

“Can Satan Raise the Dead? Can Satan Create Life? Towards a Biblical View  
to the Wound of the Beast in Revelation 13”

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Preliminary Interpretational Issues Considered

In a recent article on the death and resurrection of the satanic beast, Thomas Ice presents the tension that exists between two diametrically opposing explanations concerning Revelation 13:3-4.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the fatal wound of the beast and his subsequent return to life John wrote, “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’” Multiple questions have arisen about these verses throughout the centuries and continue to do so even for those who hold to a futuristic understanding of the Book of Revelation. Is this actually the death and return to life of a future individual,<sup>2</sup> or is it a reference to the return and revitalization of the future Roman empire?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ice, “The Death and Resurrection of the Beast: Part I” *Pre-Trib Perspectives* 8:22 (April 2005): 1, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Along with LaHaye, a sampling of those who understand the return of the beast from the dead to be an individual include Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22 An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995) 157-59; Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978) 1735; John F. MacArthur, author and gen. ed. *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word Bibles, 1997) 2009; J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*. 3 vols. (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1909; reprint in one volume. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957) 321-30. Differences among who actually performs this and whether it will be a real event or not will be forthcoming later in this article.

<sup>3</sup> Representative samplings of the return of the beast referring to the future revival of the Roman Empire are C. I. Scofield, ed. *The Scofield Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909; reprint as *Oxford NIV Scofield Study Bible*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967) 1326-27; Lewis Sperry Chafer *Systematic Theology* 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1948) 4:346-51; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966) 199-200; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (No city given: Dunham Publishing Co.: 1958; reprint Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964) 334-35; Daniel K. K. Wong, “The Beast From the Sea in Revelation 13,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (July–September 2003): 337-48.

Furthermore, if Revelation 13:3-4 does, in fact, refer to an individual, the core issued must be considered: who brings the beast back to life, Satan or God? This is a very pertinent question since, as will be shown, often the interpretation of who or what comes back to life is based on an assessment of what Satan can or cannot actually perform.

Those who hold that the beast returns to life by means of Satan present this as part of the uniqueness of what will transpire during the Tribulation. Since the Antichrist will be the pinnacle of Satan's power and deception, it is held that Satan is the one who brings his beast, the Antichrist, back from the grave. Such is LaHaye's position:

Verse 3 indicates that the beast, or Antichrist, will be given a deadly wound . . . Revelation 17:8 indicates that his spirit will go down into the pit of the abyss where it belongs, but he will be resurrected. One must keep in mind that this beast is the Antichrist. In other words, he will try to duplicate everything Jesus Christ has done . . . Christianity is unique in that we worship a resurrected, living Lord . . . This power will be all but nullified by the nefarious work of Satan through the resurrection of the Antichrist. As far as I know, this will be the first time that Satan has ever been able to raise the dead. His power and control of man is limited by God, but according to His wise providence He will permit Satan on this one occasion to have the power to raise the dead.<sup>4</sup>

However, if the above statement is true, multiple questions and concerns have been raised if John did witness a return to life of one who actually died, especially a return to life wrought by Satan. Rebuking this position, Hanegraaf responds to the implications LaHaye's interpretation of Revelation 13:3-4:

While LaHaye's interpretation of Revelation is no doubt driven by a desire to be biblical, it nonetheless erodes epistemic warrant for the resurrection and ultimate deity of our Lord. If the Antichrist could rise from the dead and control the earth and sky as LaHaye contends, Christianity would lose the basis for believing that Christ's resurrection vindicated his claim to deity. In a Christian worldview, Satan can parody the work of Christ through "all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9), but he cannot perform the truly

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<sup>4</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Illustrated and Made Plain* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1973; revised ed. 1975)  
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miraculous as Christ did. If Satan possesses the creative power of God, he could have masqueraded as the resurrected Christ. Moreover, the notion that Satan can perform acts that are indistinguishable from genuine miracles suggests a dualistic worldview in which God and Satan are equal and opposite powers competing for dominance.<sup>5</sup>

Both positions raise valid points to consider; both have issues of their own to address.

Hanegraaf raises legitimate concerns about anyone other than God being the sole author of life.

Jesus affirmed as much, such as in John 5:21: “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.” Morris comments on the

importance of this verse: “The Father (he and no other) raises people from the dead and gives them life. This is the teaching of the Old Testament (Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7).

Jesus’ hearers would have accepted it without question. There was no matter for marvel in this.

What is marvelous is the next assertion, the Son also gives life.”<sup>6</sup>

Because of verses such as these, it is certainly valid to question the supposition that Satan could at any time possess and exercise the creative power of God, which is what will transpire if Satan brings his dead Antichrist back from the grave.<sup>7</sup> Yet to LaHaye’s credit, he at least allows the text to speak for itself and seeks to explain the wound of the beast in harmony with other references within the Book of Revelation, including the amazement of *the entire* unbelieving world and the resulting worship of the beast and of Satan that will follow.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hank Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007) xix-xx.

<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971; revised ed. 1995) 278-79.

<sup>7</sup> Hanegraaf’s other concerns such as how this relates to the deity of Christ and the control of the sky will be addressed later in this article.

<sup>8</sup> Ryrie likewise understands Revelation 13:3 as reference to the fatal wounding of the Antichrist since “it is the exactly the same phrase used as is used in 5:6 in reference to the death of Christ” (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986) 471. Ryrie does not comment as to the source of the resurrection as being either God or Satan. However, in reference to the false prophet giving breath to the image in Revelation 13:15, Ryrie

However, before examining matters related to the death and return of the beast, Hanegraaf's own hermeneutics, methodology, and conclusions should at least be surveyed since he attacks much related to a futuristic understanding of the entire Book of Revelation. Throughout *The Apocalypse Code* Hanegraaf claims to employ the proper exegetical method for correctly interpreting the Apocalypse based on the acronym "LIGHTS". Though not the basis for this paper, aspects of Hanegraaf's hermeneutics should be considered, for instance, his insistence on the synergistic unity of the Bible as a whole:

Finally, the *S* in LIGHTS represents the principle of *scriptural synergy*. Simply stated, this means that the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. You cannot comprehend the Bible as a whole without comprehending its individual parts, and you cannot comprehend its individual parts without comprehending the Bible as a whole. Individual passages of Scripture are synergistic rather than defective to with respect to the whole of Scripture.

Scriptural synergy demands that individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture. Nor may we assign arbitrary meanings to words or phrases that have their referent in biblical history. The biblical interpreter must keep in mind that all Scripture, though communicated through various human instruments, has one single Author. And that Author does not contradict himself, nor does he confuse his servants.<sup>9</sup>

Such reasoning is sound and many premillennial scholars would wholeheartedly agree with this interpretational principle, and to various degrees, with virtually every other element of the "LIGHTS" acronym he espouses. However, it is one thing to advocate this approach to biblical study, it is another matter to disdain those whom he considers do not do this, and it is still quite another to have one's own works fall short of the scriptural synergy analysis. We all—present author included—err in many ways (James 3:1-2), but obviously some more than others.

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writes, "this could indicate a supernatural miracle (empowered by Satan) which will actually give life to the image" (ibid., 472).

<sup>9</sup> Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*, 9-10.

Hanegraaf readily admits that *The Apocalypse Code* is not a commentary on the Book of Revelation per se,<sup>10</sup> yet he does present his methodology as the accurate means “to interpret the Bible for all its worth . . . ”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, since Hanegraaf claims to base his teaching from within the text, to paraphrase his own words, individual passages he uses must be compared in Scripture to see if they harmonize. In other words, the scriptural synergy principle he advocates applies just as much to himself as it does to Lindsey and LaHaye and anyone else.

One of the major positions Hanegraaf holds in interpreting the Book of Revelation is that Nero was the first beast of Revelation 13:1-8.<sup>12</sup> Hanegraaf mocks LaHaye’s (and others) rejection that the advent of the Antichrist has previously occurred in history past and instead looks for the advent of a future individual who will have a worldwide reign comprising of unparallel evil activities, especially in regard to the Jewish people, as divine prophecy that awaits fulfillment. Hanegraaf notes that to hold such a position may “well reveal the utter falsity of the assertion that Jews right now are living in the shadow of the mother of all holocausts—a holocaust that will wipe out two-thirds of them. Not just two-thirds of the Jewish population in the Middle East, mind you, but two-thirds of the Jewish population on Mother Earth!”<sup>13</sup> It seems from Hanegraaf’s understanding, either Lindsey or LaHaye invented such a concept of such a prophesied destruction. Yet Scripture is the one that repeatedly presents this, even proclaiming not only that two-thirds that will perish, but also that a third will be cleansed and brought into a

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<sup>10</sup> Hanegraaf acknowledges that primarily his writing is a refutation against the teachings of Hal Lindsey (ibid., xv-xvii), and especially Tim LaHaye since he, “more than anyone else in contemporary church history, has become the standard-bearer for Lindsey’s brand of eschatology” (ibid., xviii).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., xxvii.

<sup>12</sup> Hanegraaf first makes mention that “Nero was the Beast of Revelation” on page 8, but will develop this in detail throughout large sections of his book.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 109.

proper spiritual relationship. Since Hanegraaf’s “L” section of his LIGHTS acronym is the literal principle, one should at least consider what he wrote regarding a literal understanding of the text: “The plain and proper meaning of a biblical passage must always take precedence over a particular eschatological presupposition and paradigm.”<sup>14</sup> It would reason that one would apply the “literal principle” to a passage such as Zechariah 13: 8-9:

“And it will come about in all the land,” declares the LORD, “that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

It must be noted that God Himself promises to bring about such a refining judgment to some particular people group. This either has occurred historically or awaits future fulfillment.

Nonetheless, regardless whether one understands this to be history past or yet awaits future fulfillment, the promised perishing of the two-thirds is God’s own Word—not man’s decrees.

For the sake of our study, Hanegraaf’s position on the Antichrist needs to be briefly explored as well. He concludes: “Internal evidence points to the fact that when John recorded the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the sixth king [was]—Nero Caesar . . . .”<sup>15</sup> So accordingly, he argues for all events of Revelation 13 as having transpired during the days of Nero. Note the past tense used throughout this paragraph:

We must ever be mindful of the fact that the ghastly terrors of Revelation are designed the “Great Tribulation” not just because Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, or because of the massive loss of life, but because the Beast of Revelation

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 2. Although not detailing the specific two-thirds aspect of the pending judgment, other Scripture references refer to a future judgment of unparallel nature. For instance, earlier in Scripture God promises the uniqueness of a coming day for Israel in Jeremiah 30:7: “Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s distress, but he will be saved from it.” Jesus likewise warned in Matthew 24:21-22 of a unique, perilous time unlike any other in history past, present, or future: “for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 114.

purposed to destroy the foundation of the Christian church of which Christ himself was the chief cornerstone. The Great Tribulation instigated by Nero is thus the archetype for every type and tribulation that follows before we experience the reality of our own resurrection at the second appearing of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Hanegraaf supports his claim by delineating some of the atrocities of Nero's reign, especially in regard to horrific persecutions of Christians.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the massacre was so bad during Nero's reign, Hanegraaf concludes:

The malevolent state massacre of Christians he instituted continued unabated for some three and a half years. In the end, Peter and Paul themselves were persecuted and put to death at the hand of this Beast. Indeed, this was the only epoch in human history in which the Beast could directly assail the foundation of the Christian church which Christ himself was the cornerstone. Only with Nero Caesar's death, June 9, AD 68, did the carnage against the bride of Christ finally cease. Not only is there a direct correspondence between the name Nero and the number of his name (666), as noted above, but the "forty-two months" he was given "to make war against the saints" (Revelation 13:5-7) is emblematic of the time period during which the Beast wreaked havoc on the Bride. If LaHaye is looking for a literalistic interpretation for his ubiquitous three and a half years, he need look no further!<sup>18</sup>

A few final items help define Hanegraaf's interpretational approach:

Moreover, it is no mere coincidence that within a year of Nero's suicide, June 9, AD 68, the Roman Empire suffered a near-fatal wound. In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, a dynasty that had resided in the Julio-Claudian line of Roman Caesars for a century disappeared from the face of the earth. In fact, AD 69 would go down in history of as the year of the four emperors—Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian.

Nero's death not only brought an end to the Julio-Claudian dynasty but the near extinction of imperial Rome.<sup>19</sup>

Accordingly, "To friend and foe alike it, [*sic*] appeared as though the empire [Roman] empire had suffered a mortal wound."<sup>20</sup> Hanegraaf concludes: "Finally, while Revelation was

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 114-15; 147-49.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 148-49. Hanegraaf does not give any support regarding his far-reaching claim: "Indeed, this was the only epoch in human history in which the Beast could directly assail the foundation of the Christian church which Christ himself was the cornerstone."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 149.

inscripturated in the shadow of three and a half years of tribulation, it encompasses the year that will forever stand in infamy. With the resurrection of the Roman beast, Vespasian and his son Titus, once again set their sights on Jerusalem.”<sup>21</sup>

Let us briefly review Hanegraaf’s own desire for scriptural synergy, and then let us apply it to his position to see how it fares. Remember, he insists:

Finally, the *S* in LIGHTS represents the principle of *scriptural synergy*. Simply stated, this means that the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. You cannot comprehend the Bible as a whole without comprehending its individual parts, and you cannot comprehend its individual parts without comprehending the Bible as a whole. Individual passages of Scripture are synergistic rather than deflective to with respect to the whole of Scripture.<sup>22</sup>

A good place to begin is with both the subject and the Scripture indices for *The Apocalypse Code*. For instance, Revelation 13:11-18 requires the advent of “another beast” (aḡllo qhri ÷ on) different than the first beast of Revelation 13:1-7, and yet intricately connected with his worldwide reign and dominion. This second beast in Revelation 13 is generically and henceforth referred to as “the false prophet,” the title originating from the biblical text itself (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; and 20:10). It should be noted that the Apocalypse always presents this other beast with a definite article when referring to him as “the false prophet,” instead of a false prophet or false prophets in general. Under the subject index heading of “false prophet” (p. 281), Hanegraaf lists pages, but each reference pertains to critics of the Bible who considered Jesus to be a false prophet. So if Nero was the beast historically, the scriptural synergy principle necessitates that “the false prophet” who would lead the entire world in forced worship and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 150-51.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.



reception of the mark of the beast must have been present as well since there are two distinct beasts named within the same chapter of Revelation. In addition to this, it must be shown historically who this was whom Scripture twice employs the Greek word “it was given” to him (Rev. 13:14-15) (ε δο/qh) to do something beyond his normal or natural capacities. Yet there is no a trace of evidence presented that such the false prophet existed who remotely matched the biblical description in either secular or Christian writings.<sup>23</sup> Logically speaking from a scriptural synergy standpoint, one cannot have the advent of the first beast of Revelation 13:1-8 without the advent of the other beast of Revelation 13:11-18.

In the same way, the Scripture index for *The Apocalypse Code* omits any biblical references for the false prophet where he is specially called that, namely Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10. This is imperative for numerous reasons: first, whoever the false prophet is, he must exist when the first beast does; second, he must be alive with the first beast at the Lord’s return (19:20); third, he will be cast alive into the lake of fire with the first beast (19:20); and fourth, they are still alive one thousand years later when Satan receives his ultimate fate (Rev. 20:10).

So when Hanegraaf cites the death of Nero by suicide on June 9, AD 68,<sup>24</sup> the scriptural synthesis principle is just as true for him as with anyone else, present author included. Hanegraaf rails against “unbridled speculation, or subjective flights of fancy”<sup>25</sup> and encourages the reader

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<sup>23</sup> Gregory H. Harris, “Satan’s Deceptive Miracles in the Tribulation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (July–September 1999): 308-24. Since Hanegraaf particularly questioned the Antichrist’s control of the sky and how this would severely undermine the deity of Christ (Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*, xix-xx), see within the article fire called down from heaven (314-15) and the giving of breath or spirit (not life) to the image (Και ε δο/qh αυτω^ douvnai pnevma thØv ei ko/ni touv qhri ÷ ou) (315-17).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-49.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

concerning his own *The Apocalypse Code*: “In the pages that follow, you will answer these and a host of other questions by internalizing and applying the principles of a methodology called Exegetical Eschatology . . . In the process you will not only be equipped to interpret the Bible for all it’s worth but you may well discover that you hold the key to the problem of terrorism in one hand and the fuse of Armageddon in the other.”<sup>26</sup> He further states, “Again, armed with Exegetical Eschatology, you will be empowered to make a right judgment.”<sup>27</sup>

To put such principles as Hanegraaf says he employs requires that Jesus Christ returned to earth at the latest on June 8, AD 68—the last full day of Nero’s life—because if Nero is the Antichrist, he must be alive at the Lord’s return along with his unknown-to-history false prophet who by no means deceived those who dwell on the earth (Rev. 19:20). Either Nero meets these biblical requirements, or he must be discarded as a consideration for failing to fulfill the biblical requirements for the Antichrist. Also, this interpretational approach is not restricted to Nero as some isolated individual; other events revealed throughout the Apocalypse must be considered as well. This would that the entire unbelieving world during the first century, such as those detailed in Acts 2:9-11 (plus whatever the farthest outreaches of the populations were) came through the entire period relatively unscathed. This would include enduring Revelation 12:12 (“Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time”), 15:1 (“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished”), and 16:1 (“And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, ‘Go and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth’”). Such a concept is incredible: not only

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., xxvii.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 12.

did people live through all these things; the world at large did not even notice “the woe to the earth” warning regarding the wrath of Satan, and then later God Himself pouring out His finished wrath in judgment. The just are told to live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4), yet to accept that the life or death of Nero plus, the events of the first century, in anyway remotely matches these Scriptural requirements—plus dozens more—goes vastly beyond accepting by faith.

### For Those With a Futuristic Understanding of Revelation 13

It should be noted, however, that concerns about the raising of the beast as a resurrection of an individual is not restricted to opponents of a futuristic understanding of the Book of Revelation. Numerous premillennial stalwarts have also raised many of the same questions and concerns. John Walvoord, who held virtually the same approach to the Book of Revelation as LaHaye, wrestled with the same base problems Hanegraaf does if the Antichrist is indeed killed and then brought back to life by Satan:

The wounding of one of the heads seems instead to be a reference to the fact that the Roman Empire as such seemingly died and is now going to be revived . . . It is questionable whether Satan has the power to restore to life one who has died, even though his power is great.<sup>28</sup>

Pentecost likewise responded against the position of the death and return to life of the future Antichrist with similar concerns. Based on the promise that the dead are brought out of the grave by the voice of the Son of God (John 5:28-29), the beast’s return in Revelation 13:3-4 cannot refer to an individual. “Satan does not have the power to give life. Since Christ alone has the power of the resurrection, Satan could not bring one back to life.”<sup>29</sup> To sum up his position:

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<sup>28</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 199. Later in reference to the second beast giving breath to the image in Rev. 13:15-17, Walvoord again raises the primary concern: “Expositors usually hold that the extraordinary powers given by Satan to the false prophet do not extend to giving life to that which does not possess life, because this is a prerogative of God alone” (ibid., 208).

<sup>29</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 335.

“Since all the references to this individual present him as a man, not as a supernatural being, is seems impossible to hold that he is a resurrected individual. It would be concluded that the Beast will not be a resurrected individual.”<sup>30</sup>

Others have wrestled with the dilemma of attempting to allow the text to speak for itself, while at the same time struggling with the ramifications of what such an interpretation would entail. Usually they conclude that a future resurrection of an individual will transpire, at least in appearance, but leave the means undecided. Seiss is such an example. In reference to the language used in Revelation 13: 14 of “the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life,” he writes:

The expression is so strong, definite, and intensified, that nothing less can be grammatically made of it than that real death meant to be affirmed. It is further described as a sword-wound, ‘the stroke of his death,’ or a stroke which carries death to him who experiences it. A man who has undergone physical death is therefore in contemplation. Whether he comes up again in literal bodily resurrection, or only by means of an obsession of some living man, we may not be able to decide. Whatever the mode, it will be in effect the same as a resurrection.<sup>31</sup>

MacArthur likewise, in arguing for the return of the beast in Revelation 13 to refer most likely to an individual, leaves room for the details to unfold during the Tribulation:

Whether the death is real or faked (cf. v. 14; 2 Thess. 2:9) is not clear. It may be that the Antichrist is really killed, and God, for His own purposes allows him to be resurrected. More likely, Antichrist’s alleged death and resurrection will be a counterfeit of Christ’s death and resurrection, staged, as one of the ‘lying wonders’ perpetrated by the false prophet (13:12-15; 2 Thess. 2:9 NKJV). Antichrist’s death will be phony since he never really died.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 335-36.

<sup>31</sup> Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 325.

<sup>32</sup> John MacArthur, *Revelation 12–22*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000) 45-46.

The purpose of this article is to present a third position between the two opposing positions. It will address the concerns of those who consider it a biblical impossibility for the Antichrist to die and return to life. It will also offer an alternative proposal and solution for those who hold that the return of the beast will, in fact, be an authentic death and return to life of the Antichrist himself performed by Satan, and attempt to support this biblically.

### Preliminary Considerations

As an initial consideration in addressing the various positions, it should be noted that John wrote what he saw (e.g., Rev. 1:2; 13:3), as he had earlier been instructed by the Lord (Rev. 1:11, 19). Scripture does not disclose who brought the beast back to life in Revelation 13. God revealed this future event to John, who recorded what God had made known to him, but neither God nor the apostle explained the means of the beast's return or its significance. John himself may not have even understood at the time how the fatal wounding of the beast and his subsequent return to life transpired, such as when he later marveled about the great whore of Revelation 17:6-7. Identification of the source of the beast's return, if it is identifiable at all, must come from consideration of related passages, especially those found within the Book of Revelation.

Furthermore, Revelation 13 is not an isolated event. Whatever position one takes for the wound of the beast in Revelation 13:3, will reflect on other matters related to the beast, particularly his descent out of the abyss, which is actually mentioned before his advent to the world in Revelation 13. For instance, the first reference to the beast in Revelation occurs in 11:7, where it describes him as "the beast that comes up out of the abyss," who will make war against God's two witnesses. This verse simply states the beast will emerge out of the abyss without any other additional information or explanation. More details about this ascent will be revealed later

in Revelation 13 and 17. The first reference, Revelation 11:7, “gives no time frame for his ascent from the abyss (Lenski, Caird), but later discussion will suggest it coincides with his ascent from the sea in 13:1.”<sup>33</sup> Somehow and in some way that same beast must be in the abyss and likewise ascend out of it, as shown in Revelation 17:8: “The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.” Ultimately how one interprets these passages directly relates to how one understands the resurrection of the beast in Revelation 13: Is the death of the beast, his descent into the abyss and subsequent return out of it a reference to a future individual, or does this refer to the beast as a revived world empire? Obviously, if the beast (the individual) is never killed, he will never descend into the abyss. Furthermore, if the beast (the individual) never descended into the abyss, he will never emerge from it either.

Finally, for the sake of brevity, it is not the intent of this article to argue the legitimacy of the Book of Revelation as canonical, its authorship, or to the many valid reasons for holding the futuristic view of this self-attested and divinely-attested prophecy (Rev. 1:3: 22:7, 10, 18-19).<sup>34</sup> Neither does this article argue for the future existence of the literal Antichrist and the False Prophet as actual human beings who will meet their demise at the return of the Lord instead of viewing them as symbols for some supposed system of thought which Christ will ultimately

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 93.

<sup>34</sup> For an excellent introduction on the Book of Revelation and related matters, see Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992) 1–46. Of special relevance for this article are the sections “Prophetic Style of the Apocalypse” (23–29) and “Hermeneutics for Interpreting the Apocalypse” (29–39). For the significant and severe ramifications of attempting to have all prophetic events occur in the first century A.D., see Dennis M. Swanson, “International Preterist Association: Reformation or Retrogression?,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 15/1 (Spring 2004): 39–58.

conquer at His return.<sup>35</sup> In that regard, then, most of the examination in this article deals primarily with those who hold a premillennial understanding of the Book of Revelation. Also, since the Antichrist and False Prophet are cast into the lake of fire at Messiah's return (Rev. 19:20), it is not the purpose here to support the existence of hell, the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15, nor the eternal condition of the damned.<sup>36</sup>

It should be further noted that previous articles have dealt with many of the issues raised against any supernatural view of understanding the signs and wonders repeatedly predicted for the Tribulation. This includes both the return to life of the beast of Revelation 13:3<sup>37</sup> and the authenticity of the satanic miracles during the Tribulation.<sup>38</sup> Again, although not the primary purpose of this paper, Hanegraaf's sweeping claims in regard to what Satan performing authentic miracles would do to a Christian worldview and that Satan can only parody the miracles a Christ,

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<sup>35</sup> Such as Herman Hoeksema, *Behold He Cometh* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing, 1969) 634, who states in reference to the beast and false prophet being cast into the lake of fire: "There is no question of the fact that they are here represented as very concrete and individual persons. But this does not necessarily indicate that there shall be but one person who is the Antichrist and another individual who is the false prophet. It denotes rather, in the first place, that here we have the end of the devilry and rebellion and antichristian power. Without any form of trial they are destroyed forever." Actually, the two are not destroyed but cast living into the lake of fire, and are still tormented there one thousand years later in Revelation 20:10. Hoeksema does not explain how a system itself can be tormented in the lake of fire, nor how a system could exist without its adherents who are killed at this time but not thrown into the lake of fire. Also, if two of the components of Revelation 19:20 are symbolic representations for evil, is the third component Satan also just a representation for all wickedness, or is he a genuine living being who will suffer eternal torment (Rev. 20:10)?

<sup>36</sup> The Master's Seminary dedicated the entire issue of its Fall 1998 journal to presentations of a biblical doctrine of hell. It likewise responded to the alarming increase in the rejection of biblical tenets concerning hell by those who consider themselves evangelicals. For articles relevant to this study see Richard L Mayhue, "Hell: Never, Forever, or Just For Awhile?," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 9/2 (Fall 1998): 129-45; Larry D. Pettegrew, "A Kinder, Gentler Theology of Hell?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 9/2 (Fall 1998): 203-217; and Trevor P. Craigen, "Eternal Punishment in John's Revelation," *TMSJ* 9/2 (Fall 1998): 191-201.

<sup>37</sup> See Gregory H. Harris, "The Wound of the Beast in the Tribulation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (October-December 1999): 459-68 for different views concerning the fatal wound of the beast and his return to life.

<sup>38</sup> Harris, "Satan's Deceptive Miracles in the Tribulation," 3-8-24.

needs at least to be considered.<sup>39</sup> One of many points could be raised to consider: Did Judas actually do miraculous works, or were they only parodies of miracles? This is important because of the implications of how this relates to Matthew 10:1: “And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.” Matthew 10:4 presents Judas as one of the twelve to whom Jesus gave such power to do miracles. Nothing within the biblical texts presents Judas as not doing the same authentic miracles that the other apostles did. Here then was an unbeliever, who ultimately became a tool of Satan, who was temporarily granted authority by Jesus to perform authentic miracles. It did not create any dualistic worldview in the mind of Jesus, or He never would have done it this way. Also, if Jesus granted to one “son of perdition” (οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπολείας) (John 17:12) the temporary authority to perform authentic miracles, it should not be totally surprising if He grants another “son of destruction” (“perdition”) (οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπολείας) in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 likewise to perform authentic miracles, if such is God’s holy design.

Even though previous studies have dealt with this, one statement should not lightly overlooked or set aside as unimportant: The Tribulation will be a unique time in history and unparalleled in satanic evil, power, and worldwide deception.<sup>40</sup> The Bible not only repeatedly presents statements with very specific details about the unprecedented deception that will occur during the Tribulation, it also presents multiple strong warnings regarding the coming deception as well as the means to avoid it. The *worldwide* magnitude of the promised deception, and not

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<sup>39</sup> Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*, xix-xx.

<sup>40</sup> Gregory H. Harris, “Satan’s Work as a Deceiver,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (April–June 1999): 190-202. For biblical statements about the deception of the tribulation, see pages 196-197; for the multiple warnings about tribulational deception, see pages 198-99.



mere pockets of isolated deception, must be kept in the forefront of studying matters related to the Tribulation, and something that has no historical precedence.<sup>41</sup>

### The Judgments of God's Enemies at Christ's Return

Since the ultimate fate of the beast is not an object of contention among premillennialists, beginning with his demise will be useful in addressing other matters and events associated with him. The return to earth of Jesus Christ begins a series of judgments and blessings that culminates for this earth with the Great White Throne judgment, followed by the new heavens and new earth. That the judgments commence at the Lord's return should not be surprising since Jesus had taught as much in John 5:22, stating, "not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (aÓlla» th\n kri ÷ sin pa san de ÷ dwken tw^ ui w^ ), the perfect active indicative bearing witness to the permanency of the Son's right to execute "all judgment."

Morris comments on this verse:

The thought moves on to that of judgment. Arising out of the life-giving activities of the Son comes the thought that the Father does not judge people. This was something new to Jews. They held that the Father was the Judge of all people, and they expected to stand before him at the last day. Jesus tells them now that the Father will exercise his prerogative of judging for the express purpose of ensuring that people give the Son the same honor as they do to himself. . . . This is very close to an assertion of deity.<sup>42</sup>

As Pentecost previously noted, later in the same chapter Jesus expanded on the judgment that He will accomplish: "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a

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<sup>41</sup> For a listing of the biblical references regarding the massive extent of the deception of the tribulation, see *ibid.*, 199-202.

<sup>42</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 279.

resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29).

Revelation 19:19-21 describes the first judgment Jesus will perform after His return to earth:

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Only the Beast and the False Prophet receive immediate eternal judgment at Christ’s return as they are cast living (zw nteß) into the lake of fire. This is the first biblical occurrence to the term “lake of fire” used in reference to hell. The Bible presents those who die outside of the Lord await the final judgment being confined in *Sheol* of the Old Testament, which is generally considered synonymous with the New Testament use of *Hades*.<sup>43</sup> Walvoord’s point is valid and considered standard among premillennialists: “By comparison with other scriptures, it seems that the beast and the false prophet are the first to inhabit the lake of fire.”<sup>44</sup> Likewise: “These who were Satan’s masterpieces precede Satan himself to this final place of everlasting punishment into which he is cast a thousand years later (20:10)”<sup>45</sup>

The final judgment of Satan occurs later, after one thousand years, at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, and after his final rebellion. Revelation 20:10 states: “And the devil who

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<sup>43</sup> Harry Buis, “Hades,” in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976): 3:7-8; see also Buis, “Sheol,” in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 5:395. For a biblical basis for the use of all terms related to damned, including Tartaros and Gehenna, see Pentecost, *Things To Come*, 555-61.

<sup>44</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 280.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” For those who do not bring their own established theology or philosophical presuppositions and allow the text to speak for itself, Mayhue states the pertinent conclusion as it relates to the eternality of hell: “In Rev 19.20, the beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire. One thousand years later they are still alive (20:10). The phrase in 20:10, ‘tormented day and night forever,’ indicates that what their previous tormented experience had been for a millennium would continue throughout eternity.”<sup>46</sup> Walvoord concurs:

In the divine act of judgment which casts Satan into the lake of fire, he joins the beast and the false prophet who preceded him by one thousand years. The text should be understood as teaching that both the beast and the false prophet are still in the lake of fire when Satan joins them, a thousand years after being cast into it. It is most significant that the verb [shall be tormented] is in the third person plural, indication that the verb should be understood as having for its subjects not only Satan but also the beast and the false prophet.<sup>47</sup>

The final judgment depicting all the remaining lost will be the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-15:

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

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<sup>46</sup> Mayhue, “Hell: Forever, Never, or Just Awhile?,” 139.

<sup>47</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 304.

Here is the final judgment of the eternally damned, as they are thrown into the lake of fire.<sup>48</sup>

Inasmuch as the first resurrection was completed before the thousand year reign began (Rev. 20:5), “the dead” referred to in Revelation 20:11-12 can only be those who were left behind at the out-resurrection [i.e. the resurrection of the righteous] from the dead ones and who constituted those that are raised up unto damnation. The second resurrection, better termed the resurrection of the damnation, includes *all who are raised to eternal condemnation*.<sup>49</sup>

Chafer concluded the same thing: “*All the wicked dead* are here resurrected and stand before God to be judged. That the Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is clear from John 5:27, where it states that the Father ‘hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.’”<sup>50</sup>

It is also evident that with death and Hades emptied of all its inhabitants, there will be no place for the unredeemed to escape their final judgment:

The intermediate state, personified in the double title “death and Hades,” (20:13), releases its grip with the result that the unrighteous dead are raised for their individual accounting. The use of the personification a second time (v. 14) may simply refer to the end of death and the intermediate state, that is, death will meet its end and will not be there to disturb the new heavens and the new earth. Thus, none of the unrighteous dead will escape sentencing.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Hoekema considers this a judgment for both the saved and unsaved alike. “The Scripture further teaches that all human beings who ever lived will have to appear before this final judgment seat” (Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) 257. “If all men are to appear before the judgment seat, this must include all believers” (ibid.). For a rebuttal to a singular resurrection of the saved and the lost, see Pentecost, *Things To Come*, 398-407.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 398; italics added.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1926, 1953; revised by John F. Walvoord Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 367; italics added.

<sup>51</sup> Craigen, “Eternal Punishment in John’s Revelation,” 195.

Walvoord writes of the evident necessity of the unsaved to undergo a transformation of their bodies in order to endure the eternal hell, similar to the resurrected bodies the redeemed will have previously received:

Like the righteous, they are given bodies which cannot be destroyed. But while the righteous receive bodies that are holy and suited for the presence of God, the wicked dead receive bodies that are indestructible and suited for eternal punishment. They are still wicked and still in rebellion against God. The Scriptures are very clear that if anyone's name is not found in the Book of Life, he will be thrown into the lake of fire"<sup>52</sup>

Without any additional details or information, Jesus had alluded to the body aspect of the final judgment in Matthew 10:28: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." So with the Great White Throne judgment, thus concludes the totality of God's judgments against both Satan and his angels and unredeemed mankind.

### Significance of Revelation 19 on Understanding Revelation 13

As noted, enduring the lake of fire necessitates bodies fit to endure such punishment vastly beyond present human frailties. However, in agreement with what has previously been written in reference to the unsaved receiving bodies fit for eternal damnation, the same thing must equally be true for the Antichrist and the False Prophet as well. In order for the Antichrist and the False Prophet to be two genuine human beings, at some time—either before or at Revelation 19:20—these two individuals must likewise receive bodies fit to endure the everlasting torment God has promised. Simply put, at some point the two beasts must change from a human to super human capacity. This must occur, or else the two could never endure the lake of fire for even a fraction of a second, and certainly by no means would they still be there

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<sup>52</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (Wheaton: Victor Books 1990) 671.

one thousand years later when Satan is cast into hell, “where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

The beast being cast alive into the lake of fire and still being alive when Satan is thrown in makes the restoring to life of the slain beast in Revelation 13 much more plausible. Since these two designated agents of Satan must ultimately receive a supernatural translation, and do so before the remainder of all the damned of all time, Revelation 13 has the best biblical support of when this will transpire. Thomas shows the cohesion of these verses:

It is best to identify this restoration to life with an end-time satanically controlled king who will come to the world as a false Christ. This allows for the interchangeability of the head with the whole beast—i.e., the king with his kingdom—as vv. 12, 14 require. It coincides with further details to come in 17:8 [the beast coming out of the abyss]. It agrees with a final climatic appearance of the beast in history as a person, in concert with the vision’s focus on the future (Kiddle). This means a future sequence that will be a close counterfeiting of Christ’s death and resurrection. The climax of history will include a healing . . . of an individual that closely approximates the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The question as to whether Satan has the power to restore a dead person to life (Walvoord) requires no answer here. Whether the beast performs this marvelous feat through deception or through power permitted by God, it still brings him into the limelight as never before.<sup>53</sup>

While in agreement with Thomas’ conclusion, it is the intent of this article to determine whether God or Satan restores the beast to life. While this may seem to be an extremely ambitious undertaking, biblical references actually give clear indication as to whether this is an authentic resurrection or not and actually who accomplishes it. Even beyond what has already been examined, one tremendously significant deduction warrants consideration: *The Antichrist and the False Prophet are the only two unsaved human beings in all history who will be permitted by God to bypass the Great White Throne judgment* (Rev. 20:11-15). In keeping with the divine promise that *all* judgment (th\ñ kri ÷ sin pa san) has been given to the Son, that these

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, 158-59.

two are exempt from the Great White Throne judgment is solely God's doing—not Satan's. The devil has nothing whatsoever to do with any of the judgments of God, other than enduring what God has prepared for him and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Furthermore, Satan will already be in the lake of fire, joining the two previous inhabitants, before this final judgment begins. Since all judgment has been given to the Son, this obviously is the Son's ultimate will and accomplishment. He Himself will seize the Antichrist and the False Prophet and cast them alive into the lake of fire. He Himself has already determined that, unlike the remainder of the unredeemed, the Antichrist and the False Prophet—although authentic human beings—will not stand before Him in judgment at the promised Great White Throne with the entirety of the lost throughout the ages. Satan has no part whatsoever with any aspect of this, only the Godhead. Certainly no “dualistic worldview” exists “in which God and Satan are equal and opposite powers competing for dominance.”<sup>54</sup>

At some time before being cast into the lake of fire in Revelation 19:20, which occurs before the inauguration of the Millennium, the two beasts must receive *from God* bodies fit for enduring this torment, as will be true for anyone else who eventually will be thrown into the lake of fire. Just as Walvoord wrote of the necessity of those going to eternal torment must receive such resurrected bodies in order to endure,<sup>55</sup> so also must the Antichrist and the False Prophet. In fact, it seems as though these two staunch enemies of God most likely will have already received their resurrected bodies before this since no indication is made of any kind of translation of the two beasts at the Lord's return. Instead of being slain with the remainder of lost humanity and

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<sup>54</sup> Contra Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*, x.

<sup>55</sup> Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, 671.

then thrown into the lake of fire, these two will not be killed, but instead will be thrown living (zw nteß) into the lake of fire.<sup>56</sup>

That the two beasts must receive supernatural bodies one thousand years before the rest of the lost will factors into the interpretation of related verses regarding the beast. For instance, part of the rationale for some that the wound of the beast and his return to life cannot be an individual emerges from what they consider the chronology of the judgments as given in Scripture. In reasoning that a resurrection in Revelation 13 could not be a return to life of a human being, Pentecost asserts: “The wicked are not resurrected until the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). If a wicked one were resurrected at this point it would set aside God’s divinely ordained program of resurrection.”<sup>57</sup> Actually, such would by no means disrupt God’s chronology. Yet a slight altering of what is considered the standard chronology of God’s judgment among premillennialists will be necessary to include the unique judgment of the two beasts. However, the specified judgment of the two beasts in Revelation 19:20 often fails to be included when listing the future judgments of God.<sup>58</sup> Revelation 19:20 is part of the greater

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<sup>56</sup> “Some have supposed a discrepancy between the fate of these two and that of the man of lawlessness in 2 Thess. 2:8 (Beckwith), but harmonization of the two accounts of Christ’s return is quite easy. The verb *analei* (“destroy”) used by Paul does not necessarily mean physical death. It can also refer to relegation to the lake of fire because the literal force of *anairo/w* is (*anairo*) ‘I make an end of.’ The agent(s) for casting the two to their fiery destiny is unnamed, but presumably it is He with whom they came to do battle” (Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 397).

<sup>57</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 335.

<sup>58</sup> For instance, while not arguing against the resurrection of the individual beasts, in his chart on the judgments of God, Ryrie makes no reference to the unique judgment of the Antichrist and the False Prophet in either name or with Scripture references (Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 516). Chafer does as well. In listing the different categories of the final judgments that will occur, including those of Satan the demons, he omits any reference to the judgment of the Antichrist and False Prophet (Lewis Sperry Chafer *Systematic Theology* [Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1948] 4:415-18). Walvoord, likewise, in his chart entitled “Major Divine Judgments,” omits any reference to the judgment of the Antichrist and False Prophet (Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, 468). So also the lack of reference to this judgment from his chart entitled “Order of Events of Biblical Prophecy” (ibid., 385).



mystery of God about end time events that were not disclosed earlier in Scripture. Either the Son uniquely judges the Antichrist and the False Prophet at His return in Revelation 19, one thousand years before any other humans, or else the two prophetic characters actually are indeed only symbolic representations of evil systems. Of course the two beasts will be authentic human beings, as their fate indicates:

The fact that they enter into this fate while alive (zw nteß) [*zontes*, “living”] increases the horror of the picture (cf. Num. 16:30; Ps. 55:15) (Swete). This indicates that the warrior-King has captured them alive on the field of battle and sends them off to their eternal destiny in full consciousness and that the two are more than just human, because the rest of the lost will not enter the lake until the judgment of the great white throne (20:12-15).<sup>59</sup>

It would seem that the best biblical option for this required change from human to a supra human condition is Revelation 13:3, which will have occurred three-and-one-half years earlier than Revelation 19:20.

#### Revelation 19:20 as it Pertains to the Descent Out of the Abyss

With the ultimate supernatural status of the Antichrist and False Prophet having been established, at least by Revelation 19:20, the descent of the beast out of the abyss in Revelation 17:8 should be reconsidered. Again, this is particularly true since many of the arguments used for the beast being an empire instead of a person apply here as well. In other words, often the interpretation of Revelation 13:3-4 influences the understanding of 17:8 (and visa versa), as well as the interpretation of Revelation 9:11 and 11:7. Since Revelation 9 contains the first reference to the abyss in Revelation, who or what is determined to come out of it likewise affects the

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 397.

interpretations elsewhere in related passages.<sup>60</sup> However, while in agreement with Thomas and others about the passages that necessitate the interchangeability of the head with whole beast, that is, the king with his kingdom,<sup>61</sup> where part of the rationale for those who interpret verses about the abyss with the inference that no human could ever be in the abyss should be reconsidered. For instance, again in proposing that the beast of Revelation 13:3 is the future empire instead of an individual, Pentecost supports his interpretation, stating: “Satan is called the ‘angel of the bottomless pit’ or the ‘abyss’ in Revelation 9:11, so that Revelation 17:8 does not teach that the head of the empire rose out of the abyss, but rather that the empire itself was brought about ‘from the abyss’ or by Satan.”<sup>62</sup> So also Walvoord: “Only Satan himself actually comes from the abyss. The world government which he promotes is entirely satanic in its power and to this extent is identified with Satan. It is the beast as the world government which is revived.”<sup>63</sup> It is further concluded, “the thing that caused the world to wonder was the rise to power of an absolute monarch over the ten kingdom federation who wielded absolute power.”<sup>64</sup> This reasoning binds the relevant verses from Revelation 9, 13, and 17: The beast returning to life cannot be a resurrection in Revelation 13 because he cannot come out of the abyss (17:8), because only Satan can come out of the abyss (9:11).

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<sup>60</sup> The length of this article does not permit an extended discussion on who is the leader of the demons who come out of the abyss. For supports and presentations for different sides, and his conclusion that Abaddon/ Appollyon is not a reference to Satan but rather to another demon, see Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 26-38.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-59. Daniel’s explanation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream does this same interchange. Nebuchadnezzar was “the head of gold” (Dan. 2:38) in the statue, and yet “after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you” (Dan. 2:39).

<sup>62</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 335.

<sup>63</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 250.

<sup>64</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 322.

However, there are problems with the above approach that need to be addressed. Part of the difficulty of the above position is to explain how the totality of the unsaved world during the Tribulation, who will have strongly rejected God's Word as truth, will even know the abyss exists or be cognizant of any activities related to it. Even if the beast is a reference to the empire, one would not know that the beast descended into the abyss nor that it arises out of it without divine revelation. Humans will not witness anything related to this; such is only a divinely revealed truth. If one rejects the revelatory truth of God, there is no other way to know this happens. Yet the unsaved of the Tribulation will not only know about the beast coming out of the abyss, they will respond in utter amazement after they witness this, as Revelation 17:8 reveals:

The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Also, since it is shown that the Antichrist and False Prophet will have supernatural bodies at the very least by Revelation 19, and most likely in Revelation 13, the same could be argued about entering and leaving the abyss in Revelation 17. In other words the text does not require that Satan be the one uniquely linked with the abyss.<sup>65</sup> It is true that no human could ever go to the abyss; no human could survive the abyss; no human could escape from there—and yet the beast does just that in Revelation 17:8, as Seiss notes:

Ordinary men do not come from thence. One who hails from that place must be either a dead man brought up again from the dead, or some evil spirit which takes possession of a living man.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> One item that needs to be explored by those who hold that Satan is current sovereign of the abyss is the response of the demons of Luke 8:31. When the legion of demons quaked before Jesus, "they were entreating Him not to command them to depart into the abyss." If Satan were the current master of the abyss, it seems most improbable the demons would be fearful of going there. Besides, if Satan ruled the abyss, he could simply send them back out into another field of endeavor.

<sup>66</sup> Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 325.

The resurrected bodies the Antichrist and the False Prophet will have (at least by 19:20) made them suitable for this. If one can endure the final lake of fire, one can endure the abyss. As before this is not Satan's doing; this is God in His sovereignty permitting it, ultimately even causing it. Since the beast and the false prophet have to receive a resurrected body at some point to endure the lake of fire, this is the most feasible option from the information disclosed in Scripture.

Still one important item needs addressing: Revelation 19:20 discloses that “these two [oi du/o] were thrown living into the lake of fire.” Yet it is the beast singular who has the fatal wound in Revelation 13:14 (tou\ qhri ÷ ou) and the beast singular who comes out of the abyss in Revelation 17:7-8:

And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. The beast [To\ qhri ÷ on] that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

Connected with this is one final matter that should be addressed but is often overlooked. Although not specifically stated in the text, somehow the *other* beast which John saw (a†llo qhri ÷ on), the False Prophet of Revelation 13:11, must be included in a supernatural status since the text does not say the beasts (plural) come out of the abyss but rather only the beast (singular). Yet the two are thrown living into lake of fire, not just one. Thomas muses: “The joining of the false prophet with the beast in this doom is surprising, but not completely unexpected, though, because of his evil sign-working powers.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 398.

In attempting to understand this, it is important to remember that the Bible often presents the spiritual realities behind what takes place on earth. Those on earth, especially those who do not accept the revelation of God, only see the physical events, yet the spiritual side is the real reason that the events occur. Just a few of the myriad examples in Scripture include the serpent and the serpent of old in the Garden, showing both the spiritual and the physical realities. So do the events related to the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke 1–2, as well as earthly opponents who lead to Jesus' arrest (Luke 22:1-2) as well as the spiritual opponent (Luke 22:3).

So it is with Revelation 13. Revelation 12–14 is a unique segment within the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 12, God discloses the spiritual realities, totally hidden from the lost world, before the visible events of Revelation 13 occur:

The method of narration beginning at this point differs from anything previous, because it focuses on the secret maneuvers that lie behind the visible conflict to be portrayed under the seven bowls (Kiddle). That future struggle is merely the outworking of a conflict between God and Satan that has lasted throughout history since Satan's fall.<sup>68</sup>

Before the pinnacle of Satan's man of sin emerges in Revelation 13, God uncovers the spiritual truths from which the events will emerge in Revelation 12:

Previously John has predicted the future objectively, but at this point he pauses to focus upon the inner movements that lie behind the conflict that will mark the climax of world history. He points out that the future struggle is merely the climax of a struggle that has gone on throughout earth's history and that what transpires on earth is a mere reflection of the conflict between the forces of God and the forces of Satan.<sup>69</sup>

Chapter 12 reveals the preliminary defeat of Satan as he is cast down from heaven and the following woe to the earth in Revelation 12:7-12:

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>69</sup> Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John*. Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper, 1940), 211-12, cited by Robert L. Thomas, "Exegetical Digest of Revelation 8–14" (N.p.: By the author, 1993) 207.

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.

"For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

To summarize, Revelation 12 includes (1) Satan being cast down out of heaven, (2) the pronouncement of the pending kingdom of Christ, (3) The victory of the overcomers by the blood of the Lamb, (4) the woe to the earth because of Satan's wrath, and (5) Satan's realization that his time is short. By no means will the lost of the Tribulation know of any of these preliminary defeats of Satan, and by no means will the preeminent liar disclose this to the lost world (John 8:44). The world will see only the physical beings and events before them; they will not ascertain the spiritual realities that make the events proceed, and especially not grasp their significance. Simply put, the world at large will marvel at the Antichrist and be amazed by the signs and wonders performed by the false prophet, as the predicted worldwide deception will occur.

Accompanied with this is a distinct possibility to consider: It may very well be that the False Prophet is killed, perhaps at the same time the first beast receives his mortal wound, and that the Antichrist brings him back to life—that is, again, from the perspective of those on earth who will witness this. God will grant these two resurrected bodies, but it will seem to the thoroughly deceived world that the beast performs this by his own divine power. This

harmonizes with the uniqueness of the tribulation as well as the multiple warnings of the deception of that period. Even beyond this it suits Satan's design. Satan does not desire so much world dominion, which he does have to a degree and what the Antichrist will exercise because it will be given to him (Rev. 13:4, 7). Both the beast—and ultimately Satan—desire to be worshiped as God, as seen in the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:9), the worship of the beast and the dragon (Rev. 13:4), and the Antichrist's presentation of himself to the world that he alone is God (2 Thess. 2:4).

Those deceived during the Tribulation will respond to the Antichrist in worshipful adoration, as Revelation 13:8 shows: "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." For anyone who will persuade the entirety of the world's unsaved population that he himself is God must support his claims by overwhelmingly convincing means. The Tribulation will be devoid of both atheists and agnostics. Since the Antichrist will present himself as greater than Jesus, he must at the very least equal what the Bible claimed about Jesus. For instance, when John the Baptist questioned Jesus as to whether He was the promised One or should they look for another, part of Jesus' answer was involved the dead being raised: "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5). For the Antichrist to present himself as God and be believed on by the collective lost, it would not be unexpected that he would bring one back to life (again, as the world views it).

Many have noticed that with Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, a Satanic Trinity emerges:

It will be observed that the Revelation, in relating the second beast to the first, presents him as subservient to the first. He is called “the false prophet” (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), who ministers in connection with the first beast as his prophet or spokesman. We are presented, then, with a Satanic trinity, the unholy trinity, or the trinity of hell: the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet (Rev. 16:13). That place occupied by God in His program is assumed by Satan, that place of Christ is assumed by the first Beast, that ministry of the Holy Spirit is discharged by the False Prophet.”<sup>70</sup>

While often noted, this satanic trinity should not be taken lightly, not should their capacities be automatically diminished, especially with the parameters under which they will operate during the last three-and-one-half years before the Lord’s return. If the Antichrist is supposedly to be God in the flesh and exalted above Jesus, whom the Bible repeatedly presents as raising the dead, it should not be unexpected that the Antichrist will raise the dead at some point. The healing of the False Prophet from the dead would accomplish this. It would also explain the latter’s supernatural status he has in Revelation 19:20. Yet even beyond this, it would answer another matter that must be noted: only Satan and the Antichrist are worshiped during the Tribulation—not the False Prophet. Yet he, too, will have a supernatural body when he is cast living into the lake of fire. That another heals him would also explain why the world will worship the first beast and worship the dragon (Rev. 13:4), but not worship the False Prophet. It would also harmonize with the previously noted Satanic trinity. One returns from the abyss; and one is returned to life in a supernatural form, giving worldwide witness and credit to the one who raised him from the dead and leading the entire lost world to worship him as God.<sup>71</sup>

All this ultimately originates from God. From the world’s perspective, the Antichrist and the dragon accomplish divine acts and are worthy of worship and praise. From the biblical

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<sup>70</sup> Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 337.

<sup>71</sup> However, even with this there is still something that needs to be addressed. Future studies and perhaps an article will consider why the beast went down to the abyss rather than to Hades, which is where lost humanity goes to await the final judgment.



perspective, God alone does and is. In fact, the rise of the Antichrist in Revelation 13 only comes after the preliminary defeat of Satan in Revelation 12. No true dualism exists; only the erroneous perception of dualism by the lost during the Tribulation.

### Conclusion and Significance

The realization that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be judged uniquely and exclusively by the Son in Revelation 19:20 and be mandated by God to bypass the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20 has many far-reaching elements. Initially it permits a much more natural understanding of the language of the Book of Revelation, something which those who hold to the premillennial reign of Jesus Christ frequently emphasize. Realizing that a change from the human to the supernatural must occur for the Antichrist and the False Prophet by this point certainly adds for the possibility that it may be sooner, such as Revelation 13:3 and 17:8. It further explains the worshipful adulation and marveling of the unbelieving masses that is predicted for the Tribulation and how they will respond in abject amazement. Since the lost will respond with abject wonder at the return of the beast from the abyss, it is also evident that they will not be expecting his return from the dead. Having brazenly rejected the truth of God, when the Antichrist returns from the grave, the deceived of the Tribulation will embrace the lie, “with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness” (2 Thess. 2:10-12). This underscores the absolute sovereignty of God in all areas, including even a supernatural return from the dead. Even in the pinnacle of Satan’s reign on earth, God remains fully in control. Although Satan and the

Antichrist will initially take credit for it, this will only come about by God's sovereign doing, something, of course, which the deceived world will by no way acknowledge at that time.

Secondly, we premillennialists should slightly amend our theology concerning the final judgments of God, especially in reference to Revelation 20:11-5. All the unredeemed will appear before Jesus at the Great White Throne judgment; all except two, and this by God's sovereign design and disclosure. This by no means undermines a premillennial understanding of God's judgments. It actually strengthens it in that it allows the text to speak for itself, as God has revealed a unique judgment reserved for two of His unique earthly adversaries.

Thirdly, God being the ultimate source of the beast's return and of the two resurrected bodies in Revelation 19:20 refutes every criticism and concern that Hanegraaf raises regarding the return to life of the beast.<sup>72</sup> Only God has the power to raise the dead, not Satan. The Antichrist does not raise himself; God raises him. Satan by no means possesses creative power; God alone does, although Satan will lie to the entire world about this in the future, receiving worship that is not properly due him (Rev. 13:4). So while it will appear to the unbelieving world during the Tribulation not so much that God has no equals but rather that Satan has no equals, Scripture plainly indicates this is never so. Satan operates only when God allows and only to the degree God allows. By no means whatsoever could such a view be considered a dualism between God and Satan, whereby they exist as competing equals. They are not; they never have been; they never will be, even in the height of the Tribulation and the accompanying predicted deception.

When the unsaved masses respond in bewildered adoration at the return of the beast from death, asking in Revelation 13:4, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?,"

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<sup>72</sup> Hanegraaf, *The Apocalypse Code*, xx.

God has already provided the answer in His Word. The One who is able to wage war with the beast is the One whose attributes have already been delineated in detail in Revelation 1–5, such as Revelation 1:5, where Jesus is presented as “the ruler of the kings of the earth,” which, of course, includes the even Antichrist. Even more so, the One who is able to wage war with the beast is also the One to whom *all* judgment is given. He is also the One who declares, “and I have [e||cw present active indicative] the keys of death and of Hades” (Rev. 1:18), which, by the way, is further evidence the return of the beast from death is not Satan’s doing but solely God’s.