

AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF THE  
'FATAL WOUND THAT WAS HEALED' IN REVELATION 13

by

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'FATAL WOUND THAT WAS HEALED' IN REVELATION 13  
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The fatal wound of Revelation 13 presents a most difficult interpretive problem. While several views have been taken as to its correct meaning, it is the present writer's position that the head wound and its subsequent healing constitute the actual death and subsequent return to life of the future personal Antichrist. This view is first supported on exegetical grounds. The language of Revelation 13:3, 12, 14 speaks distinctly of physical death. Ἐσφαγμένην is used in 13:3 as it is in Revelation 5:6 and 13:8 in its normal sense of "slaughter" or "murder." The use of θάνατος in verses 3 and 12 further emphasizes the fact that the beast is physically killed. The only other possible meaning of θάνατος is "spiritual death," which is ruled out by the context. That this death is the actual experience of the beast is supported by parallel constructions in the New Testament. The one possible exegetical problem with this death language is the use of ὡς. It is demonstrable, however, that ὡς does not require that the vision be cast into the realm of non-reality. This is shown especially by its comparison to the terminology in Revelation 5:6 which affirms Christ's death. The language of resurrection is also in harmony with the author's interpretation. Ἐθεραπεύθη (vv. 3, 12) and ἐζήσεν (v. 14) do not mean resurrection per se, but both may very naturally be used to mean resurrection in this context.

The actual death and resurrection of the Antichrist also finds support in Revelation 17:8-11 and Revelation 11:7. In these passages the beast is seen as existing, then going into a state of non-existence before arising from the abyss, the abode of the dead. This description accords well with the writer's view.

The major objections to the death and resurrection view of this passage are of a theological nature. This interpretation does not violate an assumed concept that God alone can raise the dead. Such a concept makes two unwarranted assumptions: that Satan is the one who performs the resurrections; and that Satan cannot raise the dead. Furthermore, the restoration to life of the beast does not disrupt God's plan any more than any other biblical resuscitation did.

It seems best to see in these passages a description of an actual death and resurrection of the Antichrist. This view does justice both to the text at hand and to the whole of biblical theology and may be justifiably included within God's preordained plan.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most perplexing problems in the book of Revelation is to be found in chapter 13 and centers upon the resuscitation of the beast from a mortal wound. Three times in this chapter, verses 3, 12, and 14, it is stated that the head, or the beast itself, is killed and his mortal wound is healed. "What is meant by saying that one of these heads was wounded to death has been among the most perplexing of all inquiries pertaining to the book of Revelation."<sup>1</sup> A number of proposed answers have been suggested. The most prominent and well-supported proposals are here briefly stated and their supporting arguments summarized.

Some expositors believe the resuscitation described in Revelation 13 represents a simulated death and resurrection of the future Antichrist.<sup>2</sup> According to this view the Antichrist will be imitating the Lord Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, but will experience neither. It will be a masterful ploy to gain political and religious power. Arguments for this view include the following: (1) The use of  $\omega\varsigma$  in 13:3 suggests that actual death is not experienced by the beast. (2) Satan

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, "Revelation," (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, n.d.), p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Walter K. Price, In the Final Days, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 173. Donald William Larmour, "A Biographical Study of the Antichrist in Revelation 13 and 19," (Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972), pp. 27, 30.

cannot raise the dead. (3) Satan, and thus Satan's man, is a master deceiver.

A second interpretation holds that this is the restoration of the Antichrist to health from a serious, but non-fatal, injury or illness. As Ellisen states, "This could mean that he was on his deathbed and in a miraculous way had his health restored."<sup>1</sup> This view draws support from the following: (1) The use of *ὡς* in 13:3 suggests appearance rather than reality. (2) The normal meaning of *θεραπεύω* (13:3, 12) is "to heal" not "to resurrect." (3) *ἔζησεν* in 13:4 can simply mean to "live on" through a dangerous situation. (4) Satan cannot raise the dead.

A third interpretation, and the one followed in this thesis, is that what is described here is the actual physical death and subsequent resurrection to life of the future Antichrist. Boyer is representative of this viewpoint: "In the original of the passage it seems clear that he actually is killed in battle and miraculously brought back to life."<sup>2</sup> The following are usually brought forward in support of this interpretation. (1) The normal meaning of *ἐσφαγμένον* in 13:3 along with the parallel to Revelation 5:6 suggests actual death is experienced. (2) *ἔζησεν* in 13:14 can mean "to come to life" as it does in Revelation 20:4, 5. (3) Revelation 17:8-11

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley A. Ellisen, Biography of a Great Planet, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>James L. Boyer, Prophecy--Things to Come, (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1973), p. 75.

makes it clear the beast dies and returns to life.

A fourth view seeks to identify the beast with the final Roman empire rather than with a person. Thus, the description is of the old Roman empire returning to life and power as a new empire.<sup>1</sup> This is not the usual identification made by premillennialists and as such will not be interacted with in this study. It will be assumed in this paper that the beast is to be identified with the future personal Antichrist. This identification is ably supported elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

It is the purpose of this paper to examine these verses (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14) to determine the meaning of the fatal wound that was healed, and to re-examine this meaning in the light of theological considerations. Interaction with the major viewpoints held by premillennialists will be evident throughout. In this way conclusions can be drawn which are consistent, valid, and biblical.

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>See H. Francis Harwerth, "Identity of 'One of His Heads' in Revelation 13:3," (Unpublished B.D. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1961), pp. 48ff. and W. Lamb, Studies in the Book of Revelation, (Sydney: The Worker Trustees, 1928), pp. 230ff.

## CHAPTER I

### THE FATAL WOUND

#### Introduction

The beast's deadly wound is mentioned three times in John's vision in Revelation 13. In verse 3 the beast is seen ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, as slain unto death. Verse 12 describes the same wound as ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου, the wound of death, while verse 14 calls it τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης, the wound of the sword. Though variously interpreted, each of these terms and the phrases in which they occur point to the fact that the beast experiences actual physical death. Each of these key terms will be exegetically examined below.

#### Exegetical Data

##### \*Ὡς (v. 3)

In John's vision he sees the beast's head ὡς ἐσφαγμένην. Verses 12 and 14 make it clear that it is not just the head of the beast but the beast itself that has suffered the wound. Many interpreters, among them Stuart,<sup>1</sup> Epp,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Moses Stuart, Commentary on the Apocalypse (Andover, Massachusetts: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell, 1845), Vol. II, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Epp, Practical Studies in Revelation (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1969), Vol. II, p. 205.

Andrews,<sup>1</sup> and Lindsey,<sup>2</sup> take the ὥς as suggesting likeness but not reality. In other words the beast appeared as if slain but in actuality was not dead at all. Stuart comments, "The head, as represented by the Apocalyptist, is ὥς ἐσφαγμένην , i.e. seemingly but not actually killed."<sup>3</sup> This interpretation seems to be based on the normal English translation of ὥς as "as" or "as if," a translation reflected in the major versions. Thus, the phrase is translated, "seemed to have had a fatal wound" (NIV), "as if it had been slain" (NASB), "as though it were wounded to death" (AV), and "seemed to have had a mortal wound" (RSV). The idea presented here in this interpretation is that the Beast's cadaverous appearance is an illusion. He seems to have been killed but he was not.

The English usage and understanding of "as" cannot, however, determine how ὥς is used in this phrase. A careful study, in fact, demonstrates that the construction here points to actual physical death. It is to be observed first that "the ὥς corresponds to the Hebrew ׀ and goes with the veiled and visionary language."<sup>4</sup> Here the ὥς is used to convey the idea of a vision and does not cast doubt upon the reality of

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Andrews, Christianity and Antichristianity in Their Final Conflict (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1898), pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup>Hal Lindsey with C. C. Carlson, The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 108.

<sup>3</sup>Moses Stuart, Apocalypse, Vol. II, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup>Otto Michel, "σφάζω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VII, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 934.

what is seen. Neither does the fact that John received this revelation in the form of a vision deny the actuality of what is ultimately predicted by the vision. While ὡς is used to convey the visionary language, and while the Beast (θηρίον) is a descriptive title and symbol for the Antichrist, the vision is still conveying the fact that a literal personal Antichrist will be literally killed.<sup>1</sup>

Even more definitive is the appearance of the exact same phrase, ὡς ἐσφαγμένην, in Revelation 5:6. There it is a lamb "as slain," the reference being to the Lord Jesus Christ as shown by the context (5:9). There is no doubt that actual death is meant in 5:6. Many expositors have even surmised an intentional parallelism between 5:6 and 13:3.<sup>2</sup> There is little reason exegetically to maintain the actual death of the lamb in 5:6 while denying it of the Beast in 13:3. Indeed, "If Christ died actually, then it appears that this ruler will also actually die."<sup>3</sup>

A final reason why ὡς need not be taken as suggesting merely an apparent death is found in A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. There ὡς ἐσφαγμένην in Revelation

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<sup>1</sup>See Paul Lee Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1974), pp. 90-91. J. Barton Payne, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), pp. 42ff., also has a good discussion of literal predictive prophecy conveyed through symbols. He does not, however, view the beast from the sea in Revelation 13:1 as the personal Antichrist.

<sup>2</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 199.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Revelation (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), p. 83.

5:6 is cited as an example of an adjectival use of ὡς.<sup>1</sup> Thus a "lamb as slain" is equivalent in this expression to "a slain lamb." The same phrase in 13:3 could be translated a "slain head." In this case ὡς does not reflect any doubt as to the reality of the death.

It seems best to conclude that ὡς in Revelation 13:3 does not suggest mere appearance but should be understood in light of the same wording in 5:6 as referring to actual death.

### Ἐσφαγμένην (v. 3)

Accompanying ὡς in verse 3 is the word Ἐσφαγμένην . It is the perfect passive participial form of the verb σφάζω . It is translated "slain" (NASB), "smitten" (ASV), and "wounded" (AV). The idea here is not that of a wound but of a slaying. Milligan states,

The true translation is "slaughtered unto death," for the Greek word used occurs, in addition to the present instance, seven times in the Apocalypse, in every one of which it must be translated "slain," or "slaughtered," or "killed." How can it be otherwise translated here?<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, his point is well taken for σφάζω does properly mean to slay or slaughter, usually by cutting the throat, and is used of animals as well as of any killing.<sup>3</sup> Liddell

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<sup>1</sup>William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 906.

<sup>2</sup>William Milligan, Lectures on the Apocalypse, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>George Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised edition (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, n.d.), Vol. II, p. 1738.



and Scott do list one metaphorical use of the term as "torment" but cite only one first century inscription of such usage.<sup>1</sup> The idea of violence is also inherent in the meaning of the word as suggested by the stem σφαγ- from σάσγανον, "knife" or "sword."<sup>2</sup> This is made even more clear by the description of the wound in verse 14 as "the wound of the sword."

The meaning of σφάζω as a violent killing is the exclusive New Testament usage of the term. The word occurs only in Johannine writings in I John 3:12 and in Revelation 5:9, 12; 6:9; 13:3, 8; and 18:24. In I John 3:12 it is used of Cain's murder of Abel. In Revelation 5:6, 9, 12 and 13:8 it describes Christ, the slaughtered lamb. Revelation 6:9 describes the slain tribulation martyrs now in heaven, while 18:24 uses the term with reference to the dead of Babylon. In each case an actual physical death is in view. The 13:18 usage is particularly significant since the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" seems to be set in contrast to the beast of verse 3. It is clear that actual physical killing is the sole meaning of the word in the New Testament. The same can be said for its cognates as noted by Harwerth,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Michel, "σφάζω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, p. 926. Also see R. H. Charles, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, The International Critical Commentary, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 349.

The cognate κατασφάζω is used one time in the New Testament. It is translated "slay" in Luke 19:27. The cognate σφαγιον occurs only in Acts 7:42. There it is translated "slain." σφαγή occurs three times in the New Testament (Rom. 8:36, Ac. 8:32, Ja. 5:5). In each case it is translated "slaughter."<sup>1</sup>

The meaning of ἐσφαγμένην in Revelation 13:3 seems quite clear. The parallel in Revelation 5:6, along with the exclusive New Testament usage of the term requires that it be understood here of a literal violent killing of the beast. This meaning is reinforced by the perfect participial form meaning "complete killing," and so εἰς θάνατον.<sup>2</sup>

#### θάνατον (vv. 3, 12)

θάνατος appears twice in verse 3 and once in verse 12. Its first occurrence in verse 3 describes the extent of the wound εἰς θάνατον. The second occurrence in verse 3 is identical to the usage in verse 12. Both act as genitives of description describing the wound ( πληγή ) and the extent of that wound. The extent of the beast's wound has been debated by many but a careful study of θάνατος leads one to agree with Hoyt that,

The words do not imply that the man was brought down to the very brink of death, and then rescued. They rather imply that the man went through the experience of death. And especially when these words are compared with those describing Christ in 5:6, one must hold that this was death, a death known throughout the world, and therefore a death attracting much attention.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. Francis Harwerth, "Identity of 'One of His Heads' in Revelation 13:3," (Unpublished B.D. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1961), p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Herschel H. Hobbs, The Cosmic Drama, (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1971), p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Herman A. Hoyt, "Apocalypse" (Unpublished Class Syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, n.d.), p. 166.

This conclusion is born out by the lexical meaning of θάνατος. While the majority of uses of θάνατος refer to physical death,<sup>1</sup> the word is also used of spiritual death. These are the only two meanings attributed to the word in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of θάνατος here in Revelation 13:3, 12, in all three instances, is clearly physical death. The references here are entirely within the physical realm. This death is the result of ἐσφαγμένῃν. Spiritual death is not caused by a "wound" but is the inherited condemnation of every human being born into the world. Spiritual death is not received by a blow but is the natural lot of mankind--the second death being the culmination of spiritual death for the unsaved. The beast enters into death (θάνατος) as a result of being slain (ἐσφαγμένῃν), thus requiring that physical death be understood in this context.

Also supporting actual physical death as the correct understanding of θάνατος in these verses, is the prepositional construction εἰς θάνατον. Hoyt cites ten passages where the same construction is employed.

Matthew	10:21	- brother shall deliver up brother to death--
	20:18	- they shall condemn him to death--
Mark	13:12	- brother shall betray the brother to death--
Luke	22:33	- both into prison, and to death--
Romans	6:3	- were baptized into his death--
	6:4	- by baptism into death--
	6:16	- whether of sin unto death--
	7:10	- I found to be unto death--

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Schmithals, "Death," New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, ed. by Colin Brown, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), Vol. I, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 351-352.

2 Corinthians 2:16 - the savor of death unto death--  
 4:11 - are always delivered unto death--<sup>1</sup>

In each of these constructions it is physical death which is in view, not spiritual death. Neither is there any suggestion of possible feigned death. The construction εἰς θάνατον elsewhere in the New Testament is used for actual, physical death and so it should be understood in Revelation 13:3.

A final indication that θάνατος refers to actual physical death can be found in the implicit contrast in verse 14 of Revelation 13. Here it is said that the beast "came to life" (ἐζήσεν). While θάνατος does not appear in verse 14 there is a clear contrast set up here between ἐζήσεν and the beast's prior state which was death. Trench points out that θάνατος is the precise antithesis of ζωή, as long as life is physically contemplated.<sup>2</sup> Ζωή here is clearly physical life as all commentators consulted affirm. So it is that θάνατος is most naturally seen as physical death as opposed to spiritual death. Likewise θάνατος is no more a faked death than is ζωή a faked life, which is inconceivable.

It is to be concluded that θάνατος as used in Revelation 13:3, 12 refers to the actual physical death experienced by the beast. The only alternative meaning, spiritual death, is ruled out by the context, which describes the events

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<sup>1</sup>Hoyt, "Apocalypse," p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Richard C. Trench, Synonymns of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976. Reprint.), p. 93.

in purely physical terms, the prepositional construction in 13:3, and the contrast with physical life. The same three factors militate against any "near death" or "faked death" hypothesis.

While the meaning of θάνατος seems quite well established, the preposition εἰς raises another question. "Εἰς may indicate the goal of the slaying without reference to whether or not that goal was achieved.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the slaying may have been intended to bring death but conceivably did not accomplish that goal. Perhaps it should be left at this, although, since ἐσφαγμένην carries with it the idea of actual death, this prepositional phrase probably should be seen as descriptive of ἐσφαγμένην. If this is the case εἰς θάνατον reinforces the idea redundantly, thus, he was "killed dead."

#### Πληγή (vv. 3, 12, 14)

Πληγή occurs in 13:3 and 12 in the phrase ἡ πληγή τοῦ θανατοῦ and in verse 14 in the phrase τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρης. The word is used in Luke 10:30; Acts 16:32, 33; and 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23. In each of these texts it is a non-fatal wound. However, John's use of the word in Revelation indicates a slight divergence from the other scripture writers. Beside the three occurrences in chapter 13, πληγή may be found in the following passages in Revelation: 9:18, 20; 11:6; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21(2); 18:4, 8; 21:9; 22:18. Minear comments at length on the use of πληγή in these verses.

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<sup>1</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 228.

When one studies the appearances of this term in the Apocalypse, he discovers two things. In the first place, while the RSV translators have chosen the rendering "wound" in chapter 13, every other occurrence of plege (twelve in all) is rendered by the English word "plague." In all these other contexts, the plague is an episode in that war in heaven which overarches the conflicts on earth between the dragon and the messianic community. It is a divinely-ordained and messianically-administered punishment for sin. It is a drastic punishment that spells death in the prophet's vocabulary; such a wound is always mortal. In the second place, the appearance of plege in chapter 13 may all be translated in consonance with the apocalypticist's vocabulary, albeit with some awkwardness for our non-apocalyptic prose. The beast received the plague of the sword and yet came to life (vs. 14); "the first beast, its heads as slain unto death, and the plague of its death was healed" (vs. 3).<sup>1</sup>

While Minear prefers to translate  $\pi\lambda\eta\gamma\eta$  as "plague," which has more severe connotations, there is nothing here that would require that the word means anything more than a non-fatal wound. The versatility of  $\pi\lambda\eta\gamma\eta$  does not allow anything dogmatic to be said as to its contribution to the argument. It should be noted that the use of  $\pi\lambda\eta\gamma\eta$  here does not, however, detract at all from the writer's interpretation.

#### $\mu\alpha\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\varsigma$ (v. 14)

Another indication that the beast experiences actual death is the use of  $\mu\alpha\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\varsigma$  in verse 14. While the instrument that inflicts the wound is not determinative as to the extent of the wound, the word offers some interesting possibilities.  $\mu\acute{\alpha}\chi\alpha\iota\rho\alpha$  is simply a word for sword or dagger

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<sup>1</sup>Paul S. Minear, I Saw a New Earth, (Washington, Cleveland: Corpus Books, 1968), p. 253.

and it may be in this literal sense that it is to be understood. However, μάχαῖρα along with δορυαῖα, another word for "sword," are used figuratively in Revelation and elsewhere as an instrument of judgment (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21; 6:4, 8)<sup>1</sup> and of violent death.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear if the sword in 13:14 is to be taken literally as the actual weapon that inflicts the wound or as a figurative expression for death. It would seem safest to take it literally especially in view of the sacrificial picture of verses 3 and 8. Yet this does not weaken the thought of death being involved. The context itself favors it, as μάχαῖρα is used in 13:10 as a sword of death.

Death is presented in verse 14 more by the picture than by the language. So Lenski argues, "When this fatal blow is now ascribed to 'the sword,' this feature brings out only the thought that the blow was mortal as when a sword splits a monster's head and kills with one stroke."<sup>3</sup> Collins summarizes the whole picture in its context.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, pp. 252-253.

<sup>2</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 497 and Wilhelm Michaelis, "μάχαῖρα" Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 525-526.

<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 408.

Whether this element refers to the actual death of an emperor or to a serious illness from which an emperor later recovered has been disputed. The vivid use of the word "sword" in vs. 14 would seem to exclude the latter possibility. The parallel between the head of the beast which was hos Esphagmenen and the arnion . . . hos Esphagmenon (5:6) would seem to imply that by the head of the beast an individual who had actually died is meant.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary and Conclusion

The description of the fatal wound in Revelation 13 is couched in the language of death. The word ἐσφαγμένην means a violent killing as in the slaughter of animals or as in the murder of individuals. It is consistently used this way throughout the New Testament. The exact same phrase ὡς ἐσφαγμένην is used in Revelation 5:6 in referring to the Lord Jesus Christ whose death was certainly real. The participial form of σφάζω is also used in the immediate context of the passage under consideration. In Revelation 13:8 it is again used of the Lord's death. This term clearly speaks of death and is never used of serious illness or feigned death.

The use of θάνατος also speaks of the reality of the beast's death. Its normal meaning for physical death is employed here and the prepositional construction would seem to complement this. The use of πληγή and μάχαιρα, while not determinative, at least enforce the idea that the beast actually experiences death.

Those who reject this interpretation often lean

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<sup>1</sup>Adela Yarbro Collins, The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation, (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 174.



heavily upon ὥς to claim that this is only the appearance of death.<sup>1</sup> Yet ὥς is to be expected with the visionary language and does not indicate non-reality any more than the ὥς in Revelation 5:6 means the lamb only appeared to be slain. ὥς ἐσφαγμένην may here even be taken as an adjectival phrase with the ὥς left untranslated in English.

The use of εἰς in the phrase εἰς θάνατον does present a problem to the actual death interpretation. The preposition εἰς may allow for the goal of death (θάνατον) not being accomplished. Indeed, from this phrase alone the actual death of the Beast cannot be adequately supported. It does seem just as likely, however, that the phrase is descriptive of ἐσφαγμένην and reinforces that idea. Other arguments for actual physical death discussed herein would seem to make this latter option the preferred one.

Exegetically the meaning of this terminology leans toward that of actual physical death. Seiss states the case very forcefully.

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<sup>1</sup>See Samuel J. Andrews, Christianity and Anti-Christianity in Their Final Conflict, (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1898), pp. 65-66; Theodore Epp, Practical Studies in Revelation, (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1969), Vol. 2, p. 205; Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 103, 108; Moses Stuart, Commentary on the Apocalypse, (Andover, Massachusetts: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell, 1845), Vol. II, p. 278.

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 . . . . A man who has undergone physical death is therefore in contemplation.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the main objection to the Antichrist's death and subsequent resuscitation is not exegetical but in actuality theological. This will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

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<sup>1</sup>J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse, (London: Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., n.d.), p. 325.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MIRACULOUS HEALING

#### Introduction

The beast who is "slain unto death" experiences a miraculous restoration. Verses 3 and 12 describe his fatal wound as being healed (θεραπεύω). Verse 14 speaks of the beast coming to life (ζάω). If the Antichrist has experienced actual physical death as argued in Chapter One, this healing can only mean a resuscitation from the dead. Others have argued that the beast suffers a near-fatal wound from which he recovers. While the writer has already committed himself to the former, a careful examination of the language which describes this miraculous healing will be undertaken below as a check on and a re-examination of the prior interpretation. If what is being described in these verses is the death and resurrection of the Antichrist, a study of the terms ἐθεραπεύθη (vv. 3, 12) and ἐζήσεν (v. 14) should conclusively bear this out or at least be in harmony with such an interpretation.

#### Exegetical Data

Ἐθεραπεύθη (vv. 3, 12)

The aorist passive indicative ἐθεραπεύθη is used in both verse 3 and verse 12 of chapter 13 to describe what

has happened to the wound of death. The aorist indicative is probably used here as a simple past tense to indicate that at the time of John's vision the wound had already been healed and the beast was alive. As to the normal meaning of *θεραπεύω*, it is used of the healing of sicknesses. More specifically Beyer states that it is used, "always in such a way that the reference is not to medical treatment, which might fail, but to real healing."<sup>1</sup> Thus, its general usage would be in reference to efficacious healing. Furthermore, the whole of Revelation 13 is of a supernatural character and seems to militate against the suggestion that advanced medical technology might allow for the resuscitation.<sup>2</sup> An interesting feature of *θεραπεύω* is that it is never used of persons raised from the dead. A person restored to physical life is raised, *ἐγείρω*, or resurrected, *ἀνίστημι*, but never healed, *θεραπεύω*.<sup>3</sup> So Mounce prefers to take *θεραπεύω* in its "normal sense" and interpret *ἔζησεν* in its light, concluding that the beast has suffered a serious

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, "θεραπεύω," trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, in vol. 3 of Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Gary C. Cohen and Salem Kirban, Revelation Visualized, (Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania: Salem Kirban, Inc., 1971), suggest, "Perhaps it will be accomplished by modern freezing techniques??? Antichrist may be stabbed, pronounced dead, frozen, operated upon, unfrozen, given an electric shock-- and then be ALIVE AGAIN! RESURRECTED!" (p. 260). If such were the case the Antichrist's resuscitation would be neither unique nor supernatural, both of which are at least implied in the passage.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew 10:8 gives an interesting contrast, *ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε, νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε*, "Heal the sick, raise the dead . . . ."

illness and recovered.<sup>1</sup> Such an insistence, however, is uncalled for. It is not the beast who is said to be healed but his wound of death. While θεραπεύω is not used of dead persons it is most natural to use it of sicknesses or wounds (πληγή). Had it been the beast rather than his wound that was in view θεραπεύω would not have been used.

The fact is the use of θεραπεύω here does not at all detract from the death and resurrection interpretation of the passage. Technically it is the wound that is healed and not the beast, making θεραπεύω the most natural verb in this context. Furthermore, if the Antichrist is actually dead as suggested above, the healing of a fatal wound results in the resurrection of the dead one to mortal life. Θεραπεύω, while not demanding resurrection, is not incompatible with such a view.

#### Ἐζήσεν (v. 14)

Ἐζήσεν is the word used in Revelation 13:14 to describe the beast's miraculous recovery. It is the aorist active indicative form of ζάω and is variously translated: "yet lived" (NIV, RSV); "has come to life" (NASB); "and did live" (AV). In general ζάω has three primary meanings. It is used of (1) physical life in contrast to death; (2) dead persons who return to life, and (3) supernatural

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<sup>1</sup>Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 260.

living.<sup>1</sup> The last of these may be seen as figurative of eternal or spiritual life<sup>2</sup> and is immediately ruled out here by the fact that the language here is physical, not spiritual, and that the beast could never be said to have spiritual life. This leaves at least two possibilities as to the meaning of ἐζήσεν, both of which have been suggested. The first is to simply take it as it would normally be translated, "He lived." The implication here is that though suffering a mortal wound the beast continued to live, and never passed through the experience of death. The second possibility is that the beast did experience death only to return to physical life, thus the translation, "He came to life."

Both of these uses may be found in the New Testament. Ζάω is used of sick persons revived in Mark 5:23 and John 4:50, 51, 53. It is also used of resurrection from the dead in Revelation 2:8; 20:4, 5 and Romans 14:9, and is essentially equivalent to ἀναζάω.<sup>3</sup> A most interesting phenomenon may be observed in the use of ζάω for resurrection. Each time it is used in the New Testament for resurrection from the dead it appears in the aorist tense as an ingressive aorist. Romans 14:9 reads, γὰρ χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἐζήσεν ("For Christ died and lived again"). Even more significant

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<sup>1</sup>Ardnt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 336-337.

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, "ζάω," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 Vols., trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), II: 865.

<sup>3</sup>Isbon T. Beckwith, The Apocalypse of John, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979, Reprint), pp. 640-641.

are the two other references within the book of Revelation. Revelation 2:8 says, *ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν* ("who was dead and has come to life"). *Ζάω* appears in the aorist twice in Revelation 20:4, 5 where resurrection is the obvious meaning, *καὶ ἔζησεν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χίλια ἔτη . ὁι λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησεν . . .* ("And they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life . . ."). The same thing can be observed in the Septuagint. When *ζάω* is used to mean resurrection from the dead it consistently appears in the aorist tense. The aorist of *ζάω* is used in Ezekiel 37:10 to describe the rising of the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision. It is also used in the Septuagint version of 1 Kings 17:22 with reference to Elijah's raising of the widow's son, and in 2 Kings 13:21 of the dead man revived when he came into contact with Elisha's bones. When *ζάω* is used to mean resurrection it appears exclusively in scripture in the aorist tense. Mounce recognizes the force of the argument and gives balance to it, while differing with the resuscitation view.

In its three other occurrences in Revelation the aorist of *ζάω* means "to come to life" (2:8; 20:4, 5). Even if that were the sense in 13:14, it could be used metaphorically of the return to health from a serious setback.<sup>1</sup>

Mounce is correct. Simply because *ζάω* is in the aorist by no means requires the meaning to be a return to life. Indeed the vast majority of aorists of *ζάω* mean simply, "He lived." But the fact remains that if resurrection is in view the

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<sup>1</sup>Mounce, The Book of Revelation, p. 260n.

the aorist is the only tense of ζάω that is used. The most that can be said is that if resurrection is contemplated the aorist is to be expected.

An examination of those verses where ζάω is used for the restoration of health of the sick reveals another interesting and suggestive fact. When so used the aorist tense is not employed. Mark 5:23 uses the future while the three references in John 4:50, 51, 53 are all in the present tense. One Septuagintal usage of ζάω for recovery from the poisonous bite of the serpents (Numbers 21:9) employs ἐζῆ, a classical form of the imperfect. While the number of such examples is so small as to prove nothing substantively, they might suggest that had recovery from a near-fatal wound been meant in Revelation 13 perhaps something besides an aorist tense would have been used. If this were the case with the Koine Greek it does not draw distinctions in meaning based on tense, but simply affirms that the aorist would normally be used when ζάω was used for resurrection and some other tense would normally be used when referring to recovery from illness or injury.

If restoration to physical life from a dead state is in view in Revelation 13 ζάω could rightly be expected to be in the aorist tense and used ingressively.<sup>1</sup> If

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<sup>1</sup>John Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 270 specifically cites ἐζῆσεν in 13:14 as an ingressive aorist (i.e. entrance into the state of life, thus implying a previous state of death). While Thayer does not state it, it would seem that the aorist tense is normally used for resurrection because it can be used to convey this ingressive idea.



restoration to health of a living person is meant it might rightly be expected to imply another tense. These distinctions cannot be dogmatically maintained but they are at least suggestive that the passage speaks of the death and resurrection of the Antichrist. The use of the aorist tense is at least compatible with such a view. Beasley-Murray delineates the views and concludes with the present writer,

. . . . 'lived' means not 'continued to live in spite of the wound,' but 'lived again after being smitten by the sword.' This is why the whole earth followed the beast with wonder. He had risen from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

Bullinger,<sup>2</sup> Hoste,<sup>3</sup> Lenski,<sup>4</sup> Hengstenberg,<sup>5</sup> Boyer,<sup>6</sup> Pink,<sup>7</sup> and a number of other able expositors concur that this is what the language conveys.

It seems also that there is a marked parallelism here in the use of ζάω as applied to the beast with the

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<sup>1</sup>G. R. Beasley-Murray, The Book of Revelation, The Century Bible, (Greenwood, South Carolina: The Attic Press, Inc., 1974), p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>E. W. Bullinger, The Apocalypse, (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1972, Reprint), p. 539.

<sup>3</sup>William Hoste, The Visions of John the Divine, (Kilmarnock, Great Britain: John Ritchie Ltd., n.d.), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation, (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 408.

<sup>5</sup>E. W. Hengstenberg, The Revelation of St. John, 2 vols., trans. by Rev. Patrick Fairbairn, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853), II:31.

<sup>6</sup>James L. Boyer, Prophecy--Things to Come, (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1973), p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>Arthur W. Pink, The Antichrist, (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1979, Reprint), pp. 50ff.

words spoken of our Lord. Smith notes,

It has already been noted that the phrase applied to the beast, "as it were wounded to death" (Greek: hos esphagmenon), is the exact equivalent of "as it had been slain" in reference to the death of Christ (Revelation 5:6), and so the words "did live" used in reference to the first beast are the exact equivalent of those spoken of Christ--"and is alive" (Revelation 2:8) in reference to the resurrection of Christ. Just as truly as the words applied to Christ speak of His death (by violence) and His resurrection, so the precise language applied to the antichrist can only signify his death (by violence) and his resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Seiss agrees,

Similar phraseology is used in this book with regard to Christ, but all agree that it there means return to life by resurrection after a real bodily killing. How, then, can it mean less here?<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary and Conclusion

The terms ἐθεραπεύθη and ἐζήσεν in Revelation 13:3, 12, and Revelation 13:14 respectively refer to the same event, the resuscitation of the Antichrist. The use of ἐθεραπεύθη is inconclusive since it does not speak directly of raising the dead but rather of healing the wound. The verb θεραπεύω does not, however, rule out the possibility of actual resurrection from the dead and is in fact compatible with such a view.

The use of ἐζήσεν in verse 14 can be seen to contribute to the resurrection interpretation, the verb being elsewhere used of resurrection. The parallelism with Revelation 5:6 and 2:8 further suggests that actual resurrection may well

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<sup>1</sup>J. B. Smith, A Revelation of Jesus Christ, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1961), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse, (London, Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., n.d.), p. 325.

be in view here. The fact remains, however, that *θεραπεύω* and *ζάω* could describe either resurrection of the dead or healing of the sick though it has been suggested that grammatically they might here be more conducive to the former. It must be admitted that how these two words are interpreted must be based upon one's interpretation of the fatal wound (see Chapter One) as much as on any exegesis of *θεοαπεύω* and *ζάω*. Lexically and syntactically both terms will allow for restoration of the dead to physical life. Therefore, if those terms discussed in Chapter One do indeed describe actual physical death as has been argued, *ἐθεοαπεύθη* and *ἐζήσεν* must affirm an actual return to physical life.

### CHAPTER III

#### PARALLEL PASSAGES

At least two passages in Revelation correspond to the Revelation 13 vision and shed considerable light on the subject at hand. In Revelation 17 the same beast, having seven heads and ten horns, appears and an interesting description is given. He is called the beast who "once was, now is not, and will come up out of the abyss . . ." (v. 8a); he who, "once was, now is not, and yet will come" (v. 8b). Similar phraseology is used in verse 11. In addition Revelation 11:7 also refers to him as "the beast that will come up from the abyss." Since Revelation 17:8 also includes this idea of rising from the abyss, it will be the focus of this discussion.

From Revelation 17:8 two arguments might be drawn to support the actual death and resurrection interpretation of Revelation 13. First, a state of non-existence ("now is not") followed by a state of existence ("yet will come") implies death and resurrection. As Roadhouse explains,

Hence he was existent; became non-existent; and then is re-existent. Again, we read, verse 10, "And they (the symbol, "mountains") are seven kings, five are fallen (that is, the lion), the one is (the bear), the other (the leopard) is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth and is of (out of, Gr.) the seven," R.V.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, it is the seventh king who is killed, only to rise again as an eighth king.<sup>2</sup> The state of non-existence corresponds to the death of the beast in Revelation 13:3. The state of renewed existence corresponds to his resurrection.

The healing of the beast in Rev. 13:3 is the renewal of the existence of the same beast in Rev. 17:8; the beast "yet is." This beast that rises from the dead is further described as the eighth king in 17:11. To the writer the only reasonable explanation of Revelation 17:11, in which one beast is said to be both the seventh king and the eighth king or head, is to link this with the actual death and resurrection of "one of his heads" referred to in Rev. 13:3.<sup>3</sup>

The language of existence, non-existence, and existence fits perfectly the death and resurrection of the beast in Revelation 13.

A second clue in Revelation 17:8 as to the interpretation of the beast's wound and recovery is found in the word ἀβύσσου. John describes the place of the beast's non-existence as the "bottomless pit" or the "abyss," the English transliteration of ἀβύσσος. It is from this place that he

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<sup>1</sup>William Frederick Roadhouse, Seeing the Revelation, (Toronto, Canada: The Overcomer Publishers, 1932), p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>For a fuller discussion see, H. Keith Binkley, "Meaning of the Seven Heads in Revelation 17:9," (Unpublished B.D. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1959).

<sup>3</sup>Harwerth, "Identity of 'One of His Heads' in Revelation 13:3," p. 71.

arises to life. Arndt and Gingrich list two basic meanings for ἀβυσσος,<sup>1</sup> the first being the unseen underworld in contrast to the sky and the earth. But it is only the second meaning, the abode of the dead and of demons, that is found in the New Testament. While demons do appear to inhabit the abyss (Rev. 9:11), the primary meaning has reference to "a common receptacle for the dead, with an immeasurable depth."<sup>2</sup> Ford calls it the "pit of death"<sup>3</sup> and Pink the "abode of lost spirits."<sup>4</sup> Unless one makes the beast a demon, which is uncalled for, it appears the beast spends this period of non-existence in the abyss, the abode of the dead. The Antichrist is dead! For the Antichrist to arise from the abyss (Revelation 11:7; 17:8) is for him to be resurrected from the dead.

To rise out of the bottomless pit, is, to John, the symbol of resurrection. It is identical with the healing of the wound of death. Compare Rev. 11:7; 13:3; 17:8; 20:1-3, 7. Wherever we read of a rising out of the pit in Revelation, the renewal of a desolating policy by a resurrected power is spoken of. It is this very fact of the renewal of persecution which proves the resurrection state of the beast to those whose names are not written in the book of life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Herman A. Hoyt, "The Place and Meaning of Death in the Bible Especially in its Relation to Sin," (Unpublished Th.B. Thesis, Ashland Theological Seminary, n.d.), p. 113.

<sup>3</sup>Desmond Ford, 2017, (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1973), p. 154.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur W. Pink, The Antichrist, (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1979, Reprint), p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Desmond Ford, The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1979), p. 293.

Revelation 17:8-11 and Revelation 11:7 speak of the beast's death and resurrection. To reject this one must place himself in the awkward position of denying correspondence between the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17, or, once again, denying the personality of the beast.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Introduction

A careful exegesis of verses 3, 12, and 14 of Revelation 13 indicates that an actual death and resurrection of a personal Antichrist is in view. It remains, however, to consider the text also from a theological perspective. Just as theology grows out of exegesis, so exegesis must be checked by established theology. In this regard some theological objections to the preferred interpretation will be dealt with, since these constitute the major reasons for adopting alternative views. Consideration will also be given to passages and ideas which would seem to support the exegetical evidence.

#### Theological Objections

##### Satan Cannot Raise the Dead.

It has been reasoned that to grant that an actual resurrection takes place here, ". . . would invest Satan with power of resurrection, which is an impossible concession to make."<sup>1</sup> Pentecost voices the same objection in a slightly

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<sup>1</sup>Walter K. Price, The Coming Antichrist, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), p. 145.



different way. Citing John 5:23-29, he states,

The Scriptures reveal that men are brought out of the grave by the voice of the Son of God . . . . Satan does not have the power to give life. Since Christ alone has the power of resurrection, Satan could not bring one back to life.<sup>1</sup>

The tension between what the text says and what most allege to be God's exclusive life--giving power is reflected in the following quote from Ellisen.

These passages strongly suggest that the Antichrist will die and be resurrected from the dead. Such a resurrection presents a problem, however, since only God has the power of giving life.<sup>2</sup>

The usual path taken to avoid this seeming dilemma is to retreat to the view of the beast as representing the empire rather than a personal being. This is Pentecost's choice.<sup>3</sup> Walvoord finds this objection great enough to drive him to a similar position.<sup>4</sup> Others, holding to a personal Antichrist interpretation of the beast, have devised other ways to avoid the dilemma, such as the non-fatal wound/healing interpretation,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 335.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley A. Ellisen, Biography of a Great Planet, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Pentecost, Things to Come, p. 335.

<sup>4</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 199.

<sup>5</sup>Ellisen, Biography of a Great Planet, p. 157 and Walter K. Price, In the Final Days, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), p. 173.

or the feigned death/resurrection view.<sup>1</sup> The insistence that Satan cannot raise the dead appears to be a dogmatic assertion that is based more on presumption and the relative silence of the scriptures than on any positive evidence. Pentecost's lone proof-text, John 5:23-29 does not support the allegation that Satan cannot raise the dead. These verses speak of the final resurrections of the righteous and unrighteous dead and does not apply to those resuscitations prior to them. If they did have application to every resurrection, how could Peter (Acts 9:40) and Elijah (1 Kings 17:21-22) have raised the dead since it was, from all indications, their voices which brought forth the dead,<sup>2</sup> though obviously God was working through them? At the same time there is very little to suggest that Satan can raise the dead. At best there is only a hint in the Egyptian magicians' ability to duplicate the miracles of Moses in bringing forth serpents from their staffs (Exodus 7:12), and frogs from the waters (Exodus 8:7). If Satan, through the magicians, could create life, then the power of

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<sup>1</sup>Donald William Iarmour, "A Biographical Study of the Antichrist in Revelation 13 and 19," (Unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1972), argues with Pentecost that Satan cannot give life and concludes this "resurrection" is a fake, ". . . it is quite possible for Satan to counterfeit the resurrection of the Antichrist, which would cause amazement, for Satan is the master deceiver, deceiving the nations (Rev. 20:3)." (p. 30). If one cannot accept an actual resurrection of the Antichrist it would be much better to accept the text as affirming actual death and resurrection and changing the beast-symbol as Pentecost has done. Better still, it would seem, is the writer's interpretation.

<sup>2</sup>Peter raised Tabitha with the words, "Tabitha arise." (Acts 9:40). Elijah's words over the widow's son were, "O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's life return to him." (1 Kings 17:21).

resurrection might be conceded to him since creation would be the greater miracle. The language, however, is not sufficiently clear as to suggest this was the actual creation of life or simply deceptive slight of hand on the part of Pharoah's magicians. It is probably best to agree with Davis who, in discussing this question, concludes that there is nothing one way or another to prove Satan can or cannot create life.<sup>1</sup> It would presume a bias to conclude on this theological basis alone whether or not the Antichrist is actually raised from the dead.

Probably the answer to this problem can be found in a very significant, though often overlooked, point. The text itself does not indicate the agent of the resurrection. While the power of Satan is certainly in view in the context (verse 2), this does not preclude God as the possible agent of the resurrection. The Antichrist, the Man of Sin, is a judgment of God upon the unbelieving world although Satan is the one who energizes him. Most of the tribulation judgments may be seen as direct judgments of God. While some may involve intermediate agents, God is the ultimate source of all judgment regardless of how horrible they might seem.<sup>2</sup> It may well be, then, that it is God, not Satan, who actually performs the

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<sup>1</sup>John J. Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt, (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1971), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup>Pentecost, Things to Come, "This is not wrath from men, nor from Satan, except as God may use these agencies as channels for the execution of His will; it is tribulation, not only in intensity but also in the kind of tribulation, since it comes from God Himself" (pp. 236-237).

resurrection of the Antichrist, or it may be that God grants Satan this power.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case, God would be accomplishing His own stated purposes,

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness (2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12--NIV).

The objection that Satan cannot raise the dead is a weak objection in itself, and it is no objection at all if it is God who raises the Antichrist to accomplish His own righteous goals. Thus, this objection is not strong enough to warrant the abandoning of the interpretation that an actual death and resurrection of the Antichrist is in view in Revelation 13.

The Wicked Are Not Raised Until the Great White Throne

Pentecost raises a second objection to the possibility of the Antichrist being raised from the dead.

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>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alva J. McClain, "Christian Theology--Dispensational Eschatology," Rev. by John C. Whitcomb, (Unpublished Class Syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, n.d.) describes it as "a resuscitation to mortal life by Satan's power with God's special permission" (p. 86).

<sup>2</sup>Pentecost, Things to Come, p. 335.

Larmour follows the same reasoning,

Revelation 20:11 through verse 15 reveals that the wicked are not resurrected until the Great White Throne. This resurrection of the wicked antichrist would nullify the preordained plan of God for the wicked. Therefore, the actual resurrection from the dead of the antichrist is not probable.<sup>1</sup>

Under scrutiny this objection is not nearly as strong as it might first appear. It should first be noted that Revelation 20:11-15 describes the final resurrection of the wicked for the purpose of Judgment and consignment to the lake of fire. There is nothing here to disallow any prior raising of a wicked person.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, by the same reasoning one could argue that because the righteous are not raised until the rapture or the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5-6) none of those raised by Elisha, Jesus, Peter and Paul could have actually been raised from the dead.

It should also be observed that the Antichrist is presented as an exception to the resurrection of the wicked in Revelation 20. Whereas the wicked are raised in order that they might be judged and cast into the lake of fire, it appears that the Antichrist, along with the false prophet,

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<sup>1</sup>Larmour, "Biographical Study of the Antichrist," p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Pentecost may be struggling here with the term "resurrection." He seems to imply a resurrection of the antichrist would require resurrection in an immortal body. No distinction has been maintained in this paper between resurrection to immortal life and resuscitation to mortal life (to die again). The text itself (Rev. 13) does not make any distinction; it simply indicates he returned to life. Certainly if he was resuscitated to mortal life in the same body only to eventually die again, as Lazarus, there should be no problem with the final resurrection. Furthermore, even if he is raised to life in a resurrection body, as Christ was, the antichrist appears to be an exception (see below).

has already gone through this judgment (Revelation 19:20) and has been in the lake of fire for a thousand years when the judgment of the Great White Throne takes place (Revelation 20:10). The Antichrist apparently does not take part in the White Throne Judgment. If consignment to the lake of fire presumes a prior resurrection, the Antichrist must be resurrected at least a thousand years before the rest of the wicked. If the resurrection of the Antichrist and false prophet are previous to the resurrection of the rest of the wicked they are simply exceptions to the normal order and do not nullify God's plan. This being the case, and scripturally it appears to be, a resurrection of the beast in Revelation 13 would also be an exception and would not set aside God's pre-ordained program. As the exception Antichrist becomes a type of first-fruits of the wicked.

This is not a valid objection to the beast's resurrection in Revelation 13. It assumes falsely that the Great White Throne Judgment precludes any prior resurrections of wicked persons, and it overlooks the clear exceptions to the norm.

#### The Antichrist Is A Mere Man.

A third objection to the possibility of a resurrection of the Antichrist is levied by Pentecost: "since all the references to this individual present him as a man, not as a supernatural being, it seems impossible to hold that he is a resurrected individual."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pentecost, Things to Come, pp. 335-336.

There are noteworthy problems, however, with this argument as well as with its underlying assumption. It is obvious from the way the argument is stated that Pentecost assumes that a resurrected person must of necessity be a supernatural being. He is again confusing two types of resurrections, one to mortal life and one to immortal life. Pentecost seems to assume that those who believe the Antichrist is actually raised from the dead also believe that it will involve an historical person long-since dead, such as Judas or Nero.<sup>1</sup> The text itself simply indicates that the beast returns to life. There is nothing explicit to require a resurrection to immortal life. At the same time, in fairness to Pentecost, this restoration does resemble a resurrection to immortal life more so than a mere resuscitation after the likes of Lazarus.<sup>2</sup> What can be said then? At best Pentecost's assumption is questionable. If this is a resuscitation to mortal life no supernatural being is required. If this is a resurrection to immortal life, a supernatural being may be required. It is upon this unclear

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>2</sup>Note especially the one unique characteristic that the beast's resurrection has in common with the two resurrections which are definitely resurrections to immortality in a resurrection body. Along with Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11, there is here no intermediate human agency. Every restoration to mortal human life (which means the one raised will physically die again) recorded in scripture is by human agency whether it is Jesus, Peter, Paul, Elijah, or Elisha. The one possible exception is the raising of the saints in Matthew 27:52-53. It is uncertain how this is to be classified, although there is good support for a resurrection to a glorified state (see Kenneth Ralph Marken, "The Nature of the Resurrection in Matthew 27:52-53," (Unpublished B.D. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1950).

and questionable assumption that Pentecost builds his argument.

Pentecost's argument is that the Antichrist is presented as a mere man and is not supernatural as would be required by a resurrection. The argument is tenuous for at least two reasons. First, the beast may be presented as a man, but he is certainly not presented as an ordinary man for he performs extraordinary feats (2 Thessalonians 2:3-9; Revelation 13:4-8). Second, the fact that the Antichrist is "presented" as a man does not preclude his being supernatural in some sense. A resurrected man is still a man and may be presented as such. Christ, after His resurrection, was still presented as a man, having the form of a man (John 20:26-27), and exhibiting the characteristics of a man (eating, Luke 24:43; walking, Luke 24:15), yet demonstrating supernatural abilities even beyond those of His pre-resurrection days (John 20:26). Pentecost's objection appears weak on all counts. Better, it would seem, to view the Antichrist as being raised from the dead. It makes no substantive difference whether he is raised in a resurrection body or returned in his mortal body to die again, he is still a man who exhibits supernatural abilities.

F. J. Dake approaches from a different perspective but raises the same objection as Pentecost.



The Antichrist or beast out of the sea of humanity must be an ordinary mortal because he will die at Armageddon (Dan. 7:11; 8:8, 22, 25; 2 Thess. 2:8-9; Rev. 19:20). This would be impossible if he were some man resurrected and made immortal during his second lifetime on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Like Pentecost's argument, Dake's is answerable either way it is taken. If the beast is returned to mortal life there is no problem with his dying at Armageddon, if indeed that is his destiny. It is assumed that Lazarus, Tabitha and the others raised by Christ, the prophets, and apostles also eventually died again. If he is resurrected in an incorruptible body, as Dake assumes, it is true that he would not physically die again. There is good evidence, however, that the Antichrist is not killed at Armageddon. Revelation 19:20 says the beast is "thrown alive into the lake of fire . . . ." Death does not precede this, apparently. Only two verses suggest that the Antichrist is physically killed at the second coming of Christ. The first is 2 Thessalonians 2:8. But here the verb ἀνελεῖ, usually translated "slay," means "to make idle" or "render inoperative."<sup>2</sup> This is accomplished when the beast is cast into the lake of fire. Physical death is not demanded by the verb. The other verse used to argue for the Antichrist's physical death at Armageddon is Daniel 7:11, ". . . the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire" (NASB). Here the beast is clearly

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<sup>1</sup>Finis J. Dake, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, The New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 107.

killed (הָרַג), the context indicating the time of the second coming of Christ. However, in the Daniel passage there seems to be a distinction that is not made in the Revelation vision. The distinction in Daniel is between the beasts which are kingdoms and the horns which are kings (Daniel 7:23-24). In Revelation 13 the beast is the king, the Antichrist. The bearing this distinction has on Daniel 7:11 is reflected by Leon Wood,

Its body was destroyed: The antecedent of the pronoun is clearly the fourth beast, and not merely the little horn. This means that a destruction of the revived empire will be effected as a result of the Ancient of Days' judgment. Since the little horn is a part of the beast's body, this includes his destruction also. According to Revelation 19:20 this destruction comes when he is cast alive into the lake of fire, following Christ's coming in power to overthrow his army, assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12; Zech. 14:1-4). The final phrase of this verse, "given to the burning of fire," may indeed be a special reference to this punishment of him.<sup>1</sup>

So, as with the Thessalonians passage, the physical death of the Antichrist is not required by Daniel 7:11. It is the beast (the kingdom) proper that is killed, not the little horn (the Antichrist). Certainly for the empire to "die" the emperor must be disposed of, but this may be accounted for by his being cast alive into the lake of fire without experiencing physical death.

This objection to the Antichrist's resurrection fails to exert convincing influence on one's interpretation of Revelation 13. Pentecost and Dake insist that the Antichrist

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<sup>1</sup>Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 191.

is a mere mortal man though their evidence for such an assertion is not convincing.<sup>1</sup> Yet whether the Antichrist is an ordinary man or a "super-man" makes little difference in regard to the interpretation of the fatal wound and the return to life. All seeming problems can be adequately answered regardless of which view is taken.

### Theological Contributions

Most scholars note that the New Testament descriptions of the Antichrist reveal a characteristic imitation of Jesus Christ. This is seen first in the title given to him, ἀντίχριστος. The prefix ἀντι- can mean either "instead of" or "against, opposed to."<sup>2</sup> Atkinson prefers the former as the sole New Testament usage,<sup>3</sup> but it may be that both meanings could be presented in ἀντίχριστος. Pink suggests this possibility,

The word "antichrist" has a double significance. Its primary meaning is one who is opposed to Christ; but its secondary meaning is one who is instead of Christ. Let not this be thought strange, for it accords with the two stages in his career. At first he will pose as the true Christ, masquerading in the livery of religion. But later, he will throw off his disguise, stand forth in his true character, and set himself up as one who is against God and His Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Major passages dealing with the Antichrist reflect many supernatural characteristics resulting from an intimate connection with Satan (Rev. 13:2). Note especially Revelation 13:5-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Daniel 11:36-39.

<sup>2</sup>A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933), vol. VI, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup>Basil F. C. Atkinson, The Theology of Prepositions, (London: Tyndale Press, 1944), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Pink, The Antichrist, p. 60. Also see Charles C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 351.

So, while the Antichrist is the antithesis of Jesus Christ in character, opposing God's plan, he deliberately attempts to imitate Christ as a pseudo-messiah. Many writers have noted this imitation motif,<sup>1</sup> and Hiebert clearly delineates it in the 2 Thessalonians 2 description of the antichrist,

Throughout the paragraph Paul describes him in terms that suggest a deliberate parallel to Christ. Each has a "coming" (parousia)--2:9 and 2:1; each has a "revelation" (apokalupsis)--2:3 and 1:7-8; each has his own gospel--"a lie" (2:11) in contrast to "the truth" (2:10, 12). The man of sin claims exclusive homage and worship and will brook no rival (2:4), and in imitation of Christ (Ac. 2:22) will support his claim with "all power and signs and lying wonders" (2:9). As Christ, the true Messiah, was empowered by God, so this Antichrist will be empowered by Satan (2:9). Clearly he is Satan's parody of the true Messiah. While imitating Christ, he will be the complete contrast to the character of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Of particular interest is the parallel language in Acts 2:22 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9, where the working of miracles (δύναμις) is attributed both to Christ in Acts and to Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians. In the case of Christ at least, δύναμις includes the power of resurrection (cf. Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 13:4), which leaves open the possibility that the same might be included in the miracles of Satan in association with the lawless one, the Antichrist. This all points to the fact that the beast will imitate the resurrection of Jesus

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<sup>1</sup>C. Fred Dickason, Angels--Elect and Evil, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), pp. 141ff.; J. Dwight Pentecost, Your Adversary the Devil, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), pp. 66ff.; G. H. Pember, The Antichrist, Babylon, and the coming Kingdom, 2nd ed., (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), pp. 3ff.

<sup>2</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, The Thessalonian Epistles, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), p. 309.

Christ, a sort of perverted Good Friday and Easter.<sup>1</sup> While this points to an intended imitation it does not prove that this actually takes place. However, this antithetical parallelism suggests that the event in Revelation 13 is a parody on the death and resurrection of Christ, a divinely permitted imitation. Just as God providentially permits the beast to receive the worship due His Son, so He will permit the miraculous resurrection that will bring about that worship. Providentially, it is as much in God's holy plan for the Antichrist to imitate Christ's resurrection as it is in the plan of Satan.

#### Summary and Conclusion

The theological objections to the view that the beast is actually killed and subsequently raised from the dead seem to center upon the preconceived idea that Satan cannot raise the dead. It must be affirmed that in the permissive will and providence of God it is ultimately God Himself who raises the beast. Yet there is nothing in scripture that would prevent Satan from being the intermediate agent in the beast's resurrection. Simply stated, this objection has little or no support and does not warrant a departure from the resurrection interpretation of the Revelation 13 passages. The contributions of theology by way of the imitation motif is at best suggestive of intent.

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<sup>1</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 214-215.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has sought a proper understanding, exegetically and theologically, of "the fatal wound that was healed" as recorded in Revelation 13. The author has taken the view that an actual death and subsequent resurrection to life of the beast, the Antichrist, is being described. Primary to this understanding is the language of death employed in verses 3, 12, and 14. Of particular force is the participle ἐσφαγμένην describing violent death, the same form being used of the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 5:6 and Revelation 13:8. There seems no other way to take the word except of actual death. Of perhaps equal importance is the term θάνατος used here in its normal sense of physical death. These terms accompanied by πληγή and μαχαίρης draw a picture that "speaks distinctly of death."<sup>1</sup> Indeed the language is such that were it not for perceived theological problems it is doubtful many would interpret it differently.

The language of resurrection, namely ἐθρασυεύθη and ἔζησεν may be taken any of several ways and are not conclusive in themselves. However, both may be understood as referring to a resurrection and if the Antichrist is actually killed, as has been argued, they indeed must mean resurrection. The

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<sup>1</sup>William Milligan, Lectures on the Apocalypse, (London: Macmillan and Company, 1892), p. 143.

terms are compatible with such an interpretation.

Second only to the language of death in supporting the death-resurrection of the beast is the fact that such an interpretation agrees with the important corresponding passage in Revelation 17. It explains how the eighth king can be existent, non-existent, and existent again. It also explains how he can be both the eighth king and one of the seven (17:11), and accords with his coming up out of the abyss.

This interpretation, furthermore, fits perfectly the beast's characteristic imitation of Jesus Christ with the beast imitating Christ's greatest work. Finally, under close examination this interpretation is not found to be contradictory to any explicit scriptural teaching.

It is to be concluded that the Antichrist, the beast out of the sea, will at a point in his career be actually, physically killed. He will soon after be miraculously raised from the dead to live again and to carry out Satan's program and ultimately God's program for the last days. It is this undeniable miracle which will secure for the beast the adoration and worship of the masses and will allow him to declare himself to be God and to be accepted as such by the world.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation is exegetically sound and, while not problem-free, can be theologically sustained.

Such a conclusion leads one to a greater respect for

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<sup>1</sup>Gary C. Cohen, "The Chronology of the Book of Revelation," (Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1966), p. 269.

our adversary, but even more so to a broader, more encompassing view of our God. It is God who divinely causes the unthinkable to happen; yet it is God who providentially causes this and all situations to bring about His greater glory.



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