

Seven Characters of the Tribulation Period

Revelation 12:1-13:18

Keep in mind that the book of Revelation and the visions found therein are to be taken literally unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. That said (and it has been said often), each of these personages represents something real. Some could say that is making the passage symbolic, but that's not so. The context indicates that they represent something other than stated – or at least they represent more than is stated (i.e., the man-child being Christ although not named as such). As with any text of Scripture, the book of Revelation must be kept as literal and accurate to the context as possible.

These two chapters follow on the heels of the seven trumpet judgments. They are to be seen as taking place with the events of the trumpet judgments – some of this takes place before, some during, and some after, or at the end. No matter the timing of the events, they are part of the Tribulation, and that is critical to an accurate understanding of these seven personages.

I. THE WOMAN – 12:1-2

A. In this part of the vision John saw a "great wonder," or a great sign, in heaven – that is, it was something very out of the ordinary, a wonder to behold

B. A wide variety of opinion is given for whom this woman represents, but to

compare this with other Scripture, as well as with vs. 5, this woman would represent Israel. Not necessarily Mary, but the fact that the Messiah is seen in the Old Testament as coming from Israel, as Israel giving birth to Him, is what is seen here.

Romans 9:3-5

(3) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

(4) Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises;

(5) Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Genesis 12:3

(3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Isaiah 11:1

(1) And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

C. The woman is seen "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"

1. This is again a reference to Israel

Genesis 37:9-11

(9) And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have

dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

(10) And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

(11) And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

2. The twelve stars could be the Apostles, and representative of the church, but considering the other references in this passage, that would be stretching things further than God intended – they point to the 12 tribes of Israel

D. The reason it is important to understand Israel here at this point in the prophecy of the Tribulation is to realize how much Satan hates the Jews, and how, for generations he has tried to destroy them – and he will try with one final fury during the Tribulation

E. Verse 2 leads into the next part of the vision – the birth of the “man child”



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II. THE DRAGON – 12:3-4

Note: More on the dragon to follow when we look at the personage of Michael

A. Verse 3 relates that John saw entering the scene with the woman "another wonder in heaven" – another remarkable sign or image

B. The wonder he was a "great red dragon"

1. This is an image of Satan personified
2. The color indicates, most likely, the

bloodshed that will ensue during the Tribulation

NOTE: These events take place at the beginning of the Tribulation and carry themselves through to the end.

3. It had “seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” – most probably there were ten horns on each head.

a) Some think this is an intimation to Dan. 7:7-8 where the revived Roman Empire is given, from which many believe the anti-Christ will come – I believe this is part of the fulfillment of that

[Daniel 7:7-8](#)

(7) After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns.

(8) I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

b) However, considering the fact that this same chapter, verse 9, says that Devil is the dragon, this dragon here is, in fact, Satan

- c) Considering this, it should be understood that, Daniel, as a companion to the book of Revelation, was giving a more detailed view of this vision and that Satan, as the supreme leader of the other beasts of chapter 13, is seen as ruler of the revived Roman Empire and has intent upon killing the children of God

C. Verse 4 says that his "tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth"

1. As already stated, these two chapters involve things that happen in a chronological time-line before the Tribulation, and some happen on that time-line before the seventh trumpet – this is one of those events
2. The third part of the stars were destroyed in the fourth trumpet judgment (8:12), and it would seem that this event, considered as literally as possible, describes how those third part of the stars were destroyed
3. There is only one right interpretation of any passage but there can be more than one application, and that seems to be the case here
 - a) As with any prophetic passage in the Bible, there is often more than one view to it – some have an immediate fulfillment along with a future fulfillment; some only have a future fulfillment; and some have a historical (backwards looking view)

element along with the immediate and/or future view – that seems to be the case here

- b) These stars could represent the fallen angels, and this event, along with the next few verses, point to Isaiah 14 where Lucifer was cast out of heaven, and this is where we get the teaching of a third of the angels following him. Keeping this verse within the context of this vision, that view would be the historical element.
- c) For purposes of understanding the one right interpretation here, and keeping it within the context of this passage, we will consider this tail of the dragon literally destroying the stars, as related in the fourth trumpet (that would be the future view of the prophecy – or, the immediate fulfillment as it was seen by John in his vision)

D. The final part of verse four then takes us back in time to when the Messiah was born in Bethlehem and how the Devil tried to have Him killed there when Herod had all the boy children two and under killed

Matthew 2:16-18

(16) Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

(17) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

(18) In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Note: Remember that this is a prophecy, and as is the case with many prophecies in the Bible, events with great lengths of time between them can appear in the same verse.

III. THE MAN-CHILD – 12:5-6

A. *The red dragon was prepared to kill the man-child that the woman gave birth to but, as verse 5 relates, He was "caught up unto God"*

B. *Not only did Satan try and kill Jesus as a baby but he tried to kill Him, or at least destroy Him, in the wilderness temptation, and then he thought He had destroyed Him when He hung on the cross, but He rose from the dead, and ascended back to heaven, to the Father, where He is right now*

Acts 1:11

(11) Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Romans 8:34

(34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

1 John 2:1

(1) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

C. The greatest indication this "man child" is the Messiah is given to us in verse 5 where it states that He would "rule all nations with a rod of iron" – this is not said of anyone else but the King of kings

Psalms 2:9-10

(9) Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

(10) Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

D. Between verse 5 and verse 6 is the Age of Grace and the first half of the Tribulation – it is one of the prophetic time issues

1. The woman, as we saw earlier, is Israel, as a nation
2. She is seen fleeing into the wilderness – considering this as literal as the text allows, it would appear that the Devil and the Antichrist are bent on destroying the Jews, so they run to the wilderness where they are taken care of by God in a place He has prepared for them for the 1,260 days (42 months, 3 ½ years)

IV. MICHAEL – 12:7-16



A. The next event is one that apparently took place at the beginning of the Tribulation, and is seen in Daniel 12

Daniel 12:1

(1) And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

B. We find, again, a difficulty in interpretation regarding the issue of this passage pointing to Satan being cast out of heaven – it appears that there are two events in view here – historical and prophetical – and they are intertwined, as many prophecies are

- C. The historical points back to Isaiah 14 and the events that are described there with Nebuchadnezzar being a picture of Lucifer being cast out of heaven because of pride (an event that is seen by some in Genesis 1:2 in the issue of the chaos on earth)**
- D. Satan, for whatever reason, is allowed to appear in the presence of God somewhere in space (the heavens) – we know this because of Job 1 – it is there that the battle between Michael the archangel (more than likely Lucifer’s equal before the rebellion) and Satan takes place, and Satan was cast out of heaven, along with his angels – this is the immediate (in John’s eyes), or future, fulfillment**
- E. They were cast to the earth, where they proceeded to attack and kill the children of God (where the martyrs are from earlier in the book of Revelation)**
- F. Satan is described here in as much detail as is found anywhere in the Bible (the following is from Willmington’s Guide to the Bible)**

1. “The great dragon”

a) Great, because of his vast power

[Matthew 4:8-9](#)

(8) Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the

world, and the glory of them;

(9) And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

b) Dragon, because of his viciousness

2. "That old serpent"

a) Old, which takes us back to the Garden of Eden

Genesis 3:1

(1) Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

b) Serpent, which reminds us of the first body he used

3. "The Devil" – one who slanders – Zech. 3:1-7

4. "And Satan" – the adversary

1 Peter 5:8

(8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

5. "Which deceiveth the whole world" – both in history past, today and during the end times – but, specifically, deceives all those that follow the Antichrist during the Tribulation

6. "The accuser of our brethren" (vs. 10)

G. There is great joy in heaven when Satan and his angels are expelled from the presence of God for the final time – vs. 10

1. God has allowed Satan down through the ages to accuse the believers – He did this to continually point to the blood of Christ as the means of the cleansing of sin (1 John)

There are two parts to the term “brethren” in this context, and it points back to the 24 elders at the throne representing both Old and New Testament saints

- a) 12 of the 24 elders represent the saints from Israel, and the term “brethren” points to them in this text, as will be seen in the next few verses
 - b) 12 of the 24 elders represent the saints of the New Testament, the church age, as they are called “brethren” literally hundreds of times in the New Testament
2. However, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation, when hell is unleashed on earth, he is expelled forever from the presence of God and is cast to the earth
 3. The celebration was heard by John as “a loud voice” – a great chorus in heaven heard as one great voice to echo through the portals of glory that it was over

H. Verse 11 shows how the brethren that were accused (in verse 10) overthrew

Satan – it is describing our victory over sin and the Devil today, but more specifically it is pointing to those that gave their lives as martyrs for their faith during the Tribulation (the early stages of it as given earlier in the book)

1. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" – the blood cleanses and sanctifies
2. "And by the word of their testimony" – their holy, sanctified, separated life was a destructive practice to the wiles of the Devil

[Ephesians 6:16](#)

(16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

3. "And they loved not their lives unto the death" – they didn't sacrifice their lives but they were willing to die for their faith. Today, we are a living sacrifice and we are to give God our whole being, and "love not" our lives all the way to death.

I. So, the call goes out in verse 12 to all the inhabitants of heaven – the redeemed, the angels, the elders – all that are there – to rejoice for victory is almost complete and the war is almost over

J. The sad part is the pronouncement of another "woe" to "the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea" – this is pointing to the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials (yet to come) – the devil

is there, and he has come in "great wrath" to kill and destroy for he has "but a short time" before he is cast into the lake of fire forever

K. Vs. 13-16 deal with Israel (represented by the "woman" as we noted in verse 1) and the attack on them specifically during the last half of the Tribulation

1. Again, we see that issue of historical fulfillment as well as a future fulfillment in these verses as they relate to Israel
2. Vs. 13 – the dragon, the devil, is cast to the earth at the beginning of the Tribulation, and as already pointed out, his intent now is to persecute the children of Israel – he hasn't been able to stop them yet, but he continues to try. This persecution is seen in the Olivet Discourse given by Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 24:15-22

Matthew 24:15-22

(15) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

(16) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

(17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

(18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

(19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

(20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

(21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

(22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

3. Vs. 14 describes the woman as she is given supernatural (as it were) abilities to evade the dragon and flee into the wilderness

a) Although the context here indicates God protecting His people Israel, two-thirds of them still perish in this Great Tribulation, according to the prophet Zechariah

Zechariah 13:8-9

(8) And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; but the third shall be left therein.

(9) And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

b) It doesn't say where this may be – some speculate it could be the ancient city of Petra but there is no indication of a specific place given other than that she was able to hide there



- c) She was given “two wings of a great eagle” in order to “fly into the wilderness” – again, this is something John saw in the vision but, because the context indicates something other than a literal interpretation (the “woman” representing Israel shows this to be a symbol rather than literal) we can see this as an indication that God miraculously protected those represented by the “woman” with the wings of an eagle. This is seen in other portions of Scripture as well:

Exodus 19:4

(4) Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Deuteronomy 32:11-12

(11) As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth

abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

(12) *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

- d) She is said to be nourished there (cared for and protected) “for a time, and times, and half a time” – as explained previously, this represents 3 ½ years (1,260 days, 42 months of 30 days, 360 day a year) and clearly points to the last half of the Tribulation (the time of Jacob’s trouble – Jeremiah 30:6-7 – read entire passage in Jeremiah 30 and 31 to understand the context here)

Jeremiah 30:6-7

(6) Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

(7) Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.



4. Vs. 15-16 indicate an event that demonstrates God protecting the remnant of Israel that has escaped
 - a) Vs. 15 – “the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman...” – although the “woman” is a type of Israel here, there is no contextual reason to believe that this event isn’t literal. Some say that the contour of the land isn’t conducive to this being possible, but keep in mind that by this time, the entire landscape of Israel (and, for that matter, the globe itself) has changed because of earthquakes and other catastrophic events, so it’s not possible to know what the landscape will be like at this point in time.
 - b) Vs. 16 – “the earth helped the woman, and the earth...swallowed up the flood” – God protected them

V. THE REMNANT – 12:17

A. This verse begins with the dragon (Satan) being "wroth with the woman" – hating Israel, hating the Jews

B. Because of this, during the Tribulation period, he is seen as being cast to the earth and making "war with the remnant of her seed" – during the Tribulation the Devil, by way of the Antichrist, rages a war against the Jews in an attempt to destroy them once and for all

C. One principle of Scripture is that there is always a remnant, and even during the Tribulation period there will be a remnant – in this case, they are Jews that were saved

D. They are described as those "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"

1. This is speaking of Jews – not necessarily all those that are saved during the Tribulation, but rather the "remnant of her seed"
2. However, they are saved the same way everyone else has ever been, and they demonstrate that the same way all others do at the time
3. "Keep the commandments of God" – even in the darkest of hours of human history believers are to "keep the commandments

of God” – not as a means of salvation but as a testimony they are saved

Matthew 28:19-20

(19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

(20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

1 John 5:2

(2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

4. “Have the testimony of Jesus Christ” – their keeping of the commandments showed their testimony for they had that testimony for all the world to see

Revelation 12:11

(11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

1 Corinthians 2:1

(1) And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

1 John 5:10

(10) He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his

Son.

VI. THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA – 13:1-10



A. His description – vs. 1-2a

1. Many believe that this description, albeit a literal description, is one describing the revived Roman Empire as given in Daniel 7:7-8 and Rev. 12:3 and 17:3, 7 (this is an instance where the literal and the symbolic are seen)

Daniel 7:7-8

(7) After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns.

(8) I considered the horns, and, behold,

there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Revelation 12:3

(3) And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Revelation 17:3

(3) So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 17:7

(7) And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

2. The beast rising out of the sea is considered by most evangelical expositors to point to the mass of humanity (Gentiles in particular) and that the beast will come from the Gentile nations, and the fact that John would have been viewing the Mediterranean Sea at the time, it is safe to consider the beast as a Gentile that comes from the Mediterranean area (taken from John Walvoord's book on Revelation)
3. The beast has seven heads which could

point to the remnant of the original Roman Empire, the ten horns pointing to this, of which three were overthrown by the "little horn" (Dan. 7:8) – the crowns point to the governmental authority and the name "blasphemy" shows their opposition to God

4. The mention of the leopard, the bear, and the lion all point to Daniel 7 where the successive world empires are described by the lion (Babylon), the bear (Medo-Persia), and the leopard (the Alexandrian Empire)

B. His power – vs. 2b – came from the "dragon," or Satan

C. In verse 3 we find that one of the heads of the beast is wounded "to death" and this wound was healed

1. No one knows exactly what this means, but considering the parallel between this beast and the revived Roman Empire, it can be seen that this just shows that the Empire, which many thought was dead, will be revived and will rule again
2. Whether this means the antichrist will die and come back to life and that will give him the authority he needs is not known – considering the whole beast doesn't die (only one of the heads), it seems like there could be another explanation other than the beast dies and comes back to life; or, as some believe, it will be someone long-dead that rises from the dead

3. The wonder that is mentioned by the world is probably the fact that this man comes out of "nowhere" to rule the world

D. Verse 4 shows the world worships the dragon and the beast – the dragon (Satan) because he is the one that gives the beast his power, and the beast because of his terrible power

E. Vs. 5-6 - For the first 3 ½ years there is peace on earth, and although the antichrist is ruler he is not seen in his full power until the mid-point of the Tribulation

1. It is at that time, I believe, that he changes his appearance into this hideous creature and takes control of the earth
2. Up until this point he is seen as deceiving the nations – gathering them to follow him, blindly
3. He is seen as speaking great things that are blasphemous toward God and His people – the more that is done on earth to demonstrate God's might, the more the beast does to demonstrate his

F. Vs. 7-8 – is found that the beast makes "war with the saints" and overcomes them – they will be killed, for the most part – and he will rule the world

G. Vs. 9-10 bring this awful topic to a conclusion

1. Vs. 9 seems to be for all those that will read this book, for all those that want to know what's going to happen, as well as for those during the time of the Tribulation – it is necessary that man listens and understands what is coming
2. Vs. 10 shows the Divine retribution during this time. God's mercy and grace are replaced with His wrath and judgment and the simple truth of this is that God will destroy all His enemies.
3. "The patience and the faith of the saints" is going to be tried and seen during this period more than at any other time in history

VII. THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH – 13:11-18

A. This beast is called the false prophet in 19:20

Revelation 19:20

(20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

B. Vs. 11 - This is called "another beast" which is another of the same kind – points to its origin and power

1. He has "two horns like a lamb" which would conjure up the aspect of the "Lamb that was slain" – he is an imitator of the

Messiah (the first beast, the antichrist, is an imitator of Christ as king rather than the suffering Messiah-Redeemer)

2. He speaks "as a dragon" – showing his authority to speak comes from Satan

C. Vs. 12 shows that he has equal power as the antichrist, the first beast, and his purpose is to cause all the people of the earth to worship the first beast as god – this shows that he is the head of the Apostate church during the first part of the Tribulation before he takes his true form half way through

D. Vs. 13-14 show his power

1. He does "great wonders," calling fire to come down from heaven – much like Elijah did
2. He deceives mankind by those miracles that he did, and he directs them to make an image of the first beast – an idol
3. This idol is the center of worship on earth during the Tribulation – it is referred to three times in this chapter and 7 more times in the book

[Revelation 14:9](#)

(9) And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

[Revelation 14:11](#)

(11) And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Revelation 15:2

(2) And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Revelation 16:2

(2) And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

Revelation 19:20

(20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 20:4

(4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their

foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

E. Vs. 15 shows this image, this idol, was given power to speak and if it wasn't worshipped, it had the power to kill those that refused

F. Vs. 16-18 is the first mention of "the mark of the beast"

1. This mark is to be either in their forehead or right hand and all, no matter who they were, had to have it – it was a tattoo, if you would
2. Without this mark no one can buy or sell anything
3. The mark is, I believe, simply the number 666 – it's a pretty simple declaration for which much has been said

Conclusion: These seven characters represent the whole of the Tribulation period, with the final two becoming the dominant world figures of the last 3 ½ years. It's important we get a true view of who these personages are in order to have a true view of what's going to happen in the end times. If we don't get these right, then all of our understanding will be off.