

THE BOOK OF REVELATION  
"World-End Leaders: Political and Religious"  
Revelation 13:1-18

Introduction

1. At the end of the present Age of Grace, the world will witness the evidence of the infernal trinity: Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet (13:1, 2, 11). It will be the most horrendous build-up of evil the world has ever seen.
2. The prime mover of the day will be the "dragon" who is in fact the personal Devil (12:9; 13:1). Hence, it is the day of the Evil One. The events he perpetrates wind up the affairs of the Tribulation Period, a time concerned with Israel's suffering and ultimate salvation (Dan. 9:24).
3. The two persons energized by Satan are clearly noted in this chapter. Their identification and character have already been noted (vv. 2, 3, 11, 12). There is more:

1. BEAST NO. 1 -----> Antichrist (False Son) Political Leader

a. His Signs vv. 3, 4

1) A Wound

a) Its object The wound brings death, but he comes to life again (cf. v. 14).

b) Its nature Here is a simulation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The beast (head of the final world political movement) is smitten. The perfect passive verb (ἐσφραγμένην esphagmenen) points to a factual matter. It is the same that happened to our Lord (5:6).

c) Its extent The wound was unto death. It is called a "stroke of death." Some would claim this a trick, but there is little reason to deny the factuality of the event. This is the height of Satanic counterfeits.

d) Its cure This is not mere resuscitation. This beast actually comes from the abyss (11:7; 17:8, 11). The abyss has a shaft to it. It is in the heart (ἐθεραπεύθη etherapeuthe) of the earth (Ro. 10:7 cf. with Mat. 12:40). From the place of departed dead, the beast comes! Now men believe the lie (2 Thess. 2:11).

2) A Wonder

It is the "earth" (γῆ ge) so Greek which wonders after the restored beast. The church has no place here neither does redeemed Israel or redeemed Gentiles. In doing this, they manifest three items:

a) Worship of dragon. It clearly points out that the dragon, Satan, gives power (authority, ἐξουσίαν exousian) to the beast. He is devil-energized! Satan worship then and now.

b) Worship of beast The front-man of Satan also is worshipped. Here is a Devil-inspired man getting the same treatment as the Devil.

c) Worship of force The question raised here is like that of Nietzsche who propounded that right makes right. Hence, brute force will maintain the situation.

b. His Speech vv. 5, 6

1) Delegated The word "given" (ἐδόθη edothe) is found six times in this passage (vv. 5, 7, 14, 15). The ability (ἐξουσίαν exousian) comes from the dragon and lasts for 42 months, or half of the Tribulation Period.

2) Concerned The big word is "great things" (μεγάλα megala). This is the sensational thing. The verb "speak" (λαλοῦν laloun) is the present active participle. Hence, much verbosity.

3) Included An entire verse notes that the beast includes blasphemy in his speech. This goes in four directions: 1) against God's person, b) against God's Name, c) against God's tabernacle, and d) against God's people. The final group is probably the church now in heaven as recently raptured.

c. His Strategy vv. 7-10

1) To war This is one of the two explicative infinitives (v. 7) to show that what was "given" (ἐδόθη edothe) to the beast had a specific goal. The "saints" here are Tribulation saints and should not be confused with the church saints.

2) To conquer Here is the second explicative infinitive (νικῆσαι nikesai). Right is trampled. Saints are in trouble (Isa. 60:2). But more than that, the entire world population falls under his dominion: all kindreds, tongues, and nations.

3) To worship Of course, the worship is designed to be for himself. It is the "earth-dwellers" (κατοικοῦντες katoikountes) (cf. v. 3) who involve themselves in this. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life of the Lamb do not get involved in this Satanic worship. Note: the Book of Life is where the names of true believers are registered (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 21:17). This Book is in heaven (Luke 10:20). Since a name can be stricken from the Book (Rev. 3:5) and since salvation is a work of God by grace through faith for the sinner (Eph. 2:8, 9), it appears that all names are in the Book, but they are removed when there is the final decision to reject our wonderful Lord (Ex. 32:31-33; John 16:9). It is glorious to notice that God has the Book of Life related to the slain Lamb – from the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

2. BEAST NO. 2 -----> Prophet (False Holy Spirit) vv. 13-17 Religious Leader

a. His Signs vv. 13 – 15

1) Fire Here is the great fire-test (πῦρ pur) again brought to bear in the last days (cf. 1 Kgs 18:25-46). This fire-test concept has long been around (Job 1:16).

2) Life The word here is "spirit" (πνεῦμα pneuma) which suggests that the concept may not be actually physical life but the involvement of an abyss-spirit. The fact of the matter is that there is an image there like earlier (Ex. 32:1-6; Dan. 3:1-30) and "miracle" (v. 14) is the critical Johannine term "sign" (σημεῖα semeia). It is this which the second beast employs to "deceive" the earth-dwellers (v. 14). The prominence of "signs" today may well be a harbinger of the end-time events. How people run ragged after them today!

3) Death Failure to submit to the worship required results in death (v. 15). A speaking and living image ought to have some response (ἀποκτανθῶσι apoktanthwsi). Those who refuse will be killed (20:4).

b. His Powers vv. 16 – 17

1) Regimentation v. 16. Here is the brand of hell. No one, whatever his position politically, economically, or socially, will be allowed to live without the mark of the beast. What the mark is in fact is not known, but it relates in some way to the name and number of the beast. It may well be the number 666 (v. 18). It is interesting to see how dominant the number "6" is in the Bible (cf. 1 Sam. 17:4-7; Dan. 3:1-7). Modern counterparts for numbering the population may well be movements in this direction; for example, the use of the Social Security number in the United States.

2) Monopolization v. 17. Apparently, total governmental will be the order of the day. Rationing or some other means to control purchases will obtain. Those who refuse to be marked (20:4) will either be killed or starved (here). Witness the diabolical terror reigns of Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Communism world-wide. These give some small idea of the difficulties engendered by the activities suggested here.

Conclusion God is not unmindful of the future events and gives sufficient warning. Here are three of them: 1. Get wise (σοφία sophia) (v. 18). Those in the Tribulation Period will know the movement of events when they see numbers taking prominence. This may well be a notice to us that the rapture is near at hand in view of the development of such items in our day. 2. Be patient (v. 10). It appears from this verse that a "no force" attitude is to be taken during these troublous times. Rather than fight the establishment, let it be, for God is working out His purpose. By this means also, God's saints manifest their patience (ὑπομονή upomone) and faith (πίστις pistis) on Him. 3. Give ear (v. 9). This is a first class condition and therefore assumed to be true. May God grant this to be the case with all of us today. Since we have ears, let us hear and respond to such amazing truth.