

REVELATION 13

Enacted Scripture

Arranged by Jon DeVries

CHARACTERS:

NARRATOR
JOHN
BEAST (3 ACTORS)

SYNOPSIS:

Revelation 13, a Scripture passage often avoided in sermon settings, describes the kingdom of the beast, a kingdom where deception reigns supreme and darkness lurks in every corner. This piece uses six powerful images to paint a vivid counterpoint to the kingdom of God described in Revelation 7.

The timing of this piece is flexible. The final images should be static, held for a moment, and then swirl into the following image. The NARRATOR should be an unseen voice heard throughout the formation and destruction of the images. The actors portraying the BEAST should wear something that blends in with the fabric, and the actor playing JOHN should wear something that stands out in stark contrast.

Lights should dim throughout the piece, until complete blackness is established at the naming of the beast. Then a pool of light rises for the Lord's Prayer.

Sound effects such as a growing, howling wind may be used throughout the piece, culminating during the complete blackout.

PROPS:

Large black fabric

REVELATION 13: SCRIPT

NARRATOR: Hear the Word of the Lord from Revelation, Chapter 13, and Matthew, Chapter 6.

IMAGE ONE: Lights up. Sound starts low. JOHN is in the center of the playing area looking out toward the audience. The three actors playing the BEAST have the black fabric stretched among them, billowing it slowly like the sea. They are placed behind or amid the audience if possible.

NARRATOR: And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

IMAGE TWO: Lights dim. Sound rises. The BEAST sweeps with fabric, up and over JOHN, taking the place he was in. JOHN steps away and stares back at the BEAST, which has now assembled into a shapeless black mass draped around the three actors. Note that, when possible, the actors' faces should be partially covered by the black fabric.

NARRATOR: And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

IMAGE THREE: Lights dim. Sound rises. The BEAST unravels and swirls around JOHN as if in a whirlwind before coming to rest with the three actors and black fabric entwined around JOHN.

NARRATOR: And the beast used its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear:
"If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain."

REVELATION 13: SCRIPT

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

IMAGE FOUR: Lights dim. Sound rises. By now the playing space is just a pool of light. The BEAST unwraps itself from JOHN and swirls to the edge of the pool of light. Two of the actors fully entwine the third actor in cloth and fall prostrate at its feet, still gripping the fabric in their hands. JOHN looks on from the opposite side of the space.

NARRATOR: Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast.

IMAGE FIVE: Lights dim. Sound rises. The two actors detach themselves from the third actor and move to the edge of the pool of light, extending their right hands. The third actor, wrapped in fabric as the BEAST, moves toward them, placing his hand on the foreheads and hands of his fellow actors. JOHN looks on from afar.

NARRATOR: It causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name, for it is the number of man, and his number is 666.

(Blackout. Sound loudest. Sound continues for twenty seconds, then silence. JOHN's prayer starts in the darkness and silence.)

JOHN: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

IMAGE SIX: Spotlight up. Silence. JOHN is crouched in the center of the spotlight praying. The three actors have the BEAST fabric draped around the spotlight's perimeter.

REVELATION 13: SCRIPT

JOHN: Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

NARRATOR: This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.