

"The Satanic Trinity"  
Revelation 13:1-18

Introduction

1. There is a proper chronology to this book (1:19). Two divisions are evident: a. The things seen and are (chaps. 1-3). b. The things which shall be hereafter (chaps. 4-22). What is revealed in this chapter fits the second division.

2. But there are inserts in the chronological movement of the book. John, under inspiration, seems to move back to pick up threads of the argument and then give a full view of the entire Tribulation Period all the way to the establishment of the kingdom under the Messiah. This is one of those inserts (cf. chaps. 7 and 12).

3. The events here relate to a trinity of infernal persons. They pose as a substitute for the true trinity of the only Godhead. The Bible does teach that the Father is God (1 Cor. 8:6). It also teaches that the Son is God (John 1:1-4, 14). Finally, the Bible affirms the deity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3, 4). Against this backdrop of the Biblical trinity, this chapter alerts God's people to the infernal trinity. It is a great manifestation following the rapture of the church (4:1) and relates to the events of the Tribulation Period (chaps. 4-19:10).

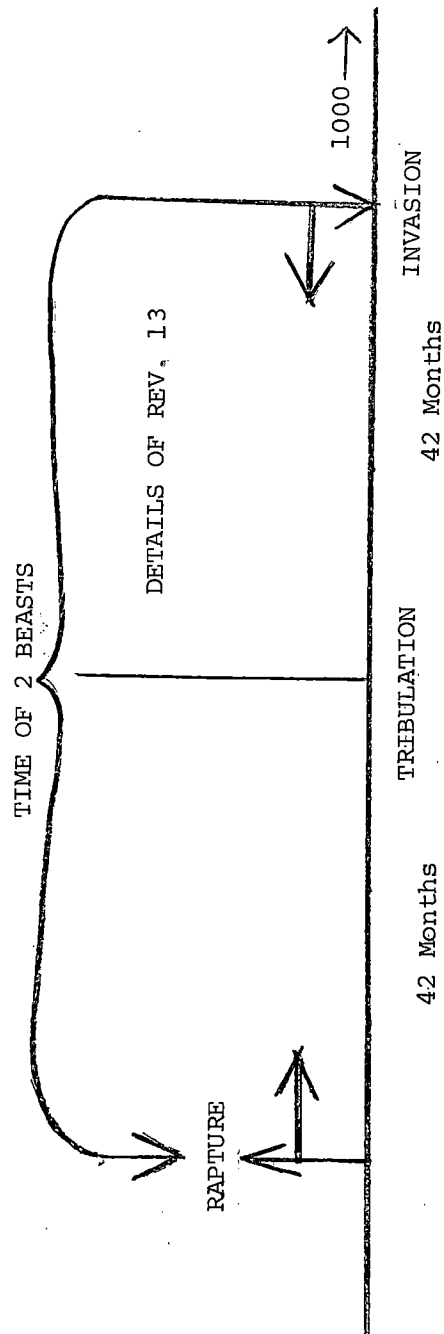
1. DRAGON → Satan (False God) v. 1  
SUPERNATURAL

a. Identified

The first phrase of 13:1 really belongs with 12:17. The pronoun should read "he" and not "I". The reference is to the "dragon" of the previous chapter. He is Satan. He has other names and functions (Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10). No wonder he is given a rousing condemnation (John 8:44).

b. Described

Apparently he "stood" for a moment in his relentless war with the seed of the woman (the Jews) to bring to the fore the "beast". The sand of the sea seems to imply multiplicity and agitation of activity. Hence, the restless nations of the world are before him in thought.



2. BEAST NO. 1 → Antichrist (False Christ) vv. 1-2

*POLITICAL*

The Bible specifically indicates that a personal anti-christ will come (1 John 2:18). The ideology did persist in the first century (1 John 4:3). Apart from those in the first century is the antichrist to come after the rapture. This is the one described here.

a. Identified

This one comes out of the sea. The sea is the raging torrent of nations. The antichrist arises from a difficult situation. He is a man (13:18). Elsewhere it is stated he comes from the abyss (11:7; 17:8).

b. Described

1) His character--he is a wild beast. This term is found 46 times in the New Testament and 38 of these are in Revelation. Points to his untamed nature. He is a rebel.

2) His corporation--the heads, horns, and crowns all indicate that he is not only a man, but he consists in an empire of some sort (17:10-11). This all takes one back to Daniel. His conspiracy is against God and therefore he blasphemes!

3) His concentration--(v.2). He partakes of a leopard, bear, and a lion. This is all a part of Daniel's prophecy (chap. 7). It is a final confederation and speaks of all that man could conjure up. It is the final grouping of nations in the last days.

4) His considerations--he accepts three items from the dragon: power, seat (throne), and authority (v. 2). Hence, he accepts from Satan what our Lord refused (cf. Matt. 4:1-11 with this). Now is evidenced the essence of antichrist and our wonderful Lord!

3. BEAST NO. 2 → Prophet (False Spirit) vv. 11, 12

*RELIGIOUS*

a. Identified

Here is the final and grossest false prophet. He rises out of the earth which may well mean he comes from the abyss. If not, then an evil spirit takes up residence in a man.

b. Described

1) His character--he, like the first beast, is a wild beast. However, he has two horns like a lamb. This is linked with his speech which is like a dragon. Although there has been much speculation on what this means, it might well connote the religious subtlety or delusion of this false prophet, the very epitome of Satanic efforts since the beginning (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:13-15).

2) His consideration--It is clearly stated that he has all the authority of the first beast before him. He acts, therefore, like the supporter of the Antichrist. He stands as his religious proponent. This is supported by his intention to get all to worship the first beast. Hence, albeit there are two beasts, their aim is singular--worship of a substitute for the Lord Jesus.

Conclusion The events detailed here relate to the future period of Tribulation. This will follow the Rapture of the church. There is no reason to suggest that the church should endure these times of satanic delusion. The explanation is simple: the Antichrist does not appear until the Spirit of God (indwelling the church) is taken out of the way (2 Thess. 2:7, 8). What value, then, is the study of this sort if the believer of this Age of Grace will not be involved in it? Much every way. It provides information which is profitable from God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). It is a learning from Him of truth yet to be demonstrated. It serves the same purpose of profit that studies in the Old Testament serve. But more than that! The events of the present cast their shadow on that to come. All of this outpouring of delusion does not, apparently, come at once. There is a build up. This serves to explain the many voices of today. They are the harbingers of the final expressions. It is well that all of us take heed and give ourselves unreservedly to the Word of God alone. Do not be misled, but be alerted to the Truth! Indeed, if you have not received the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour from sin and aligned yourself with Him, do that today. Believe and be saved! As a believer, immerse yourself in the Word of God and don't tamper with the false teachings being propagated by so many.