

***Overview of Revelation 13:** The thirteenth chapter of Revelation is a continuation of the preceding chapter presenting the significant personalities of the Tribulation. It is a continuation of the parenthetical section of the book. In this chapter the sixth and seventh personalities are described: (6) the beast out of the sea, and (7) the beast out of the earth.*

**13:1** John describes the sixth personality of the Tribulation. **And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.** John evidently is transported in spirit back to the earth where he stood on the sea shore. There, he saw “a beast rise up out of the sea.” The ensuing context makes clear this beast is allegorical of a far greater entity. Revelation 17:8-18 presents what seems to be a related but separate explanation of this beast. In short, it is a definition of (6) *the* antichrist. Revelation 17:15 seems to parallel 13:1. There, the many waters are described as ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues’—in other words, the mass of humanity. This is likely the symbolism intended of the sea here.

This beast is described as ‘having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.’ There has been much speculation concerning these details and certainly much confusion. There are parallels here to chapter 17 where the great whore is described. There, the seven heads are described as seven mountains. However, there clearly is a distinction between the beast here and the woman there. There also are clear similarities between the beast described here and

the fourth beast of Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 7:24.

One view which seems to synchronize with each of these several portions of Scripture is that the seven heads are the seven major ruling eras of the world from the beginning of the world's system at Babel onward. Revelation 17:10 tells us that John lived during the time of the 6<sup>th</sup> head which was Rome. Moving backward therefore it would seem that the first head may be the world era after the flood beginning with (a) the original Babylonian state founded at Babel. This may extend to and include perhaps the Egyptian era and then (b) the Assyrian. (c) Next clearly is the Babylonian empire of the day of Daniel, (d) then the Persian, (e) Greek, and (f) the Roman Empire of John's day. (g) The fractured, revived Roman/European union of the first half of the Tribulation is the seventh. See Revelation 17:10-11. John thus apparently sees the beast as the culmination of what has been the millennia of the world's system.

The ten horns along with their accompanying ten crowns seem to parallel the ten horns of Daniel 7:24 where they are described as 'ten kings that shall arise.'" Daniel's several prophecies indicate a tenfold division of the final form of the revived Roman empire. These ten kings evidently are the rulers over that tenfold division. Daniel seems to indicate that these ten kings (leaders) will be the political base from whence the antichrist rises to power. They apparently are the political and cultural descendants of the old Roman world. That today is essentially what is known as the western world. The name of blasphemy on the heads of the beast evidently is the godless nature of the world's system down through the ages. The titles worn by various pagan emperors of these eras down through the ages have routinely been blasphemous.

This beast has long historical and prophetic roots. It clearly is a pervasive *system* of government. Yet, as the chapter will unfold, the beast is also an individual who is energized by the power of the devil. Thus the beast is both a system and a person who heads the final form of the system. It should be noted that the word translated as **beast** throughout this chapter is (θηριον) *therion* and has the literal sense of a wild savage animal. The word translated as **beast** in chapters 4 and 5 (referring to the angelic creatures before the throne of God) is (ζωον) *zoon* and has the sense of a ‘living creature’ or ‘being.’

**13:2** John goes on to provide further description of the beast. **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.** The three wild animals symbolized are the same three used to symbolize the three empires or eras of world power prior to Rome in Daniel 7:4-6. There, the leopard depicted the swiftness of Greece under Alexander; the bear the brute force of the Persian empire; and the lion the voracity of Babylon. These qualities have characterized empires of the world’s system down through the ages. They apparently will so characterize its final form and leader during the Tribulation.

As noted above, the beast is a system. However, it clearly also is personified in a satanic personality. The beast is spoken of directly as a person here. Moreover, the empowering and energy of this leader comes directly from “the dragon” who is the devil. See 12:9. It is the dragon who gives him “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The word translated as **seat** (θρονος) *thronos*

is most frequently otherwise rendered as ‘throne.’ Implied is governmental power and authority as noted. He will be a world ruler.

**13:3** John goes on to describe, **And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.** The ensuing context will make clear the deadly wound was inflicted not upon an era of government, but upon the personality called the beast. The text will make clear this leader is the antichrist. In a way not defined, he is mortally wounded and appears to die. Yet, clearly implied here and in the following context, he appears to arise from the dead. The end of verse 4 hints his portrayed death may have been in battle. It alternately may have been via assassination.

However, the world is astounded. Here is one who seemingly can arise from the dead and come back to fight again. The word translated as **world** (*γη ghay*) actually refers to the ‘earth.’ The entire earth is amazed at the presumed power of this one.

**13:4** Subsequently, **they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?** This individual, the beast, not only personifies the final form of the world’s system as its satanically inspired leader, he also takes on religious qualities. Mankind begins to worship him. It may be that he advances himself to the world (and to Israel in particular) as the long awaited Christ, proving himself so by his advertised death and fancied resurrection. In addition, the devil, which empowered the beast, is

worshiped by the world as well. Devil worship will no longer be the domain of the back alley and the occult. In that day, he will present himself to the world as God. See II Thessalonians 2:4. Many will believe that lie ensuring their damnation.

The cry of the day will be, “Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” The word translated as **war** (πολεμεω *polemeo*) can also have the sense to ‘fight.’ The hint is that he has seemingly been killed in battle and then rises from the dead. See also 17:8. How can you fight someone like that? He must be god. Therefore, worship him.

**13:5** John further records, **And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.** As the antichrist reaches the pinnacle of world domination, he is given, evidently by Satan, the ability to speak great and blasphemous things. It may be his public and powerful announcements to the world that he is God. We then read, **and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.** The word translated as **power** is (εξουσια) *excousia*. It has more of the sense of ‘authority.’ The thought evidently is that God allows him to so blaspheme for forty-two months. The latter is three and one-half years. The greater thought apparently is that the Antichrist is allowed power to spew his blasphemy for the final three and one-half years of the Tribulation. He took the first half to rise to power. He then seats himself in the newly built temple at Jerusalem announcing to the world he is God. God permits this blasphemy to last only until the end of the Tribulation, forty-two months.

**13:6** He thus with seeming impunity **opened his**

**mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.** The antichrist during the final forty-two months of the Tribulation apparently wastes no opportunity to blaspheme God, His name, His tabernacle, or those in heaven. Precisely what the *tabernacle* mentioned here alludes to is not clear. It may be the Temple of God in heaven. However, it may refer to the recently built Jewish temple in Jerusalem. That seems more likely. The antichrist publicly appropriates the name of God and His temple to himself. He also seemingly defies the power of God in heaven to do anything about it.

**13:7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.** The word *saints* often refers to Israel, but that does not seem to be the case here for God has providentially taken steps to preserve them as indicated in 12:13-16. However, 12:17 does in fact note that the devil in that day will also make war with the believing remnant of Israel. Here, however, the saints probably are that multitude of gentiles (world around) which turn to Christ after the Rapture. The latter portion of the verse lends credence thereto. This may likely refer to the great multitude which no man could number recorded in 6:9-11 and 7:13-17. As people turn to Christ, they are ferociously hunted down by the forces of the antichrist and put to death, perhaps by beheading as noted in 20:4. This vehement persecution extends to all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; in other words, every corner of the earth. People can and will get saved during the Tribulation, but they in all likelihood will pay with their lives.

**13:8** As the final stages of the Tribulation wax on, **all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him**. Through the great power and influence he exerts, the antichrist will deceive the majority of the world to worship him. These are they **whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**. The unsaved world will worship the beast. Their names are never written in the book of life because they never turn to him. They receive his mark and thus doom themselves before God.

Of interest is the mention of (1) “the book of life of the Lamb.” This is one of two places in the Scripture where the book of life is mentioned in the context of the Lamb. The other is Revelation 21:27. Of additional interest is (2) mention of the Lamb ‘slain from the foundation of the world.’ The word translated as **slain** (σφαζω *sphadzo*) is conjugated as perfect tense and passive voice. The Lamb *has been* slain from the foundation of world. The word translated as **foundation** (καταβολη *katabole*) literally refers to ‘conception’ and by metaphor, the laying of a foundation. The thought is of ‘beginning.’ The word translated as **world** (κοσμος *kosmos*) though in some cases referring to the physical creation most frequently refers to the system of ungodliness. The Lamb of God was slain *from* the conception of the world. Implied is that when sin entered and the world as a system began, the Lamb of God was slain in the mind of God already. The thought is not *before* the foundation of the world, but *at* the beginning thereof. In any event, multitudes of gentiles who turn to Christ during the Tribulation will be slain in that day.

**13:9** As in the seven messages to the seven churches

of chapters 2 and 3, a warning is made, **If any man have an ear, let him hear**. The warning is evidently in the following verse.

**13:10** The warning apparently is the folly of God's people resisting in that day. **He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword**. To try and go on the offensive against the forces of the beast, taking them into captivity, will only lead to defeat. To defend oneself with force will only bring sure death. In contrast to such ungodly behavior, John notes, **Here is the patience and the faith of the saints**. Rather, the distinctive of God's people in that day is to by faith patiently endure whatever comes. An alternate view is those who so persecute God's people in that day will, in turn, meet God's avenging wrath. However, the warning seems rather to be to those in tune to God's Word. That would preclude the latter view.

**13:11-12** John thus records seeing a (7) *second beast* from the earth (which is the seventh personality of the Tribulation). **And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon**. This second beast will prove to be the false prophet. (That title is not mentioned directly until 16:13, and then again in 19:20 and 20:10. However, it seems clear that this second beast is one and the same with he who is called the false prophet in the passages noted.) Whereas the first beast was primarily political in nature, the second one will be primarily religious. He having two horns like a lamb (a young male sheep) bespeaks his mildness in distinction to the violence of the first. Indeed,



most counterfeit religious leaders take unto themselves an air of piousness and harmlessness. The chief one, the false prophet, will drip with phony piety and pacificism. Nevertheless, he speaks on behalf of the devil which is the dragon.

12 **He**, like the first political beast, **exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.** Mention is again made of the worship of the first beast, the antichrist. As his vicar, the false prophet forces the world to worship his leader. Again, mention is also made of the supposed wound unto death of the antichrist and his recovery therefrom.

**13:13-14** John further records how that the False Prophet has the ability to do **great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.** He is granted by the power of the devil the ability to do miracles. Moreover, to make clear his power, he on occasion calls down fire from the skies. To the unregenerate world, this must surely be the power of God.

Moreover, he **14 deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.** Paul warned in II Thessalonians 2:11-12 that God will allow them in that day “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned.” The lie very well may be that the beast is God and His Messiah. The false prophet is granted the ability to perform other miracles to further that deception. It is clear that the devil has the ability to perform miracles to deceive.

The False Prophet further directs those on the earth **that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.** The word translated as **image** (εικων *eikon*) conveys the idea of a ‘likeness’ or a ‘statue.’ No effort is spared to further the deception about this evil one who through the power of the devil convinces the world he has risen from the dead. A further hint to how he died is indicated in that it was by a sword. Moreover, it is hinted that he really did not die, but only was wounded. Nevertheless, the world is manipulated into thinking he did die and arise.

**13:15** The false prophet, to further the deception, **he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak.** Of interest is the word translated as **life** (πνευμα *pneuma*). It is the common word for ‘spirit.’ It also can have the sense of ‘breath’ and that is the likely sense here. This image not only appeared to breath, but also to speak. The greater truth is that the likeness of the beast created by the False Prophet has the very resemblance of life. Precisely where and how this image is used is not clear. However, he will **cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.**

**13:16-17** **And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.** One of the great mysteries of Revelation is revealed. The false prophet (not the antichrist) orders that all on the face of the earth, regardless of rank or position, *all* are given a

*mark* either literally *on* their right hand or *on* their foreheads.

The word translated as **mark** (*χαραγμα charagma*) is used of placing an owner's brand upon his livestock. The idea of branding is not so much in view, but rather the thought is of having the mark of ownership of the devil. Precisely how this mark is imprinted is not noted. There has been endless speculation as to exactly what this mark might be. Though the false prophet is the one executing the order of the mark, it is nevertheless clear that it pertains to the antichrist. It evidently is the visible indication the one possessing the mark has given allegiance to the beast.

Another ominous purpose of this mark is that "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." In that day, no commerce of any kind will be possible without the mark, name, or number of the beast upon one's hand or forehead. It may be that the threefold mention of the mark, name, and number of the beast is the composite of the mark itself. It may include the name of the beast as well as his number.

**13:18** John through the Holy Spirit conveys a note of wisdom. **Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.** The initial thought is, 'Let him that has a mind calculate the number of the beast.' It first is "the number of man." Throughout Scripture, the numerology of man apparently is six. It is the number of imperfection. Moreover, the number of the beast is 666. There has been endless speculation as to the significance

of this number. One thing seems clear. It is the number of the antichrist. Some have speculated that it may be some sort of triple, six-digit, identification number, or a version of a triple, six-digit form of a universal product code (UPC) bar code. Whatever form this mark takes place, it evidently will include the name, symbol, and ID number assigned by the Antichrist to every last man, woman, and child on the planet. Revelation 14:9-11 indicates anyone receiving this mark will be automatically damned forever. Of further interest is the comment in 15:2 that a great multitude will refuse to receive this mark leading to their martyrdom.

As to the timing of the mark, it may be that it is not implemented until the antichrist has full power over the earth. This seems to be the final three and one-half years of the Tribulation.