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6 - Destructive Power of the Image

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Image-6.mp3>

(Continuing on with verse 15:) **Revelation 15B . . . 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.**

John noticed that the “*image*” had this mysterious capacity of having “*life*”, which enabled it to “*speak*”; and (as suggested in the word “*both*”) this speaking ability is linked to its ability to cause death to those who wouldn’t worship it.

Nowadays, we might call this “speaking” feature of the “*image*” a propaganda war (taking place mostly through media broadcasting); and the ripple effect that accompanies this “speaking” is a hostile climate against the followers of God, which in turn brings the end result: persecution and death to “*as many as would not worship the image of the beast*”.

[Note that in the first half of Revelation 13, the Antichrist “*beast from the sea*” is pictured as having a big “*mouth*” speaking “*blasphemy*” and engaging in “*war against the saints*”. (13:5-7) Then in the second half, we read about the “*image*”, and can see that it only seems to echo or reflect what the Antichrist was pictured as doing in the first half - that is, speaking and causing the non-worshippers to be killed.]

We could compare this to Hitler’s speaking ability in the 1930’s and 40’s by which he was able to whip the German nation into war frenzy. And he could do this on a large scale through the medium of radio. This great

new speaking facility both fostered worship of him and made the German people willing to fight against their enemies. The German Fuehrer used radio to foment a propaganda war and create a hostile climate against the Jews and other European nations who didn't "worship" him. And the end result of this speaking, and hostile climate generated thereby, was the death of millions of people in World War II.

So this explains how the *"image"* will appear to be causing death to the non-worshippers. The *"image"* itself doesn't do that; the passage doesn't have to be taken so literally. In reality, the Antichrist is the one carrying out the persecution, and when he appears on television, that impression will be conveyed in his TV image - through his hostile words and demeanor as he *"opens his mouth in blasphemy against God"*.

But for a man from the 1st century, he would think that the power of causing persecution resided in the image itself (and that is how John expresses it). Perhaps he thought, "Wow, look what this image is doing; it's causing persecution and death to those who don't worship it!" That would have been his impression - like an illusion. He couldn't tell that, in reality, it was just the Antichrist himself who was causing persecution and death to those who weren't worshipping him. The image was just reflecting what the Antichrist was doing - perhaps a broadcast of him while in the course of giving a speech directed against his enemies and those who refused to worship him.

Unlike what happens during the process of creating crafted images, in television broadcasting, there is no real "break" between image and reality. But to John, because of his ancient mindset about crafted images, he thought there was this separation, that somehow the *"image"* had this *"life"* on its own, which in turn means that he thought it was doing the job by itself of persecuting and causing death to the saints.

John makes this big distinction between image and reality that isn't really there. This could be similar to what happens sometimes when a cat looks at itself in a mirror and thinks it is seeing another cat. Likewise, if John was viewing a reflection of the Antichrist via the "mirror" of TV broadcasting, it would be easy for him to think of the image as a separate entity, having a "life" of its own.

And because of the “spin” that John throws at us from 2,000 years ago, his viewpoint may fool us a bit unless we understand where he’s coming from. What was actually a reflection-type of image ended up getting described as if it were a crafted image.

And so, we wind up thinking that the “*image*” is a cleverly contrived AI-powered humanoid or image, a computer intelligence - anything that might fall into the category of being “crafted” in some way by modern technology, and having its own existence separate from the Antichrist.

That sort of interpretation does take into account the great change in technology but doesn’t take into consideration the change in our cultural mindset. To us a broadcasted image is no big deal, and we’re quite familiar with it, but to someone from ancient times it would appear utterly fantastic and incomprehensible.

The apostle’s one-sided outlook - the exaggerated importance given to crafted images - naturally found its way into his description. But his outlook need not carry over into our interpretation. Although in the past manufactured or crafted images were effective in generating worship, among modern people, with their scientifically oriented outlook and distrust of superstition, it is not so easy.

However, broadcasted images have succeeded in generating that worship (adulation) of political leaders, and that on a very wide scale. Since the image John saw in vision was one that would appear in modern times, then chances are good that this was the type of image he saw.

We take this modern invention of TV broadcasting for granted because of our cultural familiarity. But for John the Apostle, his glimpse into modern society astounded him; whatever image he saw in vision was utterly foreign to him. And if it was a broadcasted image, he would not think of it in those terms, but rather as some kind of very unusual crafted image.

But in one respect his understanding of the “*image*” was accurate: he could sense how powerful it was - causing the world to grovel in worship before the Beast and stirring up hatred against the followers of God.

Another question that may come to mind: Since the image of the beast causes those who don't worship it to be killed, then the image, or rather the Antichrist, must know who's worshiping and who isn't. But then, how exactly would they know? In most religions there is some way of showing one's worship - through tattoos, marks, circumcision, yelling "Heil Hitler", or most common in ancient times, bowing before the object of worship. But what about this modern religion of worshiping the Antichrist?

Well, that's answered for us in the next two verses of this chapter. Here is described for us the new worship service, specially tailored for the secular and scientifically oriented world of modern times.

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