

Doctrinal Summary of
The Tribulational Beast-Satan's Federation of Nations Under the Revived Roman Empire

In Revelation 13:1 John introduces a beast that comes on the scene in the last half of the tribulation.

“And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.”

The word “beast” is translated from the Koine Greek word θηρίον (“thae-ri-on”) which literally means, “wild beast with a predatorial nature that viciously attacks and secures its prey by subduing it with overwhelming force and violence, being a tool or instrument used to accomplish something.” This “beast” is not merely a Frankenstein-like monstrosity (although its description would qualify it as such), but a predator that seeks out its prey for capture and consumption. Here θηρίον is used metaphorically to describe the revived Roman empire with its various authorities and facets. It will be used by Satan as a tool to accomplish the domination of the heathen (cf. Rev. 13:3) and the destruction of the saints (cf. Rev. 13:7).

The beast from the sea is described in a nearly identical way to Satan himself (cf. Rev. 12:3), indicating the degree of unity with Satan that this beast will have. Satan will give the beast its power, authority, and a throne (cf. Rev. 13:2) providing what is necessary for the beast to be the dominating world and political power during the final half of the tribulation (cf. Rev. 13:5). With its ten horns (symbolic of ten world powers joined together) and seven heads (symbolic of complete wisdom) the beast's federated nations will rule over the world during the tribulation (its ten crowns symbolic of ten ruling authorities). Revelation 13:2 identifies its character will be comprised of characteristics from three previous world empires which had been under the direct leadership and influence of Satan.

“And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and his authority.”

The leopard characterizes the Babylonian empire, the bear characterizes the Medo-Persian empire, and the lion characterizes the Greek empire (see Nebuchadnezzar's statue from Daniel 2:31-45). Each of these three empires has arisen and fallen, including the Roman empire, however the Roman empire will be revived as the tribulational beast. This revived Roman empire will be a combination of those features which were a part of the three previous empires yet will be strikingly incomparable to any other empire.

Because of this, the beast will be worshipped by man who will marvel at its characteristics and power (cf. Rev. 13:4). Satan will also be worshipped, being recognized as the source of the beast's greatness. While the antichrist, Satan's false prophet, will operate as the dictator of the beast, forcing man to submit to its government, economic policies, and religious system (cf. Rev. 13:12).

The beast will attack God and tribulational saints, destroying many and blaspheming God greatly (cf. Rev. 13:5-7). All tribulational unbelievers will worship the beast, willfully bowing down in submission to its power and rule. However, at the end of the tribulation the beast will be judged and the empire and all of its components will be cast into the lake of fire for eternity (cf. Rev. 19:20) while those who worshipped the beast will be killed and placed into torments until the great white throne judgment (cf. Rev. 19:21, 20:11-15).