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Introduction: We have seen, in previous chapters, many of the judgments and events of the Great Tribulation acted out. What we are seeing now, in Chapter 12 and here in Chapter 13, is the development of some of the major players in the epic, both in heaven and on earth. Chapter 13 does not cover a different period of time, but it does describe for us two of the key players and their roles on earth during the 42-month (3-1/2 year) Great Tribulation. Chapter 12 had described Satan's defeat and banishment from heaven; now here we will see the earthly vehicles he will bring forth his treachery through while acting out his final times on earth.

The scene of what John is seeing shifts from heaven to the earth. Two beasts are described. One comes up out of the sea, the other out of the earth. This study will focus on the first, the beast that rose up out of the sea. Some the features of this beast are identical to that of Satan as described in the previous chapter; yet we see that the beast is a distinct entity, but still deriving its power from Satan.

1. Verses 1-4 - The beast out of the sea: who he is.

- vv.1-2 - Some old manuscripts read "heads" instead of I. If it is "heads" it is a reference to Satan (hearkening back to Chapter 12). If I, then it is a reference to John. In either case, the scene shifts from heaven to earth. The sea is a common biblical reference to masses of people, to the nations of the earth. That this beast rises up out of the sea likely refers to its power over people and nations. The heads... horns... and crowns parallel the description of the Roman Empire in Daniel 7 and the devil in Chapter 12 here. The idea is that the future earthly power that is a revived form of the Roman Empire will be directed and empowered by Satan who will have been just banished from heaven (the dragon gave him his power). The leopard... bear... and lion seem to be a reference to previous Gentile empires, Greece, Persia, and Babylon. The fact that people follow and worship this beast indicates a personality; this is likely a reference, then, to the Antichrist and his seat of power.

- v.3 - The healing of a deadly wound may refer to how the Roman Empire, which collapsed centuries ago, suddenly revives, to the astonishment of the world. Or it may refer to an imitation rising from the dead of the Antichrist. Either way, the world is caused to be amazed and swears allegiance to this ruler and his empire.

NOTE: This is also the ruler described as the "prince" to come in Daniel 9.

- v.4 - The world will be completely given over to Satan-worship, seeing him as indestructible.

2. Verses 5-8 - The beast out of the sea: what he does.

- v.5 - His message is one of self-proclaimed Godhood. The forty-two months links this to the Great Tribulation.

- v.6 - Desiring the worship of the world, he speaks against the one true living God.

- vv.7-8 - This ruler and his empire persecute the Tribulation saints; their rule is worldwide. His worshippers

3. Verses 9-10 - An encouragement for "Tribulation Saints" to faithfully endure.

- v.9 - Very similar to the exhortations given to the churches in Chapters 2-3. But here, there are no churches, no "stars" (overseers/messengers), no lampstands. The church is gone, in heaven, via the Rapture. Who is he talking to? It can only be believers who come to Christ during the Tribulation. They will be persecuted to the death, as we have seen in previous chapters.

- v.10 - Those who are saved during this time are encouraged to persevere right on through to their destinies - to give their lives for the Lord. They will bring Him great glory.