, we see the word *“kingdom”* used in verses 39-42 in reference to the arms, belly, legs, and feet of the *“great image”*.

So what about the question, does the *“image of the beast”* refer to the personified version of the *“beast”* (the Antichrist)? Or is it somehow the image of a disembodied entity, this horrific-looking *“beast”*? From what we’ve learned about the interchangeability of these mountain-versus-king and king-versus-kingdom terms, there should be no difficulty in understanding that this *“image of the beast”* refers to the likeness of the person of the Antichrist. But along with that worship, there will be a glorification of the new world order, the false utopia, that the Antichrist and False Prophet will try to sell to the people of the world as the ultimate vision of the future that they should be working towards.

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