

The Third Member of the Anti-Trinity

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[0 : 00] Well, one morning a couple months ago, I started getting texts from people I know, and they were letting me know that they had received some odd emails from me. Apparently, I had some land in Montana that I was seeking to sell them at a rock-bottom price.

And if you know me, I don't have land in Montana. It's all swamp land in Florida that I'm trying to sell and get rid of. Well, I was sent one of these emails, and upon careful examination, I noticed that the email address had just a couple letters changed.

And so there was an imposter, Mike. And this person who had intentionally posed as me was trying to deceive the people that trusted me in order that they could benefit somehow.

I don't know how. Make a buck. It was really disturbing. It was very sobering in that, oh, there are people out there trying to do that.

We all know about people trolling the internet. Imposters trying to take advantage of people who are unawares. This morning, we're being reminded of a group of imposters, the anti-trinity dragon, the first beast, and the second beast, who are actively trying to deceive people into the worship of the beast.

[1 : 38] The greatest of all imposters is the dragon, the serpent of old. And two Sundays ago, Billy preached a sermon and reminded us that, according to Revelation 12, the dragon has already been thrown down to earth as a result of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

Here's how to think about it. The beginning of the end. He already knows it. His being thrown down is the beginning of his end.

He knows his time is short, and he's furiously waging a war against God and us, his blood-bought people, his saints. And the war that he's waging is a war over worship.

Toothbrushes. They're made for dental hygiene. Light bulbs are designed to help you see at night. Knives are meant to cut.

Cats, nobody knows their purpose. And people are designed to worship. The dragon is waging war, and he has mobilized two beasts.

[3 : 00] This is Revelation chapter 13. Last week, we took a look at the first beast in verses 1 through 10 of chapter 13. It's the Antichrist. It's a false savior gathering for itself followers who marvel at its false death and resurrection.

It's a false salvation. And last week, I tried to make the point that the emphasis seems to be on a false savior of the state. The first beast is the anti-Lamb, the second member of the anti-Trinity. And this morning, we're going to look at the second beast, also known as the false prophet. And what we're going to see is that this third member of the anti-Trinity is the spinmeister of the anti-Trinity.

If the first beast is about just raw power, the second beast is about subtle propaganda. He is in the communication business.

Think about the false prophet, the second beast, as Satan's PR firm that is seeking to spin reality to cause people to worship the beast.

[4 : 29] There is a trans-historical spiritual force of darkness that is deceiving people in order to worship the beast and oppose the lamb.

Did you hear that word trans-historical? And I'm wondering, what does that mean? Here's what I mean by that. This second beast, as well as the first beast, and the dragon, they span history. Trans-historical. From one generation to the next. From one people to the next. Hundreds of years after hundreds of years. And they are manipulating human systems and institutions in order to carry out their purposes in opposition to God.

And this morning, we're going to look at one of these trans-historical forces of darkness, the second beast. You see, it's all about worship.

This war is over the hearts of men and women. Who you're going to worship. And the two options are you're either going to worship the beast or you're going to worship the lamb. And so the call this morning shows up in our verse, in verse 18.

[5 : 42] The call to be wise. To be aware. To be discerning. To know the landscape of true reality as revealed in the scriptures.

What John is doing, he's pulling back on the curtain of helping us to see how things really are. Revelation chapter 12 and 13. It's the theological center of the book.

John is saying, here's the real problem. Our real problem is a spiritual conflict. So we need to be wise.

And so this morning, I want to show you four things. Be wise to what the second beast is like. Second, be wise to the purpose of the second beast.

Be wise to the tactics of the second beast. And finally, be wise to its name. You wonder what 666 is?

[6 : 46] We have a trans-historical spiritual power that is seeking to deceive people and to worship the beast and to oppose us.

And we learn some things about him in chapter 13. So let's be wise to who it is. Look at verse 11. Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth.

You learn something about where they're from. You learn something about someone from where they're from. And what we learn about this second beast is he's from the earth. Now, remember last week I told you that the first beast, he came out of the sea.

And what John is helping us to see is that beast 1 and beast 2, one from sea, one from land, they are the dragon's counterclaim on all of creation saying, it's still mine.

But the dragon's been thrown down. Christ's death and resurrection has thrown him down. The beginning of the end has started.

[7 : 54] And Satan will not relinquish his claim on creation without a fight. So we need to be wise to this serpent and how he operates.

And so the second beast is part of his counterclaim on all creation to oppose God. And notice verse 11 that he's sneaky.

It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. Two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. Does anybody else feel the dissonance of that?

The conflict of that? He looks cute as a lamb but he's got dragon breath. He speaks like a dragon. He spits dragon poison. The second beast, he's an imposter.

Who is the lamb of the book of Revelation? Jesus! He's trying to be lamb-like but his true nature comes out in his speech.

[9 : 10] Dragon speech. Jesus warned us of false prophets in Matthew 7.15. He spoke of wolves dressing themselves in sheep's clothes so that they can devour.

We've got an imposter. Comes off lamb-like but he's really serpent at the core. This is the false prophet.

He's purposed on destruction. And when you see it spoke like a dragon that is a major clue as to this beast's modus operandi.

It's how he rolls. He is in the communication business. He wants to access information and manipulate it for beastly purposes.

That's why the second beast is called the false prophet in chapter 16 verse 13 19.20 20 verse 10.

Here's how to think about it. The second beast is to the first beast as John the Baptist was to Jesus.

[10 : 17] The second beast is going before the first beast to make the way of his anti-lord. And in verse 12 at the beginning we see that all the authority of the first beast has been given to the second beast the false prophet.

He has been authorized to represent the first beast. So if the first beast is power the second beast is propaganda.

Now in John's day when the people who originally received the book of Revelation they would have understood first beast as a reference to the emperor.

At that time it was Domitian. And in every city that this letter showed up to in Asia Minor all those seven churches there was this imperial cult of emperor worship.

and every citizen under the emperor's reign was to worship the emperor once a year.

[11 : 29] Take a pinch of incense throw it on the altar before his image and say something to the extent of you know Caesar is lord and savior. And so they were facing a very specific manifestation of the first beast and they were also dealing with a very specific manifestation of this second beast.

There was this group of people called the Asiarchs the council of Asia. We see them make an appearance in Acts 19. Paul is preaching Christ in Ephesus and God's turning that whole city upside down and the Asiarchs come out to Paul to make an appeal to him.

And what these Asiarchs are they were essentially the keepers of the imperial cult worship city to city. They were making sure the emperor got his due.

They were localized representatives ensuring the worship of the emperor. They were making sure he got his due. And so what is going on in the first century is that the second beast is showing up in a specific manifestation.

He's going to show up in a different manifestation in the 21st century America. This second beast is authorized by the first beast to spin could you imagine Smyrna first century Asiarchs come knocking on your door hey you know what notice you haven't been at the emperor temple this year.

[13 : 13] Listen you don't need to make your Jesus thing in the worship of the emperor thing in either or thing. You don't need to do that. Don't worry about doing that. I'm not going to put you in that position.

You can go about being a follower of Jesus all the rest of your days every year. we just need you to come down to the temple just you can come tomorrow take the incense pinch it throw it in the altar do the do the emperor savior lord thing you just need to do it once go on your way no big deal.

Make it easy on you. Drive through emperor worship. Does that sound kind of familiar? You don't need to make Jesus an all or nothing thing.

We can all be happy here. We're all worshiping the same God. The problem is this. Our crucified and risen Lord requires our wholehearted exclusive devotion and worship to him 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year.

there's no room for this compromise. He is worthy. So the question becomes who's the equivalent of the 21st century Asiarchs?

[14 : 39] Well let me give you a clue. Where is the call to worship coming from in our culture?

Who's saying worship this way? Who's telling you how to think? You should be looking at me. I'm one of them. Based upon this book. Who else is out there making claims? You know what it all boils down to?

It all boils down to who says. Who says that God's word? And we're putting all of our eggs in this one basket of God's word.

His word is authoritative and true and we're going to do what it says. You've got to know that there's a second beast.

[15 : 39] So part of the way I was thinking about this sermon was this. I just want to raise your awareness. There is a trans-historical spiritual force of darkness that is actively seeking to deceive people to worship the beast and to oppress God's people.

But you also need to recognize we've got to be wise to the second beast's purpose. Look at verse 12 again. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence.

To what end? How so? For what purpose? And makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed.

Do you see the end game here? The false prophet, the second beast, is looking to promote the worship of the first beast.

And in so doing, the second beast is mimicking the very ministry and purpose of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity.

[16 : 54] Do you remember in John 16, 14, Jesus tells us what the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit is? Jesus, this is a quote of Jesus about the Holy Spirit, he will glorify me.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to spotlight Jesus. that's what the third person of the Holy Trinity is seeking to do. But what we see going on here is the third member of the anti-Trinity is seeking to spotlight the beast.

So if you were to ask the first beast, hey, what's the purpose of the false prophet? You know what he would say? He will glorify me.

The false prophet. is deceiving people to worship a false savior who promotes a false salvation through a false death and resurrection.

What we're seeing here is the role of the third member of the anti-Trinity and the end game is worship. There's a battle raging.

[18 : 10] You might not have realized it on the drive over with the sun shining and the blue sky, but there is a battle raging for all of the hearts of the people around you. We need to be wise to the beast's purpose.

Third, we need to be wise to the tactics of the false prophet, the second beast. What we see in verses 13 through 17 are four how-tos, four tactics of the second beast to cause people to worship the first beast.

The first one is this. I'm calling them sinister spin tactics. Sinister spin tactic number one. Wonder making.

Look at verse 13. It, the second beast, performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people.

It does great signs. The second beast is out to wow you, to make you wonder, to draw your heart to amazement, to put you in awe.

[19 : 27] You notice it's, he's not making intellectual arguments. He's appealing to your sense of wonder.

It's out to wow people into believing the first beast. How so? Even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people. That's an appeal to 1 Kings chapter 18 verses 20 through 39. Do you remember this? Elijah, he squares off against 450 prophets of Baal and they set the terms of their showdown. You guys get a bull, put it on your altar, I'll get a bull, put it on an altar to Yahweh and we'll call on our gods and if Baal sends down fire from heaven and consumes your bull, we'll follow your God.

But if Yahweh sends fire down onto my altar, this altar, and burns up this bull, we all follow Yahweh, so let's do it. The prophets of Baal said, let's do it.

They go into their crazy cutting themselves and offering prayers and all the while Elijah is taunting them, is Baal going to the bathroom? Where is your God?

[20 : 45] He never shows up. But you know who shows up? Yahweh shows up, he pours out fire and incinerates not just the offering, but everything around it.

So in verse 39 of chapter 18, before all the people, they see it all. And do you know what their response is? Listen, all the people say, the Lord Yahweh, he is God.

The Lord Yahweh, he's God. God. God. The great sign of 1 Kings 18 resulted in the recognition of Yahweh being God.

So the false prophet is taking a play out of God's playbook, imitating one of God's great signs to demonstrate to the watching world that the beast is actually divine or making the claim.

Hence, he's a better savior. here. And in doing so, it's just a sheer act of defiance. I hope you can see, I hope this is making you aware of what the false prophet is capable of.

[22 : 01] He is capable of mimicking great signs purposed to deceive, to lead people away from the lamb.

to worship the beast. What does this mean for us today? Well, it means for us today that this same false prophet operating in first century kind of Roman imperial cult worship, he's operating in American culture too.

He's not done. He's just adapted. here's how to start sniffing this out. In our culture, start asking this question of yourself.

Where are people being wowed? amazed? Where are people being amazed? Where are people saying, unbelievable?

Maybe it's a demonstration of political power. Wow! Maybe it's a demonstration of scientific power. Amazing! Maybe it's a demonstration of technological miracles.

[23 : 12] What else can we do? Maybe it's just you're amazed at the entertainment. It is quite sobering to think though that this even applies to religious demonstrations of power.

It raises the possibility that not all miracles done in the name of Jesus are done in the name of Jesus. That there can be a mimicking to draw peoples away from the Lamb.

So here's what you do. You start asking the question, okay, where's the wow happening in our culture? And then you ask this question, who's getting the credit for it? Who gets credit for that

wow?

And if it's not the triune God, you've got to start sniffing a beast. Because chances are that wow is leading people away from the Lamb.

It's very cunning. It's very effective. And it appeals to our experience. Who's getting the credit?

[24 : 30] the false prophet is able to do what the prophets of Baal were not to do.

We've got to be wise to his wonder making. But there's a sinister spin tactic number two. He's into making images or making people make images of the beast, of a false savior, and a false salvation, of a false hope.

If the second beast wins somebody's wonder, it will seek to capitalize on that by this next tactic of image making. the intent here is to focus someone's worship on something visible and tangible.

Something that you can feel and see. the false prophet wants human beings to make images for their worship and it's not just religious images.

It's any image will do just fine. Thank you very much. Why? Because when you create an image you are moving down the line of idolatry.

[26 : 01] It is establishing this object of worship in your heart. It's like pressing it down more. You're focusing on it.

Here's the thing though. This is just flat out defiance by the false prophet, the second beast.

Because God's word is very clear in Exodus chapter 20 verses 1 and 2.

You will have no other gods before me and you will certainly not make an image of me. The beast knows the human heart. He knows that we want to walk by sight, not by faith.

He knows that we want to see what we believe. believe. To be able to put our hands on it. To measure it.

To smell it. To taste it. Now a prime example of this kind of image making and worship goes back to Daniel 3.

[27 : 10] Do you remember that? Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, erects this 90 foot gold image on the plains of Dura and then he puts this command out, anybody in my citizenry must worship this idol.

And so the kind of band plays and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do not worship this image because they know Exodus 20, 1 and 2.

And you know what happens? They get tossed into the fiery furnace. And God does this miraculous deliverance of them. there's this fourth person like a son of man glowing in the fire.

They went in not knowing they would be delivered. They went in not having a promise that God would deliver them. But this image making and worship is not limited to the 6th century BCE.

It also applies to the 1st century Asia Minor. The Asiarchs, this council, this priesthood of imperial worship, they were insisting that those citizens under Domitian needed to make their annual visit to the emperor temple.

[28 : 32] Cast your incense on the altar before the bust image of emperor Domitian. religion. That's what our brothers and sisters in the first century were facing.

How about us? Certainly there are religious images around today which people end up worshipping. Gold Buddhas all over the place. Shivas.

Even crucifixes get worshiped, become objects of devotion instead of Christ himself. And then it's not limited to religious images. There are political images.

Have you ever seen a shot of North Korea and there's this banner of Kim Jong-un and there are just these crowds fanatically devoted to him?

Apparently worshipping an image. pictures of Lenin, of Stalin, of Hitler, of Mao Zedong, even Uncle Sam.

[29 : 41] They're all designed to generate nationalistic fervor of devotion. It's all ripe for the false prophet.

But I think the false prophet is extremely cunning and I think he has brought a new dimension to the image-making kind of aspect of this in 21st century America.

We no longer make our images. Images are made for us. How we encounter these images is through marketing.

Have you ever thought about it this way? what is the goal of any good marketing firm? Here it is.

Their goal is to convince the consumer that what they really need is the goods and services of the client it represents, whether it's a car company, shoe company, pharmaceutical company, tech

company, or whatever.

In what marketing companies do, they send out images for you to set your heart on and then pine after.

[31 : 05] I want that. You know what they're making a case for? The good life. Here's how you can be happy. I just want to raise this, just to make you aware, it's ripe for misuse.

I'm not calling all marketing evil and satanic. What I am saying, though, is we got to be wise. The most effective marketing campaigns are those that convince you that this good or service, you can't live without.

That's worship talk. Is it possible that the false prophet is utilizing America's marketing prowess for his purposes?

Oh, yeah. I think it's more than possible. I think it's unlikely to draw off people into worshipping the beast, a false savior, the false savior of consumerism, the false savior of materialism.

I'll be good if I just have more. Here's how you find out what an image is doing.

[32 : 37] Idols promise deliverance. false prophet knows that. And so, we have on all of our screens, our phones, our TVs, our tablets, our game consoles, our watches, these are all venues to image.

We're not making our images anymore. anymore. They're being made for us. And placed squarely in front of us.

We got to be wise. We got to be careful. Do you want to know how to find out what an American idol is? And I'm not talking about the show.

Here's how to find out what American idols are. You find a Christian who was raised in another country, and you asked them, hey, brother, sister, where are, what idols, what images do we American Christians worship?

Or just Americans? That's sinister spin tactic two. Sinister spin tactic three is related.

[33 : 59] The false prophet makes images speak look at verse 15. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast.

The image that was made. To give breath, literally, that word breath is the word spirit. To enliven Holy Spirit mimicry again.

What the false prophet does is it gives breath to the images and they speak. We've got all sorts of speaking images confronting us day in and day out, brothers and sisters.

All sorts of images making big claims, and we don't realize how big those claims are. The claims are, this is the good life.

this will deliver you from your boredom. This will really make you happy. Only if you had this. When Brian opened up this morning by reading Psalm 115, I'm not sure if you heard verse 5.

[35 : 20] Let me restart with verse 4. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

Verse 5, they have mouths but do not speak. And so what God is saying there is, hey, you can find out an idol because they don't speak.

And so here we have another act of defiance. The false prophet is making an image speak, confusing those who hear, deceiving them, making them worship the beast.

it's another act of defiance. Are you aware?

Are you aware of all the messages that are coming at you day in and day out through all of the screens presenting all of these images?

Are you aware of that? You need to be aware of that. They're making bigger claims on you than you realize. And you're getting inundated with them.

[36 : 30] What I want you to see though is in verse 15, what is the result of this false prophet giving life to these images and them speaking?

Look at verse 15. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

Apparently, at least in some cases, the false prophet's work of giving breath through an image results in Christians dying.

way. It raises the stakes real quick. His ways are not neutral.

There's nothing neutral out there. What we're talking about now is a kind of persecution that is being propagandized by the false prophet through images.

[37 : 44] And we in the United States, none of us are fearing death today. None of us are fearing being slain because of North American marketing campaigns.

But we have brothers and sisters all around the globe that today they are facing the possibility of being slain for not worshiping the beast.

last week I pointed you to an app through Open Doors. There's another website that you need to check out if you haven't already.

It's called Voice of the Martyrs. And these Christian organizations are bringing awareness to the global Christian community of those brothers and sisters who are facing death and hardship for following Jesus day in and day out.

It's happening all around us. There will be brothers and sisters who die today for being followers of Jesus. Now this should remind us of the stakes of the war over worship.

[38 : 51] This is life and death business. Don't buy what the images are saying. It's not that big a deal. It's a huge deal.

The worship of God is at stake. That's sinister spin tactic number three. Sinister spin tactic number four.

It, the beast, makes its mark. The mark of the beast. We go from wonder making to image making to making the image speak to mark making.

notice the mark of the beast in verse 16 is an equal opportunity marking. Small and great, rich and poor, free and slave.

It doesn't discriminate. All are welcome. That is, all who are not sealed with the seal of God. God. If you're sealed with the seal of God, Revelation 7, you will not have the mark of the beast.

[40 : 08] God knows those who are his. Do you remember in verse 8 of chapter 13, 14, and all who dwell on the earth will worship everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb who was slain.

If you're a follower of Jesus and you are seeking to live for him an uncompromised life, you're in the book of life. You bear the seal of God in 14.

1, it's his name on your forehead. The mark of the beast and the seal of God indicate ownership, mastery, allegiance, ultimates.

So the mark of the beast is its mark of ownership and the seal of God shows up on those who he's bought with his blood. It's who you belong to.

The mark of the beast is the anti-seal of God. it marks those who belong to the kingdom of darkness.

[41 : 21] Is it like a tattoo? Is it a barcode? Is it something you put under your skin? It could be. I think it has more to deal with profession.

I think it has more to deal with how you're living your life. I think it has more to deal with who you are speaking of as your master. And the result in chapter 13 verse 17 of this mark on hand and forehead, if you do not have that mark, if you have the seal of God on you, you will not be able to participate in everyday activities like buying or selling.

The beast's mark is discriminatory. It sanctions Christians. For first century Christians who are part of a trade guild, remember, if you're part of a trade guild back in the first century, you're making dyes, making clothing, making bricks, and your trade guild had a patron god.

And if you went to one of your paid trade guild parties, chances are there'd be a moment of that party where you offer sacrifices to the trade god, and you speak a word of prayer to the trade god, and if you were unwilling to do that, do you know what may happen?

You lose your livelihood. You're out of the guild. That's what our brothers and sisters in the first century were dealing with. What about today?

[42 : 58] Does the name Jack Phillips ring a bell? Jack Phillips is a Christian baker from Colorado, and he was in the news this past summer because he refused to bake a cake for a person, an image bearer, who wanted to celebrate their gender transition.

And he refused on the grounds that he was a follower of Jesus Christ, and he could not in good conscience bake this cake for this image bearer. And he was sued for it.

It went all the way up to the Supreme Court. He won, but you know what was in jeopardy? his livelihood. That was the summer in America.

Ousted from the trade guild. If you are uncompromising in your commitment to Christ, you're going to find yourselves more and more frequently in challenging situations.

You're who's mark do you bear? Maybe you've been told at work, you know, Rick, please, I'm glad you like Jesus so much, but keep it to yourself.

[44 : 20] It has no business in business. And so what those who are not followers of Jesus seek to do is they try to make what's called a sacred-secular split.

They want to say, you can privatize your faith, just don't bring it into public forums. Be happy. It's a compromise. Because we know as Christians, our faith drives everything we do.

I can't disconnect. And so I'm going to pray in my company's cafeteria before I eat. Is it possible that Christians in the United States will have their livelihoods sanctioned by our government for taking moral stands because we're followers of Jesus?

Yes, it's possible. Likely. There's already precedent. If you bear the seal of God, you will not bear the mark of the beast.

but as a result, you will bear, you may bear, the loss of your livelihood. These are the four sinister spin tactics of the false prophet.

[45 : 44] And he employs them in order to make people worship the beast and even punish those who don't. They're deceptive, they're defiant, and they're devastating.

There is a trans-historical spiritual force of darkness that is actively seeking to deceive people to worship the beast.

How do we respond? Verse 18, this calls for wisdom. This calls for discernment. You need to be aware of this.

You need to see what's going on. You need to follow John's lead, and as he pulls back the veil on reality and sees the real conflict going on, we need to see it too. So what's the 666 business?

Well, at a minimum, it's identifying our enemy and saying he exists, it exists, exercising influence.

[46 : 51] 666 means. There are two classic explanations of what 666 means. One is called gematria, and that is an ancient practice of assigning number values to an alphabet, and it results in a code.

word. And if you get the right words, letters, in the right language, you can get the number 666 from the word beast and from the words Nero Caesar.

reminder. It's a compelling explanation. It does have some challenges though. Another explanation, and the one that I lean to, is more of a symbolic value explanation, and that keys on the words, for it is the number of man, in verse 18.

The number of man is the number of six, and you get that number because man was created on the sixth day of creation. creation. Mind you, it wasn't the last day of creation.

That's the seventh day, when God rested, when God completed his work. And so, the question becomes, how is it that the beast is identified with the number of man?

[48 : 16] Well, it carries that sense of incompleteness. If seven is complete, shout out to Rod Stemmler, six is incomplete.

Bear with me, you ready? So, why is six being repeated three times? Well, you know how seven is a number for completeness? It turns out so is three.

So, when you see six, incomplete, repeated three times, complete, here's what it means.

Incomplete, incomplete, incomplete. Completely incomplete.

incomplete. Completely, completely incomplete. Incapable. He can't do it. And ironically enough, we have an anti-Trinity, chapter 12 and 13, the dragon, the beast, false prophet, completely incomplete.

Incomplete. To what end? They don't have the last word. Chapters 19, 20, 21, and 22 are in the book of Revelation.

[49 : 33] Jesus comes back, he hip tosses the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire, and then he tosses the dragon into the lake of fire. fire.

He wins. The number for the Trinity would be 7, 7, 7. Completely complete.

He's in control. The bottom line here is that God is raising our awareness of an anti-Trinity, a sophisticated, complex spiritual force seeking to deceive people into the worship of the beast and oppose the lamb.

But let me assure you this morning, he doesn't win. He doesn't win. God is in control. There are two little phrases in verses 14 and 15.

It was allowed. It was God allows this to happen, to fulfill his great purposes for all of time.

[50 : 48] Suffering is part of our calling for God to be glorified. In closing, let me remind you of this one thing.

If we suffer at the hands of people who oppose us, we got to remember fear. That behind their efforts to hurt us is an anti-trinity who has deceived them.

So we take our cues from Jesus and we pray for those who persecute us. Asking God to give them eyes to see the deception that has blinded them and to deliver them from the captivity of the devil. our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and powers and principalities in the spiritual forces. And we are to stand firm against them.

As people seek to cause us harm, we bless them. Point them to Jesus. We must be wise of who the second beast is, of what his purpose is, of his tactics, even his number is completely incomplete.

[52 : 04] God wins. We must be wise. We must endure. Worthy is the lamb. Let's pray. God, thank you so much for Revelation 13.

God, help us to be wise and to endure. We trust this all in ourselves to you. In Jesus' name, amen.