

THE EVIL TRINITY RULES THE WORLD

Summary and Historical Background

This chapter exposes Satan's organized effort to control the world through his unholy trinity composed of himself, Antichrist and the False Prophet. Satan will seek to unite the whole world against God and His Christ (Ps 2:1-3). Even though he has failed to kill Christ and has not been able to crush Israel yet, he will not give up. He will use Antichrist and the False Prophet to turn the whole world against God including Israel, so that Christ will have no kingdom to rule on earth. He will make Antichrist the political leader to bring all the nations of the world under his control (13:1-10) and he will make the False Prophet the religious leader of the world to create a religious environment for worshipping him (13:11-18). The False Prophet will make an image of Antichrist and demand all the world worship Antichrist at his image. In turn Antichrist will direct the world to worship Satan. Satan is determined that he will continue to rule the world.

I. The First beast [Antichrist] – 13:1-10

A. His Portrayal – 13:1-3

13:1 – Chapter 12 ended with the dragon in defiant wrath against any Israelite that kept the commands of God and trusted the testimony of Jesus Christ. When chapter 13 opens, he is seen standing on the seashore. A textual problem occurs in the first verse. Some manuscripts read, "I stood" referring to John. Older texts read "he stood" referring to the dragon that was just mentioned in the previous verse. The difference between the two is one Greek letter (*nun, n*) either added to or dropped from the verb, "stood." The difference in the interpretation is not too great, but most Bible scholars favor "he stood," because it fits the context better.

The dragon stands on the seashore to call up the beast (Antichrist) from the sea. The sea was considered a place where great monsters were found, greater than the monsters found on land (Ps 74:13-14; Isa 27:1; Dan 7:3). Here the sea is likely a symbol for the abyss, sometimes translated the bottomless pit, from which John sees a monster-beast raised up by the dragon. This monster that will be raised from the dead is Antichrist (11:7; 17:8). How can Satan do this? He will need God's permission to do it, which is given to him. The precedent for this interaction between God and Satan is seen in the life of Job; God granted Satan permission to attack Job on two occasions (Job 1-2).

The beast has seven heads and ten horns, but in chapter 12 Satan, as a great red dragon has seven heads and ten horns (12:3). This does not mean the beast and the dragon are the same person, but it shows their affinity to each other. Satan and Antichrist will work together like a hand in a glove. The next verse will make this clear. However, a close examination of the location of the diadem crowns on the dragon and on the beast will show the difference between the two of them. The dragon has crowns on the seven horns; whereas, the beast has crowns on the ten heads. The crowns on the seven horns represent seven kingdoms (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the revived Roman kingdom by Antichrist). Satan has used the first six kingdoms in an attempt to destroy Israel, but without success. He will use the kingdom of Antichrist in the future to make his final effort to annihilate Israel. The crowns on the ten heads represent ten kings (and their kingdoms) that will give their allegiance to Antichrist to form an alliance that will terrorize the world during the Tribulation. Antichrist and the ten kings will be the seventh head of the dragon.

On the ten heads of the beast were blasphemous names (cf 17:3). This shows their disdain and disrespect for God, His Son and for Israel, His chosen nation. This irreverence for God will climax in Antichrist, the seventh head on the beast, and he will be more vile than the six heads (kings) that preceded him in blaspheming God and in despising Israel.

13:2 – As a beast Antichrist will have the characteristics of a leopard, bear and a lion, which corresponds to Daniel's prophetic dream in Daniel 7. He will have the swift movement of a leopard, a symbol for Greece in Daniel's prophecy. The swiftness of the leopard referred to the rapid conquest of the world kingdoms by Alexander the Great. He extended his kingdom from Greece to India in less than ten years (Dan. 7:6). Antichrist likewise will rise rapidly from obscurity and in seven years will conquer and rule most of the earth. He will also have the sturdy, powerful feet of a bear, a symbol for Medo-Persia in Daniel's dream. The sturdy power of the bear to kill and devour its prey represented the sturdy conquest of nations under Cyrus the Great for the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan. 7:5). Antichrist will be steady in his conquest of the kingdoms of the world (cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 7:13-14; 13:6-7). Antichrist will have the majestic roar and mouth of a lion, a symbol for Babylon in Daniel's prophetic account. The bite and roar of the lion as king of all beasts referred to the biting words of Nebuchadnezzar as the king of kings (Dan. 2:37-38). His words were fierce and final. So Antichrist's rule will terrify his opponents with his violent words and vicious wars (13:5; Dan. 7:25; 11:36ff).

The dragon will give Antichrist his power, his throne and great authority (13:2). When Antichrist receives Satan's power, he will have the power of the mightiest of all the angels that God created; he will have the power of the god of this world. When Antichrist receives Satan's power, only Christ will have more power than he will have. However, Antichrist does not receive these rewards from Satan without a price. When Satan offered Jesus Christ his authority to rule the nations of the world, he demanded that Jesus fall down and worship him to receive this authority. Jesus refused to worship Satan and said that the only one to worship was the Lord God (Mt 4:8-10). From this it is certain that Satan will demand the same of Antichrist to receive his authority to rule the nations. Antichrist will accept the terms of Satan that Jesus Christ firmly rejected. Antichrist will rule the nations with Satan's authority for 3½ years, but Jesus Christ will rule the nations with His Father's authority for a thousand years.

Antichrist is typified by Antiochus Epiphanes, a despicable Greek king that fiercely attacked Israel about 165 years before Christ was born (Dan 8; 11:21-35). Daniel prophesied about Antichrist's hostility toward God: he would regard himself as god and do according to his own will (Dan 11:36-39). Paul spoke of this person as the "man of sin" or "lawless one" (2 Th 2:3). The "man of sin" will not be known until the Rapture of the Church has occurred. Then the restraining power of the Holy Spirit through the churches will be removed and Antichrist will be able act without that restraint (2 Th 2:6-9).

Although most people refer to the beast as Antichrist, he is never called by that name in Revelation. He is simply called, "the beast." However, John referred to one that would come in the last days by this name (1 Jn 2:18). The term, "Antichrist," exposes his hostile attitude toward Christ. Adding the prefix, "anti," to Christ forms his name. "Anti" has a twofold meaning: (1) "against," which speaks of Antichrist's opposition to Christ and His people (cf. 7:13-14; 13:7); and (2) "in the place of," which indicates that Antichrist wants to take the place of Christ. He wants to rule the world in the place of Christ and he wants the world to worship him in the place of Christ (13:4-8, 14-15). He will do whatever he wants because the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit through the churches will be removed at the Rapture, which will take place before the Tribulation (2 Th. 2:7-8). An indication of his power is seen when the Jews make a covenant with him to protect them from their enemies for seven years. This covenant is an insult to Christ

who offered to save them from their enemies forever and ever, but they spurned His offer (Dan. 9:27; cf. John 5:43).

13:3 – One of the seven heads of the beast was delivered a fatal wound, but it was healed. Some commentators say this wounding and healing has reference to the destruction and revival of the Roman Empire, which will cause people to marvel. However, this does not seem to be correct for several reasons. **First**, the Roman Empire represented in Daniel 7 never really dies. It smolders and then rekindles into a flame in its second phase when the ten horns appear with a little horn in charge of them. **Second**, the beast is treated as a real person in Scripture. The same words that are used to depict the slaying of the Jesus Christ, the Lamb (Rev. 5:6), are used for the slaying of the beast. Also, the beast comes out of the abyss or bottomless pit (11:7; 17:8), which is the abode of some demons (9:2ff). Kingdoms do not descend into the abyss, only real persons do that. **Third**, historians and scholars may be amazed over a revived empire, but the average person in the world is not so moved by such an event that he would worship Antichrist and Satan. But the resurrection of Antichrist from the dead would amaze all people and cause many to worship him and Satan. Satan needs such a miracle as this, but he cannot do it without God's permission. Since he still has access to God at this time, it is likely that he will plead with God to grant him permission to raise Antichrist from the dead so that He does not have an unfair advantage over him, having raised His Son from the dead (cf Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8).

It is better to interpret the death of the seventh head literally. He is the king of a ten-king coalition that dies in battle and goes to the abyss (13:14b; cf 11:7). He is the king of the Roman kingdom in the latter days (Dan. 7:7-8, 24-25; Rev. 17:12-13). He is Antichrist and his kingdom becomes powerful before the Tribulation begins.

Israel sees his power and makes a covenant with him for seven years for protection, possibly from her Muslim enemies, while she builds her Temple on the mount where the Muslim's Dome of the Rock now stands. The signing of this covenant will start the seven-year Tribulation. Antichrist will initiate a great war that will cause the death of one-fourth of the world's population during the first half of the Tribulation (6:1-8). He will conquer many nations, but not Israel; she is his ally.

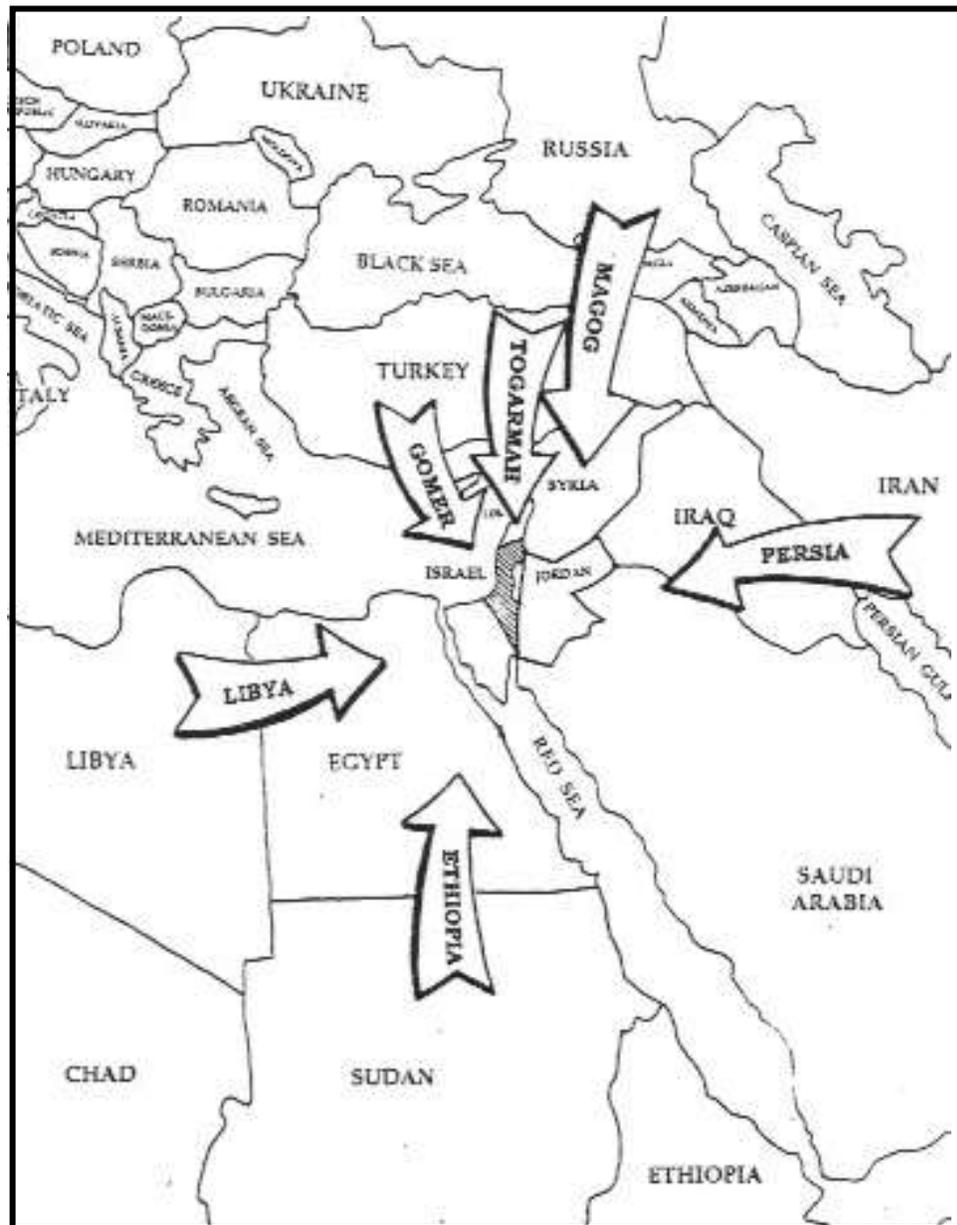
A king of Rosh (Russia?) from the land of Magog north of Israel will attack Israel with his allies: Persia (Iran), Togarmah and Gomer (both are related to Turkey). It appears Antichrist is killed in their attack on Israel. Then the northern king will plunder Egypt of her riches and join forces with Libya and Ethiopia.

While he is in Egypt he will hear terrifying news from the land of Israel, which seems to be the news of Antichrist's resurrection. Whatever the news is, he is compelled to return to Israel to wage another battle. He has no other choice for him and his army to maintain his earlier victory over Israel. This time God will supernaturally destroy this northern king and his allies (Ezk. 38:21-29:8; Dan 11:40-45; Joel 2:20; cf Isa 37:36).

The destruction of the King of the North and his allies will allow Antichrist to take control of these oil-rich countries that attacked him and give him control of much of the oil in the world. This will greatly aid his quest for world supremacy. As a result, he becomes the eighth and final Gentile kingdom to rule the world (Rev. 17:11).

When this happens, he will break his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27). The False Prophet will set up the abomination of desolation (his image) in the holy place and demand that everyone worship Antichrist or be killed (13:14-15; Mt. 24:15). Assuming this analysis is correct, Antichrist's resurrection and the destruction of the northern king and his armies will amaze the world; many will consider him to be invincible, believe he is god (2 Th 2:11-12) and they will worship him. These events will occur at the middle of the Tribulation.

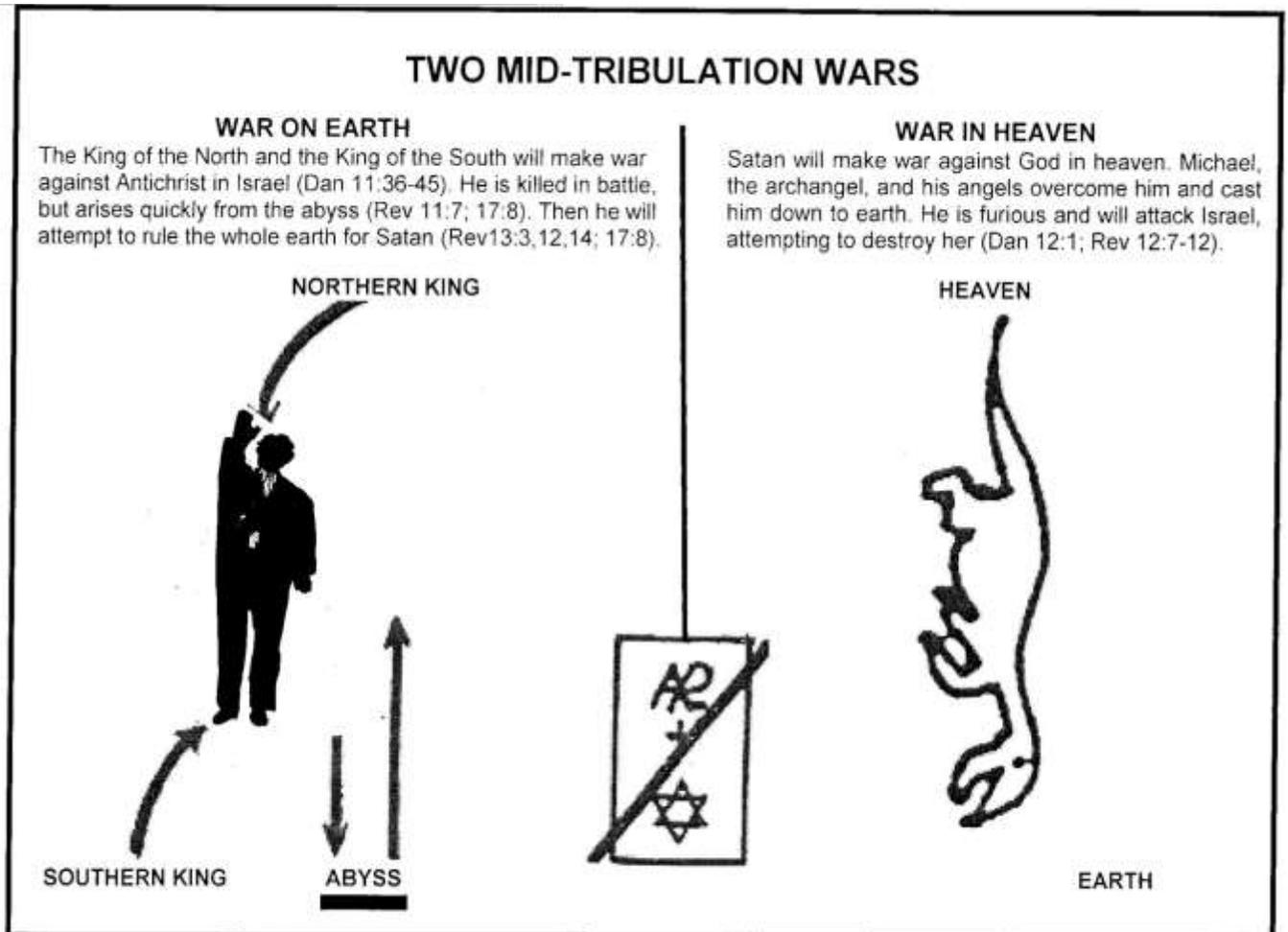
THIS MAP SHOWS A POSSIBLE ATTACK THAT COULD CAUSE ANTICHRIST'S DEATH



B. His Purpose – 13:4

13:4 – When Satan raises Antichrist from the dead and gives his authority to him to rule the nations, the people will worship both of them, but Satan will receive the ultimate worship. This fulfills the purpose of Satan. Whatever Antichrist will do, it must be done for the glory of Satan. Satan will only give his power and authority to a man that he can control. He raised Antichrist from the bottomless pit to amaze the people and win their worship, even if he has to share that worship to some degree with Antichrist. The people will believe that no one will be able to wage war with the dragon and the beast and succeed. It may seem that their evaluation is right when the king of the north and his allies are destroyed shortly afterward. However, they will be blind to

the truth and their evaluation will be wrong. They will not realize that God destroyed them, not the dragon and the beast. God will do it so that believers in Israel and the nations will have reason to worship Him (Ezk 38:16-23; 29:21-22).



C. His Plan – 13:5-7a

13:5 – Antichrist will use his mouth for two purposes: (1) he will speak “great things,” which refers to his intelligence to speak on many subjects that will impress the educated world (philosophy, science, social sciences, humanism, etc.; cf. Dan. 7:8,20,25; 11:36ff); (2) he will blaspheme God (cf Dan 7:8, 11, 20, 25).

Antichrist’s authority to rule the world will last for a mere 42 months, the last half of the Tribulation (cf 11:2; 12:6, 14). Then he will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire along with the False Prophet (Rev 19:20).

13:6 – He will blaspheme God, speaking against His name and His tabernacle, *even* (καὶ) them that dwell in Heaven. Καὶ should be translated “even,” in this verse. Those that dwell in Heaven are not a separate group. They are God’s tabernacle in Heaven (cf Rev 3:12). Antichrist will speak against God and those who belong to God. He will blaspheme God, denying His attributes and claim them for himself. He will not deny the existence of God as atheism does, but he will set up his image in the court of the temple and proclaim that he is god and all must worship him. He blasphemes the tabernacle of God by denying the saints in Heaven any hope

of an earthly Kingdom. Instead, he plans to build an earthly kingdom for himself and for his followers by the power of Satan. He will lead the nations to break God's rule over them and oppose His Anointed (Christ) from ruling the earth (Ps 2:1-3). The world will welcome his blasphemous speeches and will rally behind him (2 Th 2:10-12).

13:7a – He will make war with the saints and inflict severe persecution upon believers. Multitudes will lose their lives as a result of his attacks against them (cf 7:13-14; 12:10-12; 13:17 for comments).

ANTICHRIST CONTRASTED WITH JESUS CHRIST	
ANTICHRIST	CHRIST
Daniel 7:24-25	
7:24 Conquers three kings	Conquers all kings [Rev 19:16; Ps 2:6-9]
7:25 Blasphemes God	Blesses God [Jn 17:25-26]
7:25 Wears out the saints	Strengthens the saints [Phil 4:13]
7:25 Tries to change God's times and laws	Fulfills God's times and laws [Mt 5:17-18]
Daniel 11:36-39	
11:36 Does his own will	Does His Father's will [Jn 4:34; 6:38; Heb 10:5-7]
11:36 Exalts himself	Humbles Himself [2 Cor 8:9]
11:36 Blasphemes God [Dan 7:25]	Blesses God [Jn 11:41-42]
11:37 Rejects all gods	Is the true God [1 Jn 5:20]
11:37 Regards not the desire of women [Christ]	Is the desire of women [Lk 2:26-45]
11:37 Magnifies himself above all gods	Magnifies Himself above Antichrist [Rev 19:19-20]
11:38 Honors the 'god of fortresses' [god of war]	Honors the God of all nations (His Father) Ps 2:1-9
11:38 Gives his wealth to strengthen his army	Gives His life to save His people [Heb 2:9-18]
11:39 Attacks strongholds by his 'god' [army]	Attacks Antichrist by His Word [Rev 19:15-21]
11:39 Makes leaders of wicked men [2 Th 2:9-10]	Makes leaders of godly men [Jn 15:16,19]
11:39 Gives land to followers for a bribe	Gives cities to followers for loyalty [Lk 19:11-27]
2 Thessalonians 2:3-12	
2:3 Is the man of sin	Is the man without sin [1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5]
2:3 Is the son of perdition [destruction]	Is the Son of salvation [Jn 20:31]
2:4 Works against God	Works for God [Jn 9:4]
2:4 Exalts himself [Dan 11:36]	Humbles Himself [Phil 2:8]
2:4 Sits in the temple of God	Is the temple of God [Rev 21:22]
2:4 Professes he is God	Proves He is God [Jn 1:1-2; Heb 1:6-8]
2:8 Is wicked [lawless]	Is holy [Act 2:27; 3:14; 4:27; Rev 3:7]
2:9 Works by Satan's power	Works by God's power [Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-22]
2:10-12 Destroys people by his deceit	Saves people by His truth [Jn 8:31,32,36]
Revelation 13:1-10	
13:2 Receives power from Satan [2 Th 2:9]	Receives power from God [Dan 7:13-14]
13:3 Is wounded to death [in a battle?]	Is crucified to death [for our sins [1 Pet 2:24]
13:3 Is healed; comes up from the pit [Rev 11:7]	Is raised; comes down from above [Rev 19:11-13]
13:3 Amazes the world	Afflicts the world [Mt 10:34-37]
13:4,8 Is worshipped by the world	Is despised by the world [Isa 53:3; Act 3:14-15]
13:5,6 Blasphemes God [Dan 7:25; 11:36]	Blesses us [Tit 2:14]
13:7 Makes war with the saints	Makes peace with the sinners [2 Cor 5:18-21]
13:7,[5] Rules the world for 42 months	Rules the world for 1000 years [Rev 20:4,6]
13:10 Will be cast down [Rev 19:20]	Will be lifted up [Phil 2:9-11]

D. His Power – 13:7b-10

13:7b – Satan will give his authoritative power to Antichrist over all people of the earth. At the end of the Tribulation, God will send Jesus Christ to remove this power that Satan gave to Antichrist. Christ then will reclaim the earth for Himself and establish righteousness. But until Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, Antichrist will have authoritative power over the world. He will have the ability to rule with the power that mighty kings have coveted. He will use his power to promote himself and Satan.

13:8 – The worshippers are those who dwell on the earth, a phrase that refers to the ungodly here and other places in Revelation (3:10; 6:10; 11:10; 13:8; 13:12; 17:2, 8). They refuse Christ as their Savior and will worship Antichrist because he opposes Christ just as they do. They do not have their names in the Lamb's book of life (cf Rev. 3:5 for comments). Notice the contrast between God's people that dwell in Heaven (13: 6) with Satan's people that dwell on the earth (13:8).

The Lamb is a reference to Jesus; He is called by this name 28 times in Revelation. It was the plan of God to have Him crucified to save people from their sins, even before He created the world (1 Pet. 1:19-20). God knew that man would sin even before He made him, so He had a plan ready to save sinners.

13:9 – God urges everyone to listen to Him about His justice in retribution.

13:10 – His retribution applies to Antichrist. He led people into captivity, so he will go into captivity (in the Lake of Fire). He put people to death in war, so his life will end on earth in war. This also is the thought of Daniel 9:27. This principle of divine retribution is shared with Tribulation believers to encourage them to remain steadfast in their faith in God. He will put down the wicked rule of Antichrist and will set up the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. This principle also will help believers in other types of persecution.

II. The Second Beast [the False Prophet] – 13:11-18**A. His Portrayal – 13:11**

13:11 – “Another” beast is introduced. There are two words for “another” in the Greek language. One means “another of the same kind,” and the other means “another of a different kind.” The False Prophet is another of the same kind of character as Antichrist. Two different kinds of fruit illustrate this concept. Two apples are “another” of the same kind of fruit. An apple and an orange are “another” of a different kind of fruit. However, this beast comes out of the earth, which is in contrast to Antichrist, who comes out of the sea (13:1). This may show that he is inferior to the first beast, since land animals were considered less fierce than the monsters of the sea. He is identified as the False Prophet (Rev 16:13; 19:10; 20:10).

He is compared to a lamb which indicates his relationship to religion (lambs were used as sacrifices). Since his mission is to cause people to worship Antichrist, he is a religious leader. The horns like a lamb give him the appearance of being harmless (Matt. 7:15), but his true character is revealed by his speech, which is as a dragon (Matt. 24:24). His two horns may represent the religious and political power that he will have during the last half of the Tribulation. He will assist the political objectives of Antichrist and will promote the people's worship of him at the image that he will construct. The Two Witnesses will minister at that same time and they will promote the worship of God. Both the False Prophet and the Two Witnesses will produce mighty miracles as a part of their ministry.

B. His Purpose – 13:12

13:12 – The False Prophet’s authority comes from Antichrist and Satan. He will use his authority to cause those who dwell in the earth (unbelievers) to worship Antichrist. He will be the vilest of all false prophets of all time (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

C. His Plan – 13:13-18**1. Deceives People by his Miracles – 13:13-15**

13:13 – He will produce many mighty miracles (the verb is in the present tense showing repeated activity). He will call fire down from heaven like God’s prophets (cf 2 Kings 1:10-12; Rev. 11:5).

13:14 – His plan is to deceive those who dwell on the earth (cf. 13:8). He will use his power to produce miracles in the presence of Antichrist and promote the worship of Antichrist as god (2 Th 2:8-12; 2 Tim 4:3-4). These earth dwellers (unsaved) will believe his lie.

He will tell the earth dwellers to make an image of Antichrist, who was killed by the sword (possibly in the battle with the king of the north), but was raised from the abyss to live on the earth again. False religions require an image or a picture for people to worship (Ps 115). This image is reminiscent of the one that Nebuchadnezzar made for the leaders of his people to worship in his presence (Dan. 3). Worshippers of the true God cannot have an image made of Him, because He is a spirit and any image would be a misrepresentation of Him. Instead they have the Holy Spirit to teach them how to worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).

13:15 – The false prophet will give life (breath) to the image. The word “life” is more accurately translated breath or spirit and may indicate that an evil spirit will give the appearance of life to the image. It will speak to the people and kill those who do not worship it (cf. Dan. 3). This will amaze the people of the world and cause them to have deep respect for it. However, there will be many that will not worship the image including the 144,000, the Jews that flee to the wilderness, the two witnesses and a great multitude of Gentiles (Rev 7:9-17). These believers that escape death during the Tribulation will enter Christ’s kingdom in their natural bodies to repopulate the earth.

2. Demands People Receive the Mark – 13:16-18

13:16-17 – All classes of people will be coerced to receive the mark of Antichrist on his right hand or on his forehead or be killed. People of low society or high society, people with many possessions or few possessions and people who are free or slaves must have this mark to be able to buy or sell. Anyone involved in business will be required to have this mark. People will need the mark to buy food, clothes and other necessities of life. By this means he will control the lives of people. There has been much speculation concerning the exact nature of this mark but Scripture reveals: (1) it will be conspicuous on the right hand or forehead; (2) it will be necessary to buy or sell products; and (3) it will identify Antichrist’s ownership of them. God also will put a mark on the 144,000 Jews that will witness for Him during the last half of the Tribulation (cf. 7:1-8).

13:18 – The mark is Antichrist’s name and number that a wise person will be able to decipher in the end-time (13:17). His number is six hundred sixty-six. Speculation has produced a multitude of ideas concerning this number, but it is doubtful anyone will get it right until Antichrist rules the

world. Six is the number of a man, one short of seven, which is the number of perfection; but the wise person is told to count the number. The ancient system of assigning numerical values to letters of the alphabet is called "gematria." But, without knowing the exact value assigned to each letter, it is futile to speculate on the identity of the Antichrist until the end-time. It seems that no one will know who he is before the Rapture.

This chapter gives the most detail of the two "beasts" that will work with Satan during the Tribulation.



THE EVIL TRINITY