

THE UNHOLY TRINITY

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First, let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

INTRODUCTION:

Satan is a great deceiver. He mimics God in many ways to deceive the people into believing that he is the true one. In Revelation 13, God reveals that he will even try to counterfeit the holy trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) with a trinity of his own, an unholy trinity (Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet). Jesus said that there will be men who claim to be the Messiah (Christ) and others who claim to be a prophet of God announcing who the Messiah is. These men will perform such powerful signs and wonders that even the saved will almost be deceived (Mt 24:24).

AIM OF THE LESSON:

Warn the students of Satan's deceptions.

OUTLIN OF THE LESSON (use the Study Notes to add to this lesson plan as the Spirit leads you):

I. The First Beast: Antichrist (13:1-10)

A. His Portrayal (13:1-2)

In this chapter the beast (Antichrist) 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 in the first half of the Tribulation. In the middle of the Tribulation Antichrist will be killed, but the dragon will raise him from the abyss and give him life. Then the dragon will give him his power, throne and authority (13:2). That will make Antichrist the eighth head and will be of the seven (Rev 17:8-11). 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.

Antichrist is called "the beast" because he has the bestial characteristics of a leopard, a bear and a lion. These three beasts characterized the kingdoms of Greece, Persia and Babylon in Daniel 7. Antichrist will have the bestial cruelty of all three great kingdoms. A wild beast may appear gentle at a distance, but its ferocious nature will erupt when it is close enough to attack. This will be the character of the Antichrist during the Tribulation because he will have the authority of Satan (13:2,4).

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by Satan. You may think he is harmless as you play with drugs, the occult or with sin in general, but he is like a roaring lion that is seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8).

B. His Purpose (13:3-4)

Antichrist begins the Tribulation as the seventh head of a dragon representing Satan (12:3), but he is killed in a battle (sword) and goes to the bottomless pit (11:7; 13:14). With God's permission Satan raises him from the pit (13:1), because his deadly wound is healed (13:3, 12, 14; 17:8). Then Satan gives his

authority to him and he possesses him. He is different person and is called the eighth head. Antichrist is the human form of Satan (17:9-11). This great miracle of Satan will amaze the unsaved people and cause them to worship him and Antichrist. This is the ultimate purpose of Antichrist.

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by Satan's miracles. He has great power to duplicate some miracles of God with God's permission. Satan wants you to worship him instead of God.

C. His Plan (13:5-7a)

Antichrist's plan is two-fold: to attack God with blasphemy and to attack the saints with bloodshed. The first is religious in nature and the second is political with strong religious overtones. He carries out his plan during the last 42 months of the Tribulation (13:5).

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by Satan. He may appear to cooperate with religious people, but he hates God and will kill His saints whenever he gets the opportunity. You must never cooperate with him.

D. His Power (13:7b-10)

Satan will give Antichrist power (authority) over the entire world. Only those who have their names written in the Lamb's book of life will be free from his power. The unsaved will worship him (13:8), but God will punish him (13:10). The principle of retribution will be in effect: he, who made captives, will be made a captive; and he who killed will be killed. He will be cast into the Lake of Fire and separated from God forever (19:20).

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by Satan into thinking that he and his followers can sin and escape the judgments of God. Neither you nor anyone else can do that.

II. The Second Beast: the False Prophet (13:11-18)

A. His Portrayal (13:11)

The second beast gives the outward appearance of a lamb, but inwardly is as ferocious as a dragon and speaks like one. He has only two horns and no crowns, so he is subject to the first beast. Although his appearance is weak, his words are strong and by them he does mighty deeds for the Antichrist.

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by mild-mannered religious men. Beware of their words when they fail to speak according to the Word of God.

B. His Purpose (13:12)

The second beast has all the power (authority) of the first beast, but he uses it to magnify the first beast, not himself, and causes the world to worship him.

APPLICATION: Do not underestimate the power of a person who uses his authority to lift up one of Satan's leaders. It is a power that is extremely dangerous to God's work and God's people.

C. His Plan (13:13-18)

The plan of the second beast is to win the worship of the world for the first beast by calling fire down from heaven as God's two witnesses were doing at that time (cf. 11:5), by performing miracles (signs) in the sight of men, by making an image of the first beast and giving it life, by killing all those who would not worship the image of the beast, and by putting the mark of the beast on all of his followers so only they could buy or sell in the marketplace.

APPLICATION: Do not be deceived by the programs of religious men that require you to worship at the altar of sin and compromise your conscience so that you can solve your physical needs.

BEWARE OF THE DECEIT OF SATAN AND HIS FOLLOWERS