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Series: For the Time is Near
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I Got Your Number
Revelation 13:11-18

We're in Chapter 13. I'm just loving this study through Revelation. We're in the second portion of Revelation Chapter 13.

My wife, Betina, and I, along with Pastor Chuck and Linda were at a senior/assistant pastor's and wives conference retreat up at Twin Peaks. That was Monday-Wednesday, enjoying some time with other pastor's and their wives. We went through the seven I Am statements of Jesus in the gospel of John. It was just a great time of going through that. But one of the things that I wanted to share with you that was really prevalent throughout the whole event was that all the pastors were basically bringing across a sense of urgency, understanding that we're living in the last days.

You guys know that we just had two earthquakes in Japan, right? And then one in Ecuador. There are other things going on. We have Russia who is provoking the United States. Did anyone see the picture of the fighter jet that flew next to our battleship? It was within 30 feet of the ship itself. There's a picture of it and I'm just in awe. I, having military background, think that thing should've been shot down. Period. Ask questions later. It was too close.

But there are things like this that are happening and all these pastors are saying, "Hey, listen, the time is short. We need to get serious about our relationship with the Lord. We need to get right with Him. We need to walk right with Him. We need to abide in Jesus Christ. We really need to live out this faith because He's coming back soon."

Basically, the prophecies that have already taken place--there's nothing really left except for the Rapture of the church. So, this should move us to understand and come to believe that we're on the cusp of falling into The Tribulation Period.

I know everyone is going through different things and different issues in life, and as we went over last Sunday, the thing that prophecy should do in your life is to prepare you and to give you strength. In fact, as we went through the first few verses of Revelation Chapter 13, the last part of verse 10 says:

"Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints."

We're coming to know that these are the last days. Those saints that are going to be going through the Tribulation Period are called to stand, and stand well with the Lord no matter what happens. No matter if

they're brought before a firing squad; no matter if they're brought before the sword; no matter if they're in prison; no matter what, to endure and have faith. So, what does that speak to us? As far as the church is concerned we are to stand and to persevere, to endure, and exercise our faith with a clear conscience and with clean, pure hands.

With that in mind, this morning we're going to go over the second portion of Chapter 13. The title of this message is *I've Got Your Number!*

Have you ever heard that idiom? Let me put it to you this way, anybody play basketball? Let's say you're playing one on one and you cross them, which means you faked them out. They went one way, and you went the other way and scored. And you turn around and tell them, "I got your number!" What does that mean? Have you ever asked yourself that question? You all basically know what it means, but I'll tell you that it means having the upper hand. It means having some kind of leverage, some kind of control, knowledge, or power over the other person.

Wouldn't you like to have that kind of power, or position, as it pertains to the enemy in your life? Let me be honest with you, we give him too much credit! Many times, it's YOU, it's ME! We're the problem. Satan is not omniscient, not omnipotent, and he's not omnipresent. He can only be in one place at one time. So, no, Satan didn't do it. It was our flesh, it was what we desire, what we wanted to do. It was our own stupid mistakes and choices that we made.

Could it be that one of his minions, the fallen angels, demons did it? Yeah, they're all over the place and they can be affecting you in very real ways. That *can* happen, but listen, wouldn't you like to have the upper hand? Of course, and God tells you that you do have the upper hand. You just need to exercise it. You need to walk with the Lord. You need to abide in Him. You need to know His truth and apply it, and walk in the Spirit that you would not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Now, many times when this statement is made it's just a power grab, a psychological manipulation, or sometimes it's bullying. They're gambling on whether the other person buys into it or not. *I'm gonna go ahead and call your bluff*. Then you realize that they really don't "got you". They were just trying to make it appear as if they do.

What I'm talking about is something that is real, that is possible. In fact, we just sang it in that song: *The same power that rose Jesus from the grave, lives in us*. It's true! The same power that can move mountains lives in you, lives in me if you are truly Christ's. Satan is no match for Him. He's not even his opposite. There are times when this leverage, and having the upper hand is very much real, and it's due to having knowledge and knowing how to use it. It's called wisdom.

There's another saying, and that is: "Knowledge is power." This is true if a person knows how to actually use the knowledge. It's not enough to know *how* to use it, but it's actually using that knowledge, using what you know and applying it to everyday life in a practical way.

I want to just pray for our time together and then we'll continue on.

Father, I think we all are in a place to where we desire to have the upper-hand. We know that Your Word says "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." We know that all things are possible with You. In fact, Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." So, if those are the things that Your Word says, then we can stand on Your Word. I pray that we would

not live lives that are conquered, that are surrendered to the enemy. Father, may we not live looking back, but rather looking forward and up. I pray that You would bring encouragement this morning to each and every one of us, that You would help us to understand that we are more than conquerors with You. We commit this time into Your hands, Lord, we ask Your blessing that You would do a special work in each and every one of us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Just to bring you up to speed, in Chapter 12 we learned about the Dragon, who is Satan himself, the one who was cast out of heaven and thrown down to earth. When he was thrown down to earth he went after the woman, which we know as Israel. Because the Lord had divinely taken her away and hid her, the Dragon was very angry knowing that his days were short he went after her offspring.

Last week, Chapter 13, we went into understanding who it was that rose from the sea, and that was the Beast, or the Antichrist, as we know him. This Antichrist was given the power, authority, and throne of Satan and made war against the saints. It was in verse ten that John writes:

"Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints."

God encourages us through His word to have endurance, and faith through difficult times. But it isn't without having first, knowledge. We continue with that this morning with the introduction of the False Prophet, the second beast or another beast rising out of the earth, during the Tribulation Period. As we learn about the False Prophet, this is the one who will cause the earth to worship the Antichrist.

Last week we know that at the beginning of Chapter 13, the world was already starting to worship the Antichrist. As they were worshiping the Antichrist they were also worshiping the Dragon, Satan himself, whether directly or indirectly, really doesn't matter. What matters is that Scripture tells us they were worshiping the Dragon/Satan, along with the Beast/Antichrist.

False Prophet (vv.11-18)

Great Signs and Wonders to Deceive (vv.11-15)

Now, we go into the False Prophet, or the second beast, that rose or is going to rise from the earth. Let's continue reading in Chapter 13, beginning in verse 11:

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. ¹³ It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 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.

We'll stop there. I want to first point out and go over these great signs and wonders that are performed by the False Prophet. They are all, by design, to deceive everyone who is on the earth.

The first beast rose from the sea, the second beast rises from the earth. As I said last week, we don't know exactly what that means. We understand from Scripture as it references the sea, how it can be powerful, chaotic, and turbulent. So, from that reference to the sea we can basically come to the conclusion that he's

going to come from a time of chaos, from a time when the whole world is going to be yearning for a leader to come to the surface and take the lead, and take care of everything and make everything good.

Now, the second beast rises from the earth and all I can tell you is that we don't know exactly what that means. We just aren't certain about that. We know that they are different from where they come from, their appearance is different. We'll take a look at that in just a few moments.

There is rank and order in the demonic realm. There is Satan; there is the Antichrist; and there is the False Prophet.

The False Prophet will cause the whole earth to worship the Antichrist. So, obviously he is subservient to the Antichrist, we do know that. We also see that the False Prophet will have a lamb-like appearance with two little horns, but when he speaks you will know his origin because he will speak like a dragon. He'll be gentle in appearance, but he will be hellish in speech.

Exercises All the Authority of the First Beast (v. 12a)

In the first part of verse 12, it says:

It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast...

He exercises all the authority of the first beast. Remember how Satan gave the first beast its power, authority, and throne. So basically, this power is being passed along and it's all for specific reasons. It's not just to pass it along to whoever, to wreak havoc on earth. No, it's for a specific purpose.

The Antichrist was given the power, throne, and great authority of the Dragon, Satan himself. We see here that this is now gone beyond the Antichrist to the False Prophet, who is using the power of position and authority on the Antichrist's behalf. The reason he's given this power, this throne, and this authority is to make war on the saints and fulfill Satan's plans of destruction and death upon the earth.

You know, one of the things that we can always see, if there's some kind of destruction, some kind of division, some kind of chaos that is happening, no matter the situation, rest assured that there is deception there. Really when we have questions about situations that seem kind of out of order, whether it be in personal relationships, or things going on at work, the one thing that we can always run to that is sure, is God's Word. Doesn't matter what it is. Put anything in front of me, and if it's out of order I can tell you that God's truth, His word will bring it back into order IF all parties apply it. But if not, it won't work.

The purpose and the desire of the enemy is to steal, kill, and destroy. So, this False Prophet is given this power, authority, and position in order to fulfill what the Dragon laid out. Satan gave that to the Antichrist, or the first beast, and he's passed it right along to the False Prophet, or the second beast. Because in Part B in verse 12, we see the False Prophet's purpose, which is to make the world worship the first beast.

False Prophet's Purpose – Make the World Worship the Beast (v. 12b)

Let's continue in verse 12-B:

and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed.

So, worshiping the one who is bringing war against the saints. You can say that this is the False Prophet's job description and purpose for existing. His whole job is to make sure the Antichrist is worshiped by any means. It doesn't matter how, he's the only one that you are to worship. It's false worship, though.

For you and I, we are designed to worship God by any and all means, in all manner of life. You are to put Him first and no one or anything else. If you don't, you're falling into a deception of the enemy because if you put anything in His place you're practicing idolatry.

So, there's this false religion that is taking place, a false relationship. The False Prophet's job is to make sure that everyone is worshiping the Antichrist and no one else. You would think that with the world being so anti-religion that it would not be given to the worship of any person. What the world doesn't understand is that humans are made in God's image and there is an inclination to worship, but when they reject their Creator they are inclined to worship other false gods that are made in their image.

I can sit down with anyone long enough and pretty soon I can tell you who your God is. Some things come up right away, other things you need to dig a little deeper, but sooner or later it comes up right to the surface.

The world wants a kingdom, but don't want God in it, when He IS It! They want peace and seek it in other ways, not understanding that peace has already come through Jesus Christ on the cross. It's already here! When the ladies are competing for Miss Universe or Miss USA, and they say, "We just want peace on earth." It's already come! His name is Jesus and He died on the cross for you and I, and you can know peace through Him.

How? Performing Great Signs and Wonders (vv. 13-15)

How is the world going to be deceived and convinced to worship the Antichrist? Well, verses 13-15 tells us:

¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 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.

Wow! I mean, I would be in awe! Who wouldn't be in awe? Here's this False Prophet who causes fire to come down from heaven in front of you, at will. That would be pretty amazing! And then this image is erected and the False Prophet is given power to give breath to the image. That is crazy!

Let me remind you of Exodus Chapters 7 & 8. For those of you who come on Wednesdays, you know what I'm talking about, or maybe you've studied those two chapters. That was when Moses was called to be the deliverer of the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and he started showing these signs and wonders before Pharaoh. The magicians of Pharaoh would duplicate them, but all they could do was make things worse, they couldn't make things better. But they could duplicate them. I truly believe that that was Satanically empowered, they were demonically empowered. Yes, they were able to do it for the first few, but after that they had no power whatsoever. In fact, they turned to Pharaoh and said, "This is none other than God's hand." He definitely didn't heed their warning.

In Deuteronomy Chapter 13, God warned the Israelites of false prophets and teaches them to judge the prophet by their message and their works. They both need to come together.

Paul warns about the latter times, in his letter to the Thessalonians:

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.¹¹ Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,¹² in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

These are the people that are already unbelieving. Their desires are completely opposed to Jesus, and anything that has to do with God. They completely deny the Lord, ***"refused to love the truth and so be saved."***

Please turn with me to Matthew 24, we'll be starting in verse 15. I just wanted to read this together. This is Jesus speaking and He's referring to the Tribulation Period and the Abomination of Desolation that's going to take place during that time.

"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house,¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days!²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.²³ Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it.²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.²⁶ So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

In other words, it will be without any doubt whatsoever. They won't have to tell you, "There He is." You will know. Jesus was speaking about the very times that we are referring to here in Revelation. He gives warning. Why? Again, I asked a question last week. Why are we even learning these things? I mean, it is pretty cool, but is it just for the knowledge, or is it supposed to do something? It's supposed to do something!

I know we refer to John, Mark, Matthew, James, and Jude and the Apostle Paul because they were used as instruments by God, but God wrote this. This is the very breath of God right here! Let's not lose that perspective. God is saying this is why! Here's the call for the endurance of the faith of the saints and if you look at the last verse here, verse 18 in Chapter 13, it says, ***"This calls for wisdom..."*** Ah! So all of this to get to that? Yeah! Know the times. Know what we're living in. Know what you're supposed to do in various situations. Why? Because this calls for wisdom, and that is knowledge rightly applied, and it's to the glory of God, that's why.

These signs and wonders, miracles, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of people is absolutely amazing! This False Prophet will have the people make this image that represents the Antichrist, and he'll make it speak and have breath. That's amazing! That would be like having this microphone all of a sudden come to life and start speaking!

He will also be able to cause those who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. The first part of John 10:10 says:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

***There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.*** Proverbs 14:12

Beware! Listen, if you're making stuff up in your own mind, your own philosophy, and your applying it to life...*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.* Just make sure you understand what it says in Jeremiah 17:9:

***The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately sick;
who can understand it?***

"Just go with the heart; Trust your heart." No!! Don't trust your heart. If it's opposed to, or contrary to the Word of God, then please, by all means do NOT trust your heart. *There's a way that seems right to a man.* It seems right, but if it's not according to God's Word, don't do it. You're going down the wrong path. Look to the Word of God, trust Him. When signs and wonders have your attention, God's Word is what you want to most closely cling to. You're going to see Him more and more as the end of days approach.

You're going to see other stuff. It's amazing to me what people are falling for. There are these churches that claim to see gold dust in the air, "the presence of the Lord" showing up in so many different ways, and it does not line up with God's Word. Church, don't be ignorant, okay?

If you don't pull anything out of this morning's message, just get into God's Word for yourself. Know the Word of God because I'm not going to save you. Your spouse is not going to save you. Your children, your parents aren't going to save you. It is God's Word that will save you in situations. Why? Because you are rightly applying it. You will not be easily moved. You will not be deceived. You will not even be weakened as you go through certain things. You will be strong and it will all be to God's glory.

In fact, I've noticed that a lot of people are asking for signs and wonders. And I'm afraid that the enemy has tapped into our conversations and he's providing them in God's stead.

Oh, I hear you. I'll provide the fleece for you. I'll go ahead and tell you what you want to hear. Oh, you want an open door. I'll give you an open door of "opportunity." I can do all kinds of things.

He can make himself to even appear as an angel of light. Did you know that? Did I tell you, "Know the Word of God"? I cannot emphasize that enough. Be students of the Word of God, otherwise, you too will be deceived. We read there in the words of Jesus that even the elect, if it is possible will be deceived; you and I, saints, people who have been saved.

John 16:33 says this about Christians:

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Amen? Amen! So, it's not easy street being a Christian, but it's worth it. I would not trade it for anything.

Economic Enslavement (vv.16-17)

¹⁶ Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave [in other words, everyone; it doesn't matter, it's not a respecter of man], to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

Somehow this mark, that everyone will be required to get, will be on the right hand or the forehead. We don't know what it is, but It's going to serve like a human barcode; it's like an identification chip. We know that without this, as we see here, you won't be able to buy or sell anything. You'll have to have this in order to participate in this universal system. It won't just be able to identify your name and birthdate, but also your qualifications, your bank account information, medical information, even potentially your real-time location. Just in case there needs to be "emergency" services dispatched for you, right? They'll spin it in so many different ways. With chaos increasing throughout the world and economic tension rising, I can see the world buying into some sort of universal economic system that someone introduces as the answer. In that time, nothing will match it, nothing at all.

The Lord is trying to encourage them to stand fast, endure, and have faith. This calls for wisdom.

666 – The Number of the Beast; The Number of Man (v.18)

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

I studied this up, down, and sideways. So, does this number tell us exactly who this man is? Well, I remind you to not look towards trying to identify the Beast because it could point to a number of people. I'll give you the list of people who have been referenced: The Pope or the Papacy, John Knox, Martin Luther, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, etc. In fact, the early church insisted that this was in reference to Caesar Nero. So, the answer is no. You can spend your whole life trying to look for the Antichrist. I would rather you spend the rest of your life looking for Jesus and pursuing and serving Him. I want to bring you through this because it's important.

Then there is the thought that the letters of "Jesus" add up to 888, which 8 is a divine number, new beginnings, and that for Satan, 666 is its counterpart. Now it's not my thought, it's just what came up as I'm going through this. Let me remind you Satan is not the opposite of Jesus. Jesus is God, Satan is not. He's a fallen angel who will be cast out of heaven and has no power that matches Jesus. He's NOT His opposite!

Whatever it truly signifies will be known at that time, and those who are God's people will be able to figure it out. This calls for wisdom! But for now, keep your eyes on Christ. Some of these things are distractions by design. Our obsession and our focus should not be on trying to figure these things out, but to be moved to live today with a sense of urgency and spiritual fervor that serves to advance the kingdom and live to God's glory.

I want to conclude with this: This calls for wisdom! Wisdom is knowledge that is acted upon and so with this said, there are some important things to consider. You all know that sometimes I throw a curve ball at you, right? I think this is probably a little curveball for you.

Gentle in appearance, but hellish in speech.

You heard me cover that earlier. That's how the False Prophet is going to appear. Now, this is not just for the person with a foul mouth. Although, keep in mind, it sounds more intelligent and wise to learn and use other forms of adjectives and adverbs to communicate your feelings. I have spoken with people who on the surface are very gentle in appearance, even their manner of life seems to be very calm, cool, and collected, but their

speech is very humanistic and you can quickly discern that their god is self, humanity itself, or a number of other things. Very gentle in appearance, but out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So, if you spend enough time with someone, it comes out exactly what it is that they honor and hold in high esteem.

You can only have Satan's number IF you have a relationship with Jesus, and are growing in your biblical knowledge of Scripture. Then you are personally no match for him, but God's Word is, God's spirit is, and He lives within you. So, in a sense you *can* have his number. You can have the upper hand. You can have that leverage.

Who are YOU causing the world to worship? The False Prophet will cause the whole world to worship the Antichrist and, in turn, worship Satan. *We* cause the world we influence to think of someone or something when they think of us. Who or what is it? These are things to think about.

When they think of you, who or what do they think of? Is it Jesus, your relationship with the Lord? Obviously, you are a Christian; obviously, you're walking with the Lord; obviously, you live a life of integrity. We are supposed to be as the Bible tells us, ambassadors of Christ, we're representing Him. Are we truly representing Him and pointing everyone to Jesus, or are we pointing the world to something else? Those are all things to think about.

Are YOU looking for signs and wonders to direct your path in life? I warn against that. Don't be looking for signs and wonders. Don't fall into this trap of being superstitious. Christians are not supposed to be superstitious, and yet we can practice it in subtle ways, in ways that seem acceptable. Don't do it. Don't go there! I really dislike the whole open/close door thing.

Do you guys know the only way that the Lord allows us to test Him? It's with our finances. Why? Because your pocketbook is the one thing that is the hardest to part with. It shows where your heart is. He says, "Show me your faith by your finances." A pastor talking about finances? Yeah, because it's Scripture. I'll talk about the Word. So, we test Him in the area of our finances. All other areas you don't have the right to test Him, at all.

Even the elect can be deceived with signs and wonders, according to the Word of God. Remember, God's path is not the easy one, but it is the right one. You *CAN* have Satan's number, the upper hand, so to speak, but it's only if you are abiding in Christ, walking in the Spirit and in truth, and you can only do that if you are His!

I pray that if there's any question about your relationship with Jesus Christ this morning, that today you get it settled, that you understand that He is the way, and the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. Because if He's moving in your life, even right now, and you have any sense of His presence, of the fact that He loves you so much that He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for you, to atone for your sins, something that you could never have done completely, that's why you spend eternity in hell separated from God the Father, because you're trying to atone and pay for your sins, but you never can because you're impure, unholy. But He demonstrated His love toward you, in that while you were still sinners, Christ died for you on the cross. If you don't know a relationship with Jesus Christ, I hope that right now as we close in prayer, that you just confess your sins to Him, repent, ask Him for forgiveness, and then receive Him! Ask Him to be your Lord and Savior. This is just between you and Him. We would love to come alongside you and help you in that relationship, point you in the right direction. I would encourage you to come and tell us about that decision, about what you have done, surrendered to the Lord because all of this that we just learned will come to pass.

I Got Your Number

Father, we again thank You for Your perfect knowledge. We thank You that You do not leave us in the dark. We thank You, Lord, that You don't lighten our load, but that You strengthen these shoulders. You tell us to stand up, to persevere, to endure. You talk to us, not like little babies, but You talk to us as Your children, who are people that are guided and led by, and filled with You. I pray, Lord, that You would strengthen Your church and continue to help us to Your glory. We pray this in Jesus' name, we love You. Amen.