

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: The Beast from the Earth: Revelations 13:11-18

### Christ-like Life

A Scottish missionary, home on furlough from her work in India, told this story. She had been teaching a group of children one day, telling them the story of Jesus, bringing out bit by bit incidents showing His character. As she was talking, one child, listening intently, grew excited, and then more excited. At last she was unable to restrain herself and blurted out: "I know him; he lives near us." Was there ever such praise of a human?

### Character Develops in Silence

What a silent but awful work is character building! We understand now why "there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while the temple was in building" (1 Kings 6:7). It has been discovered that the quarries where the stones were made ready were under the city. All the preparations were made in silence and secrecy down beneath the tread of busy life; and then, when the great blocks were cleft from their bed, hewn, shaped, polished, and fitted for their place, they were hoisted through a shaft to the temple platform and lifted to their exact position. So all the preparations for character go forward in silence and secrecy; but the results are manifest in the structure which, for glory or shame, mysteriously grows before our eyes.

### Incomplete Character

What becomes of those who reach high on the plane of morality, but do not touch the yet higher plane of spirituality? You might just as well ask me what becomes of a marksman who almost hits the mark, but does not hit it. You might just as well ask me what becomes of an anchor that is let out of a ship, and reaches almost to the bottom, but stops short without touching it. You might as well ask me what becomes of a portrait which is splendidly painted, and is almost like the man that it is designed to represent, and yet is not like him.

### The Real Man

It is with a man as it is with corn. You may take away the stalk, but that is not the corn; you may strip all the husks, one after another, and yet the corn has lost nothing. The kernel remains, and that is the corn. The stalk and husks are good to protect the corn, and carry the sap to it while it is growing; but when it is grown they are of no use to it. And a man has lost nothing when his surroundings are taken away.

**Keep in mind that "the beast" is a counterfeit Christ.** The world would not receive Christ, but it will receive Antichrist (John 5:43). The world would not believe the truth, but they will believe the Re (2 Thessalonians 2:8-12). Jesus spoke (and still speaks) gracious words of salvation, and men turn a deaf ear; but they will listen to the blasphemous words of "the beast." The world will not worship the Christ, but they will bow down to Antichrist.

In Revelation 17, we will learn that "the beast" rises to power by means of "the harlot," a symbol of the apostate world church. This is not any one denomination or faith, but a world religious system that has

rejected God's Son and God's truth. However, when "the beast" rises to universal power, he will no longer need "the harlot" and shall subsequently destroy her and establish his own satanic religion.

### **The Beast from the Earth (Rev. 13:11-18)**

In Revelation 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10, the beast from the earth is called "the false prophet." The dragon or Satan is the counterfeit Father ("I will be like the Most High"), "the beast" is the counterfeit Christ, and the false prophet is the counterfeit Holy Spirit. This completes the satanic trinity.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and lead people to trust and worship Him (John 16:7-15). The false prophet will point to Antichrist and his image and compel people to worship Satan through "the beast. "

The image of the horns (Revelation 13:11) suggests that the false prophet has authority, but the absence of a crown indicates that his authority is not political. Our Lord warned that there would be false prophets (Matthew 24:11,24), and this one will be the greatest. He will have the "character" of a lamb but the voice of the dragon. What a deceiver he will be - and all the world will listen to him!

**When our Lord ministered on earth, Jewish leaders often asked Him to perform some sign to prove that He., was indeed their Messiah; and Jesus refused.**

But the false prophet will perform deceptive signs that will lead the world into devil-worship (see 2 Thessalonians 2:9). His greatest sign will be "the abomination of desolation" mentioned by Daniel (Daniel 9:27; 11:36), Jesus (Matthew 24:15), and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

**What is "the abomination of desolation"? It is the image of "the beast," set up in the temple in Jerusalem. An idol is bad enough; but setting it up in the temple is the height of all blasphemy. Since Satan could not command worship in heaven, he will go to the next best place - the Jewish temple in the Holy City (Daniel 8:9-14).**

**The false prophet, energized by Satan, will perform his "lying wonders" and even duplicate some of the signs performed by the two witnesses (Revelation 13:13; see also 11:5).** Up to this time, the two witnesses have been ministering at the temple in Jerusalem, but "the beast" will slay them and take over the temple. When God raises the two witnesses from the dead and takes them to heaven, the false prophet will answer that challenge by giving life to the image of "the beast." Not only will the image move, but it will speak!

Not content to control people through religious deceit, the false prophet will institute strong economic measures as well. Everybody (except believers; Revelation 20:4) will receive a special mark in order to buy or sell; but the only way to get that mark is to submit to "the beast" and worship him. Surely this is a strong allusion to the Caesar worship in the Roman Empire, but this same policy has been used by political leaders throughout history.

This special mark is the name or number of "the beast" - the mystical 666. In the ancient world, the letters of the alphabet were used for numbers, both in Greek and Hebrew; and Bible students have been attempting for years to unravel the mystery of this name and number. If you work at it hard enough, almost any name will fit!

Since man was created on the sixth day, six is the number of man. Creation was made for man and likewise has the number six stamped on it: twenty-four hours to a day (4 x 6), twelve months to a year (2 x 6). Seven is the number of perfection and fullness, but six is the "human number," just short of perfection.

Despite all man's imaginative calculations, we must confess that no one knows the meaning of this number and name. No doubt believers on earth at that time will understand it clearly. The "satanic trinity" cannot claim the number seven; it must settle for 666.

This much is sure: in recent years, we have seen a worldwide increase in the use of numbers for identification. In the United States, a person's Social Security number is indispensable. In fact, numbers are more important to computers than names! Perhaps this is an advance warning of what will happen on earth when "the beast" is in control.

We have reached the middle of the Tribulation in our study, but we are not yet ready for the return of the Lord. Before John revealed how the great drama will climax, he paused to overview great events to come; and that will be our next topic.

An antichristian system pervades our world, and true believers must not be a part of it (1 John 2:15-17). We must shun false worship (1 Corinthians 10:14-22), that we may be found faithful to the Lord in these last days! (2 Timothy 3)