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<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Image-8.mp3>

This passage about the “image” is truly one of the more enigmatic ones in Scripture. In the past, scholars assumed it was an idol of some kind. This legacy came from the era of crafted images (paintings, sculptures, etc.). That was the cultural norm as far as image-making was concerned. No one knew a thing about TV, or even any of the other reflection-type images like photographs, xeroxes, and so on. Mirror images were known, of course, but these were not used as objects of worship. So in those days the only way to understand the Revelation 13 “image” was in terms of a crafted image.

In this new day, however, we cannot allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by past viewpoints. We do have the benefit of some historical hindsight, not available to our forefathers. And so we should upgrade our thinking and not limit ourselves to the mindset or understanding of those from olden time.

With some idea now of what modern culture and technology is like, we could paraphrase the Revelation 13 passage about the “image” into modern lingo like this:

“The TV and movie industry belong under the jurisdiction of the False Prophet and his worldwide business empire. Through his influence, he is able to ensure that the Antichrist receives extensive and favorable media coverage. The TV cameras film the Antichrist during his speeches. And by this means his image is broadcast into every screen in every household of the world.

The Antichrist, in his speeches, rails against God and His followers, those who don't aduluate him and don't join the economic system based on the 'mark'. The people who show their refusal to worship the Antichrist (whom they can see on TV) by not joining the computerized 'mark' system, risk getting spotted by the False Prophet's vast surveillance system, then caught, and finally killed by the forces of the Antichrist."

John's description in Revelation 13, however, sounds different, and it's easy to think the "image" must be something more elaborate than just a plain old TV image. But by taking into account John's 1st-century mindset - that he was describing a modern image in terms of the ancient ways of image manufacture - that clears up this misunderstanding caused by the clash between ancient and modern viewpoints.

In fact, John's peculiar way of describing the "image" lends credence to this being a genuine description of modern image-broadcasting as filtered through the mind's eye of someone from ancient times. A time-travel trip if ever there was one!

In ancient times, it was impossible to imagine what our modern world would be like - the scientific advances and so on. Even the way people think has changed. In today's world, there is no superstition. To worship any kind of manufactured image, however modern or technological it may be, is not acceptable to the secular, non-superstitious people of modern times.

And how could the False Prophet get around this modern day skepticism? Since the immediate presence of a dynamic personality always has a way of generating worship and aduluation, then he simply has to use an image that transmits the Antichrist's persona rather than try to craft it somehow.

And thus, the world will fall for the TV image of the Antichrist. And this, just like a religious image, serves to visualize the demagogue, and thereby facilitate and spread worship of him. Of course, the world won't really be worshiping the image, but the man himself; but John the Apostle was not aware of this subtle distinction. So his description makes it sound as if the image itself is the object of worship.

And so, what better way for the False Prophet Beast to fulfill his role of communicating false ideas to the world and causing them to worship the Antichrist than through a picture-making and voice-carrying medium like TV that is already established worldwide, already preparing the masses along this line?

Understanding the vision of the “image” in terms of television does make a nice fit with the conditions of Revelation 13:14-15. For one thing, there’s no question that television broadcasting could create an “image of the beast”, one that has “life” and can “speak”. And the modern secular world will easily “worship” it because they know they’re seeing the real thing.

Aside from these basic considerations, we find other details pointing to this passage as an ancient description of a broadcasted image of the Antichrist:

1) “And he (Beast from the earth, the False Prophet) causeth the earth... to worship the first beast (the Antichrist)... and deceiveth them by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” (13:12,14) This was John’s way of explaining how the image would be created – by means of some strange activity going on in the presence of the Antichrist; these are easily understood as the TV cameras recording his live speeches, but for the apostle, a mysterious, miracle-producing operation taking place “*in the sight of the beast*”.

Even now, “those miracles” that John observed are going on in modern political life. Appearing before the people through television broadcasting is the most effective way for political leaders to gain popularity; or, as John expresses it, to cause “worship” of themselves and “deceive” their subjects into following them.

2) “Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.” (13:14) This was John’s way of explaining that the image was distributed throughout the earth. And that’s what television broadcasting does; it “casts abroad” live images throughout the earth.

The phrase “make an image” is John’s peculiar way of

explaining how people would get their images of the Antichrist. Of course, we know that, with TV transmission, people don't have to "make" the image. Nor do the TV cameras; they just do the recording, the "instant crafting", and then TV transmitters send the live image throughout the earth. All that people need are the receivers, the TV screens; but John could not understand how the modern process worked and could only express it in terms of ancient processes of creating and distributing images

3) ***"And he had power to give life unto the image the image of the beast that [it] should both speak and cause [people] to be killed."*** (13:15) Knowing nothing about modern technology, this was John's way of explaining how the image got its life - by some miraculous process done under the sponsorship of the earth-Beast.

The "cause... to be killed" phrase, since it seems to combine with the image's speaking ability, is easily understood as the destructive influence of the Antichrist's own speeches when he "opens his mouth in blasphemy against God" as part of his propaganda "war against the saints". (13:6-7)

In addition, since the "image" is nothing more than a reflection of the Antichrist, then in reality it is the Antichrist and False Prophet who are raising persecution. But to someone like John the apostle, it would appear as if the image itself was doing it. And so that is how he expresses it.

Humankind will always have a need to look up to and worship a Superior Being. Having undermined faith in the true God, how can the forces of Darkness satisfy the spiritually starving masses? By promoting worship of the Antichrist, the new savior of their troubled world - not in an obviously religious way; but since the masses have come to admire, fear, or adore their new master, then this suffices for worship. And that was the impression that John the Apostle had; the world was groveling in "worship" before the Antichrist.

And what better way to spread this "worship" throughout the world than through the Antichrist's live, broadcasted image? That was the intriguing reality which John the Apostle tried, in his simple way, to convey so long ago in Revelation 13. However, because of our cultural familiarity, we don't always realize what an amazing invention TV

broadcasting is - a technology that will be able to generate worship by bringing the live presence of the Antichrist into every household of the world.

Through live media broadcasting then, the forces of Darkness can accomplish their goal of stealing the world's worship through their man, the Antichrist, and with the help of their False Prophet. And so, the Revelation 13 passage emphasizes the TV image of the Beast rather than TV in general.

This climactic tip of the iceberg seems to be what the “*image*” vision of Revelation 13 was portraying. However, the decadent, deceiving influence of television has been around a long time, preparing the hearts and minds of the masses towards the goal of getting them to worship the Antichrist instead of the true Christ.

There is still the “iceberg” - the 70-some years of TV technology - that has been laying the groundwork: a worldwide TV culture indoctrinated with anti-God values and perspectives.

The “*image of the beast*” doesn’t just pop up out of nowhere. It is necessary that the image’s vehicle - television and associated media devices - first comes into common usage by the world before the Antichrist should begin to appear on them. The infrastructure must be in place.

Seen from this viewpoint, media broadcasting is certainly a major “sign of the times”, a necessary preparatory step to unveiling the “*image of the beast*”, or the revealing of the Antichrist. We don’t have to wait for some new invention to come along - two-way TVs, a great computer idol or robot looking like the Beast, a computer intelligence, or whatever kind of crafted image we think it might be. The invention for the “*image*” is already here; and it is an entrenched technology in use the world over. All that remains is for the Antichrist to show up.

And so, from this point of view, the End Time stage is a lot more ready in some ways than we may have thought. We don’t have to distance the arrival of this “*image*” into a SciFi-like future. We have, as it were, a now-future. If need be, the “*image of the beast*” can appear tomorrow.

Revelation 13 portrays the image as an essential component in the operations of the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet. Revelation 19:20, making a brief mention of the False Prophet, highlights this fact: “*The False Prophet wrought miracles before him* (the Antichrist).” (This is referring back to the “*miracles*” mentioned in Revelation 13 that bring “*life to the image of the beast*”.)

Translated into today’s world, we know how true this is for modern leaders, how their broadcasted image (these “*miracles wrought*” before them) greatly magnifies their power and influence. They rely heavily on the miracle of modern TV communication. To us it’s not magic, of course, but in the mind of John the Apostle that was how it looked.

Compared to the idols and images of yesteryear, this vision of a modern image must have looked extraordinary to him. In olden times, images were powerless; and without the use of superstition could do nothing to capture people’s imagination and worship. But now, the magic of TV greatly multiplies the power and influence of leaders, generating “*worship*” of them among their subjects, in a way that was never possible before.

And with television, people don’t have to travel to a public place to hear someone in person (such as the Antichrist) making a speech to a crowd. Now, the whole world is a public auditorium because of this invention. And one day soon, it will beam the Antichrist’s own persona straight into the households of everyone on Earth.

Today, no would-be demagogue is going to get very far if he doesn’t make good use of television and media broadcasting. And from the sounds of it in Revelation 13, that looks exactly like what the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet plan to do. They can conquer the world politically through the Antichrist’s military might, make them dependent economically with the “*mark*” system, but perhaps, more crucial than anything else, they must try to win their hearts through use of the “*image*”.

From the viewpoint of those in ancient times, this vision of the future amazed them with a glimpse at what they believed would be the world’s supreme and worst example of emperor worship. And it amazes us too to behold the grand foresight of the Almighty, by which he envisioned His

apostle with a special glimpse across the centuries into our modern world and its peculiar worship system.

What does All This Mean for the Abomination of Desolation?

It has been customary in Christian teaching to base our concept of the “image” on the assumption that we can conflate, or identify, it with the “abomination of desolation” referred to in several End Time portions of Scripture. But what if they are not the same thing? Could it be that we have an example here of an idea that’s taken on a life of its own that it was never meant to have? It would be wise to keep that in mind – in case things don’t turn out the way we think they should.

Now that we’ve seen how the “image” could be talking about the Antichrist’s TV image, then it is not so necessary to tie it in with the “abomination”. If we understand the Revelation 13 “image” to be the TV image of the Antichrist, then there’s no need to think that another image or idol is needed in the form of the abomination of desolation in the “holy place”. If the Antichrist is there, that should be sufficient. He himself is the object of worship.

And so, understanding the “image” in terms of TV begs the question, what really is the “abomination of desolation”. Answers to this question may be found in the series of posts, [Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination of Desolation...](#)

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