

THE BEAST THE DRAGON & THE WOMAN



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Joe Crews

The Beast, the Dragon & the Woman
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God's Law and You!—A Bible Study
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Published by Amazing Facts International
P.O. Box 1058
Roseville, CA 95678
800-538-7275 | afbookstore.com

Printed in the U.S.A.

Cover Designed by Daniel Hudgens
Interior Designed by Greg Solie • Altamont Graphics

ISBN 9781580197243

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I. THE BEAST AND HIS BACKGROUND

A Fearful Warning

The most fearful warning of punishment found anywhere in the Bible is contained in Revelation 14:9, 10: “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, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

This description is so alarming and so very unlike all other verses which deal with God’s character that we almost recoil in horror. But it points clearly to a time when God’s mercy will be withheld from those who have persistently rejected the authority of Heaven. It will be an unparalleled performance on the part of God in His relationship to the human family. For almost 6,000 years, His punishing judgments upon the most wicked men have been tempered with mercy. But now the measure of rebellion reaches a point which makes it necessary for God to intervene and to expose the terrible extent of man’s treason against God’s government.

Right here we are curious to know more about the sin that provokes God’s strange act of fiery punishment. Notice that the final issue involves a false allegiance to the beast power, so often referred to in Bible prophecy. At last, the world shall stand divided into two great camps: those who worship the true God, and those who worship the beast of Revelation 13. But what issue leads to this massive division of the world’s people? After describing the fate of the false worshipers in Revelation 14:9–11, John has this to say in the very next verse: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” We see here a startling contrast between those who follow the beast and those who follow the Lamb.

Please note that the issue revolves around the keeping of God's commandments. Those who do not have the mark of the beast are described as obedient to those commandments, and the rest suffer the wrath of God. This agrees perfectly with Paul's statement in Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

The highest allegiance is accorded through the act of obedience. At last, the majority of Earth's inhabitants will accept the authority of an antichrist counterfeit power, in disobedience to God's great Ten Commandment laws. Every individual will be on one side or the other. The Bible makes it very clear that life or death revolves around the final decision concerning the beast of Revelation 13.

Strangely enough, modern theologians have simply ignored the warning message of Revelation 14, relating to the mark of the beast. The interest of multitudes has been destroyed by the influence of pastors who would not take seriously the solemn words of John's prophecy. Often it is dismissed as a confused, insignificant letter, applying only to a local problem in the early church. For some reason the book called Revelation is counted a sealed book, instead of the obviously revealed truth that its name implies. But please note the promise made to those who search out the truth of this wonderful book, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Revelation 1:3.

Before delving into John's vivid account of that final clash between Christ and Satan, let us take time to examine the contestants in the conflict. When and how did it get started, and how will it end?

Two Powerful Contenders

Even though the climax in the great struggle takes place in the very end of human history when all the world is arraigned in two opposing camps, the controversy between Christ and Satan has been going on for almost 6,000 years. It started in heaven with the rebellion of Lucifer against God's rule of the universe. The story of that beautiful angel who coveted the position of God Himself is revealed through a number of Old Testament prophetic writings. Isaiah says in reference to this glorious being: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." Isaiah 14:12-14.

The seeds of that selfish revolt of one leading angel spread rapidly to affect the loyalty of other angels. Soon one third of the heavenly host had joined the disaffection of Lucifer, and the great controversy was under way—a controversy that was to rage for over 6,000 years, and which would finally demand the decision of every living creature in heaven and on earth.

The immediate result of the discord was war in heaven that climaxed in the complete expulsion of Lucifer from the presence of God and the loyal angels. John describes it this way: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9.

No more was the fallen angel to be known as Lucifer, signifying "star of the morning," but Satan which means "adversary."

The conflict had now been transferred from heaven down to this earth. Here it will continue until it reaches a desperate climax in the division of Earth's multitudes for or against the commandments of God. Just as the rebellion began by disloyalty to the authority of God, so it will end by a defiance of His authority as vested in the law of His government.

Satan has been here with his evil angels from the time he was banished from the regions of light. With devilish cunning, he has experimented with successive forms of warfare against God and His plan for this world. Through various insidious approaches, he has continued his efforts to overthrow the authority of God. The purpose of this booklet is to expose the massive assaults that have been made, and are being made, by Satan against the foundations of truth.

Every generation has witnessed a new manifestation of that evil power in its untiring warfare with Heaven's program to save the world. The final form of the enemy opposition will be that of the beast of Revelation 13. That counterfeit power will be set up in deadly conflict with the commandments of God. The whole world will be called to take sides. The confederation of evil will consolidate for a desperate last-ditch struggle to engage the loyalty of Earth's inhabitants. The issues will be clearly revealed, and no one can remain neutral. Obedience to God or to Satan, as manifested through the beast power, will be the only alternatives open to man.

A Life or Death Issue

Now, with this little background of the contenders, let us look closer at the biblical setting for the last decisive engagement in the great controversy. Please note that the beast of Revelation 13 symbolizes a gigantic antichrist power that attempts to displace God entirely. Here is the description of that power in the

language of Revelation 13:1–7: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon that gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

We cannot fail to see here an unprecedented scale of opposition to God and those who follow Him. Later in this same chapter, we read that this beast power will exercise so much influence over the earth, that it causes men to receive a mark in their foreheads or hands (Revelation 13:16). Finally, those who have the mark will suffer the terrible wrath of God as described in Revelation 14:9, 10. The wrath of God is further defined in Revelation 15:1 in these words, “Seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.”

The awful nature of those plagues and the extreme sufferings they visit upon those who receive the mark of the beast are fully revealed in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation. We will not dwell on them at this point in detail, but let us remind ourselves again that this issue will involve eternal life or death for all. How earnestly should we seek to understand who the beast represents and how we might avoid that mark! There must be no guesswork

or speculation on this vital subject. We must know exactly where the danger lies and how to avoid it.

The average Christian has scarcely even heard about the urgency of this subject. He has not the faintest idea about the beast or his mark, even though his destiny hinges upon the issue. Multitudes of preachers comfort the people in their ignorance of this point. They say, “Don’t worry about the beast. It is too complicated to understand. As long as you love the Lord, you will be all right. You can’t really know who the beast is.” Listen, will God warn us about the fearful danger of this beast—a danger so deadly that it will mean life or death—and then tell us it is impossible to know what it is? Would He say to us, “You will be cast into the fire if you have the mark, but I’m not going to tell you what it is—it’s just too bad if you have it”? No, that is not like God. He warns us of a danger that can be avoided. We can know that we are safe from the beast only if we know who the beast is. We can know we are free from the mark only if we know what the mark is.

A Symbolic Animal

Is it possible to understand the mark of the beast? Without fail, we can know and must know. But first we must understand the identity of the prophetic beast itself. Let us establish that this strange, composite animal is not to be taken literally. No one ever saw a creature with the body of a leopard, the mouth of a lion, and the feet of a bear. The prophetic books of the Bible usually deal in types and symbols. This beast represents something. But what does it symbolize? There must be no guessing here. The Bible does not leave any room for doubt. It serves as its own divine commentary and provides the key for understanding the prophecies.

Everything in the Bible description of the beast is symbolic. Consider the water, for example, out of which the animal arises. What does it represent? Read the answer in Revelation 17:15, “And

he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." There can be no quibbling over this point. God clearly explained the meaning of water in prophecy. Once the symbol is interpreted in any prophecy, the rule will apply in every other prophecy. Water will always symbolize people in biblical prophetic imagery.

Now, what about the other parts of the strange, apocalyptic beast? What do they represent? In order to understand the beast we must go back to the Old Testament book of Daniel and compare Scripture with Scripture. The books of Daniel and Revelation explain each other. They fit together like a hand and glove. Please notice that Daniel had a vision very similar to that of John. It is described in Daniel 7:2, 3: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." He saw the prophetic water just as John did, but Daniel saw four beasts arising instead of only one.

We have already found out that water symbolizes peoples or multitudes, but what do the animals represent? The answer is found in verse 17, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." There it is. So plainly worded that no one can question or doubt! God says that animals in prophecy represent nations. Just as we have the American eagle and the Russian bear in our modern political vocabulary, God used animals long, long ago to represent countries also. Then, to be more explicit, God added this in verse 23, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." If the fourth animal represented the fourth empire of history, then the first three would have to represent the first three empires.

This explanation becomes more simple and clear when we remember that there have only been four world empires in the earth since the days of Daniel. These kingdoms are referred to often in Bible prophecy and are called by name in some related prophecies of Daniel. Refer to Daniel 8:20, 21 and Daniel 11:2 for

examples of this. In the second chapter of Daniel the same four world kingdoms are symbolized by four metals in the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Those four empires are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Four Empires of History

Will you take a closer look at these animals, one by one, as they arose in the prophet's vision? The first was "like a lion and had eagle's wings." Daniel 7:4. Here we have represented that grand empire of Babylon, so well symbolized by the king of beasts. It was one of the wealthiest, strongest nations ever to exist on the earth. Notice that this animal has wings. Wings are used in prophetic terminology to symbolize speed. And sure enough, Babylon arose very quickly to take its place as a ruler of the entire world.

From 606 BC until 538 BC Babylon continued to exercise her extensive authority. But a change was to take place. Daniel saw the second beast, "like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it." Daniel 7:5. After Babylon came the kingdom of Medo-Persia in 538 BC, the second world empire.

The bear is raised up on one side to represent the fact that Persia was stronger than the Medes. Those two powers were allied together in their domination of the earth. The three ribs probably symbolize the three provinces of that kingdom—Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.

Then in 331 BC Medo-Persia went down, and the third world empire arose. According to the prophecy, "dominion was given to it." Verse 6. It was "like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads." Verse 6. Any schoolboy who has studied his lessons carefully in ancient history will know that Greece arose as the next world ruler. Alexander the Great came marching from the west, laying the world at his

feet in a very short time. The four wings of the leopard denote the exceeding speed with which Alexander subdued the nations. Within eight years, he had completely subjugated the world and sat down to weep because there were no more worlds to conquer. But he could not conquer himself; he died as a young man of thirty-three at the height of his power. At his death the kingdom was divided among his four leading generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. The four heads of the beast represent those divisions of his empire. This brings us to the year 168 BC and the downfall of the Grecian Empire in that very year. So far, every detail of the prophecy has been fulfilled exactly.

The Terrible Fourth Beast

Now let us notice the rise of the fourth beast, which is “the fourth kingdom upon earth.” Verse 23. Although Daniel had seen living wild beasts like those portrayed in the first three prophetic symbols, he had never seen anything resembling the fourth terrible beast. This is the way the Bible describes it: “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 had ten horns.” Verse 7.

As we have already learned, this symbolizes the fourth world empire, which was the iron monarchy of Rome. The extension of its cruel domination of the earth has been well documented in the pages of ancient history. But this powerful nation was also to be divided, as verse twenty-four indicates, “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise.” Please notice that this is God’s interpretation of the ten horns on this animal. Rome would be divided into ten distinct areas.

By following the course of history we discover that the exact fulfillment did come in the year AD 476. Fierce tribes came

sweeping down from the north country, and overwhelmed the territory of Western Europe, dividing it finally into ten parts. Those parts, of course, correspond to the ten toes of the great image of Daniel 2.

All students of history are well acquainted with the names of those tribal conquerors of Western Europe in AD 476. They were the Anglo-Saxons, Alemanni, Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Suevi, Lombards, Burgundians, and Franks. Seven of those tribes are still in existence to this very day, having grown into modern nations. They survive on the map of Europe as significant twentieth-century powers. Three of them disappeared from the stage of history, as we shall learn in just a moment.

The Little Horn

Now we are prepared to read the next verse of the prophecy and find out the meaning of the little horn in the vision of Daniel. "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." Verse 8. Here we must be very, very careful, indeed. We must not make the mistake of falsely identifying the little horn power, because it will prove to be the great antichrist power of history.

In order to avoid all mistakes of identity, it would be well first to consider the nine characteristic marks described in the prophecy itself. These marks of identity will enable us to be absolutely sure of the interpretation. We dare not guess or speculate concerning the historical identity of this "little horn" of prophecy.

First of all, the little horn came up among the ten. This places it geographically in Western Europe. *Second*, it came up after the ten arose, because it came up "among them." Since the ten arose in AD 476, the little horn would have to begin its reign some time

after that date. *Third*, it would uproot three of the ten tribes as it came to power. The eighth verse says that before the little horn, “there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots.”

Fourth, the little horn would have “eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” Verse 8. This indicates that a human being would be at the head of the power represented by the little horn. *Fifth*, “he shall be diverse from the first (horns).” Verse 24. This means that the little horn would be a different kind of power from those purely political kingdoms that preceded it. The *sixth* characteristic is revealed in the first part of verse twenty-five, “And he shall speak great words against the most High.” Another verse says, “speaking great things and blasphemies.” Revelation 13:5.

At this point, let’s define from the Bible the meaning of blasphemy. In John 10:30–33, Jesus was about to be stoned for claiming to be *one with the Father*. The Jews who were going to kill Him said, “For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” According to this text, it is blasphemy for a man to be accorded the place of God.

Now let us read another definition of blasphemy. Jesus had forgiven a man his sins, and the scribes said, “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” Mark 2:7. Clearly, Jesus was not a blasphemer, because He was God and He was able to forgive sin. But for a man to make such claims would constitute blasphemy, according to the Bible’s own definition.

Now we come to the *seventh* point of identity, found also in verse twenty-five, “and shall wear out the saints of the most High.” This tells us that the little horn is a persecuting power. It will make war with God’s people and cause them to be put to death. The *eighth* mark is also given in verse twenty-five, “and think to change times and laws.” Apparently, in its bitter opposition to the God of Heaven, in speaking great words against Him, this power

also seeks to change the great law of God. This move of the little horn could only be an *attempt* to make a change. Obviously, man can never alter the moral law of God.

A Rule of 1,260 Years

The *ninth*, and final identifying mark, in verse twenty-five, tells us exactly how long this little horn would exercise authority in the earth, “and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Here we are faced with a strange expression. It is actually a prophetic term that the Bible itself explains. In Revelation 12:14, we read these words concerning the same time period, “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Now read verse six, which describes the same event. Instead of saying, “a time, times, and half a time,” it says, “a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” Thus we see that the two periods of time are exactly the same. By comparing these Scriptures, we understand that a time is a year in Bible prophecy, times is two years, and half a time is half a year. This gives us a total of 3 1/2 times, or 3 1/2 years, because 3 1/2 years is exactly equal to 1,260 days. We are using, of course, the Bible year of 360 days.

We are now ready to apply another great principle in the interpretation of prophecy. Please notice that always in measuring prophetic time, God uses a day to represent a year. In Ezekiel 4:6 we read the actual rule, “I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Further support of this is found in Numbers 14:34. This method of reckoning time must always be applied in the study of Bible prophecy. This means, then, that the little horn power would rule for 1,260 *years*, instead of merely 1,260 *days*.

An Exact Fulfillment

We have before us now a list of nine specific characteristics, which have been lifted out of the seventh chapter of Daniel in description of the little-horn power. There is only one power in all history that meets the description given here. In other words, God closes every other option, and forces us to the only possible conclusion: the Catholic Church alone fulfills all the points of identity established in Daniel 7.

Let us take a quick look and notice how clearly this is done. *First* of all, the papacy did arise in western Europe, at the very heart of the territory of the pagan Roman Empire—in Rome itself. *Second*, it did come up after AD 476. It was in the year AD 538 that a decree of Emperor Justinian went into effect that assigned absolute preeminence to the Church of Rome. These are facts of history that can be verified by any authoritative historical source. *Third*, when the papacy arose, it was opposed by three of the tribes that had taken over at the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Vandals, Ostrogoths and Heruli were Arian powers that strongly opposed the rise of the Catholic Church. The armies of Rome marched in to uproot and completely destroy these three tribes. The last of the three was destroyed in the very year AD 538, when Justinian's decree went into effect. *Fourth*, the Catholic Church did have a man at the head of its system. *Fifth*, the papacy was a diverse kind of power from the other political kingdoms before it. It was a religious-political system quite unlike anything that had been seen in the world before that time.

Now we take a look at the *sixth* characteristic—the speaking of great words and blasphemy against the Most High. Does the papacy meet this description? We need only to be reminded that the Catholic Church has ever attributed to itself the power to forgive sins. As to the great words, let me quote from an article by F. Lucii Ferraris, contained in the book, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica*. This book was printed at Rome and

is sanctioned by the Catholic encyclopedia. Listen to these claims: "The Pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted, that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the Vicar of God. The Pope is, as it were, God on earth, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power." Volume VI, pp. 2529. These are only a few of the words that the Bible defines as blasphemy. Thus, the papacy meets the marks of identity as the little horn power.

Coming now to the *seventh* point of identity, we find that history supports the prophecy concerning papal persecution. Everyone who has any knowledge of the Middle Ages is acquainted with the fact that millions of people were tortured and killed by the Catholic inquisitions. From a book written by a Catholic cardinal, which also bears the sanction of the Church, we read, "The Catholic Church ... has a horror of blood. Nevertheless when confronted by heresy ... she has recourse to force, to corporal punishment, to torture. She creates tribunals like the Inquisition. She calls the laws of the state to her aid. ... Especially did she act thus in the 16th Century with regard to Protestants. ... In France, under Francis I and Henry II, in England under Mary Tudor, she tortured the heretics." *The Catholic Church, The Renaissance and Protestantism*, pp. 182–184.

We could multiply statements like this from historians, both Catholic and Protestant, that describe the horrible tortures of the papal authorities upon Protestants. Thus we can see the complete fulfillment of this description of the little horn.

The *eighth* mark, as given in verse twenty-five, concerns the attempt to change God's laws. Does this apply to the papacy? Please note this: the Catholic Church has removed the second commandment from her doctrinal books and catechism, because it condemns the worship of images. The tenth commandment is then divided so that they still have ten commandments. But two are against coveting, and there is none against idolatry. In this way, the papacy has thought to change the law, but unsuccessfully. God's law cannot be changed.

Finally, we come to the *ninth* identifying mark, which tells us exactly how long this papal power would exercise its authority in the earth. We discovered that it would be for a period of 1,260 years. Is this according to the record of history? Remember that we have noted how the papacy began its reign, by order of Justinian, in AD 538. By counting down 1,260 years from this date we are brought to the year 1798. In that very year the French general, Berthier, marched his armies into Rome and pulled the Pope off his throne. He was carried away into exile, and all the properties of the Church were confiscated.

The French Directory government decreed that there would never be another Bishop of Rome. As far as the world was concerned, and by all outward appearance, the Catholic Church was dead. After exactly 1,260 years, in fulfillment of the prophecy, she lost her control of the world. Thus, the final point is clearly fulfilled in the papacy, and in it only.

The Beast and Little Horn Identical

You may be wondering what all of this has to do with the beast of Revelation 13. We are now ready to identify that strange, composite animal described in the book of Revelation. Let us read the description of that beast once more, which has the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” Verse 5. Notice, please, that this beast is doing exactly the same thing as the little horn of Daniel. Verse five continues, “And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” How long is forty-two months? Exactly 1,260 prophetic days or years—the same as the 3 1/2 times of Daniel’s prophecy.

Concerning the beast, we read further, “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” Verse 7. This beast is also a persecuting power. In other words, the beast

of Revelation 13 is the very same power as the little horn. Both are symbolic of the papacy. This is God's graphic illustration of the papal power, as it came up to exercise arbitrary authority over the earth for 1,260 years.

Further similarity is found by reading Revelation 13:3, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." As we have already established, the deadly wound was given in the year AD 1798, when the French armies carried the Pope away into exile. But that wound was to be healed, and finally the whole world would give its allegiance to the papacy again. That prophecy has been fulfilled very, very vividly before our eyes.

It was in the year 1929 that Mussolini executed the Concordat of 1929 with the Pope, restoring the properties that had been taken away from the Church. At that time, the Pope was actually made king once more, and the Vatican City was set up as a political sovereign power. From that day to this, the strength of the papacy has been advancing with tremendous strides.

At this present time most of the countries of the world have political representatives at Vatican City. The incredible influence of the papacy in world affairs is attested to by the headlines in today's newspaper. Almost every utterance of the pope is published to the ends of the earth, and millions and millions of people look to the papal power as the greatest influence in politics today. Yes, the wound has certainly been healed, and the world continues to follow after the beast.

II. THE DRAGON AND THE WOMAN

At this point, we are prepared to ask another question concerning this appropriation of power on the part of the beast. Where did she receive the authority to rule over the world for 1,260 years and to persecute so many millions of people for their faith? The answer is found in Revelation 13:2, “And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Notice that the power comes from the dragon. But who is the dragon? Revelation 12:7–9: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

The dragon, of course, is Satan himself. But when did Satan deceive the whole world? When he was cast out of heaven, there were only two people on the earth, and they represented the entire world. By deceiving Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan led all the world astray and came into temporary possession of the earth. The great controversy between good and evil, which had started in heaven, was now transferred to this planet.

A Prediction of Enmity

After the fall of man, God pronounced a curse upon each participant in that original transgression. In Genesis 3:15, we read of the curse that was placed upon the devil or the dragon. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Here is a prophecy of the age long struggle that would exist

between the dragon and the woman, and between the seed of the dragon and the seed of the woman.

But whom does the woman refer to in this prophecy? A woman, in Bible prophecy, always represents the church. In Jeremiah 6:2 we read, "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman." Who is Zion? Isaiah 51:16, "And say unto Zion, Thou art my people." So the great controversy has been going on ever since Eden. There have been two sides from then until now. The dragon and his followers are arraigned against God and His followers. Truth versus error, and Satan versus the church.

Two Sides

Satan and God have been contending for the control of every living human being. Even in the children of Adam the two sides were represented. Cain was on the dragon's side and wanted to substitute his own way instead of the way God had commanded him. Abel belonged to God's side and was so righteous that Cain finally killed him. Do you remember how God told each one of them to bring a lamb, but Cain substituted fruit or vegetables for that which God had commanded as a sacrifice? This, you will discover, will always be the mark of the dragon. He tries to substitute, or make a counterfeit, for the exact truth of God.

Through the descendants of Cain the earth was so corrupted that God finally had to destroy it with the Flood. But after the deluge the two sides appeared once again. The dragon's followers concentrated in Babel and tried to defy God by building a great tower that was to reach up to heaven. The plan failed, of course, and that site of the tower of Babel later became Babylon, which in 606 BC began to rule as the first world empire.

During those early years of confusion, God called Abraham out of Babylon and sent him over into Canaan. Abraham had grown up right there in Mesopotamia, near the place where the

great tower of Babel was attempted, and where the empire of Babylon developed. God's plan has always involved a call of separation from the confusion of falsehood.

The Dragon and Sun Worship

Briefly, let us study the history of the dragon's side. The city of Babylon was the first capital of the dragon on this earth. A pagan system of religion developed there in the form of sun worship. It was a blasphemous idolatry, filled with immoralities, licentious ceremonies and degrading rites. But soon the dragon's followers quarreled among themselves, and Medo-Persia came into power. But it was still the dragon's headquarters. Baal worship continued to predominate as it had in the previous kingdom. Then Greece took over, and she also subscribed to the same pagan sun worship. Finally, Rome began to rule the world. But there was no change in the religion. Mithraism, or sun worship, was the universal religion of the pagan Roman Empire. From Babylon to Rome, the dragon held control through heathen sun worship.

But during the Roman rule, a great thing happened! It was time for the seed of the woman to appear. Remember, the prophecy spoke of enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the dragon. The seed of the woman appeared in the days of the Roman Empire. Let's read about it in Revelation 12:1, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Do not forget that a woman in prophecy represents a church. A pure woman stands for the true church, but a fallen woman symbolizes a false religious system.

The Seed of the Woman

This woman in white, described in Revelation 12, represents the true church, the apostolic church, with its pure doctrines. The twelve stars on her head are the twelve apostles. "And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns ... and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Revelation 12:25. Now, who was this man-child? There has been only one man-child who was destined to rule all nations and who was finally caught up to God's throne. It is none other than Jesus Christ. But who tried to kill Jesus as soon as He was born? You answer, "Herod, the Roman king." And so it was. Herod tried to put all the boy babies to death in Judea in an attempt to destroy Christ.

The Roman Empire, then, is symbolized in Bible prophecy by the same red dragon as is the devil himself. Because Satan worked so closely through that nation to destroy Jesus, pagan Rome is represented by the same symbol in prophecy as the devil. But Herod did not succeed in his attempt to destroy the man-child. Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt and escaped the terrible decree. The masterstroke of Satan to destroy Jesus on the cross was foiled on that Sunday morning when the Crucified One broke the bonds of death in the resurrection. Forty days later, He was caught up to heaven in perfect fulfillment of the words of the prophecy.

When the dragon saw that he was not able to destroy Christ, he turned his wrath against the early church. According to Revelation 12:13, "When the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." At this time, there were only a small number of Christians in all the world, and Satan felt that he could completely obliterate

them by persecution. Thousands and thousands of Christians were martyred under the terrible persecutions of the cruel Roman emperors. But the gospel continued to grow and spread. The blood of the martyrs seemed to become the seed of the church. When one died a hundred more sprang up to take his place. Paul preached his gospel right up to the very gates of Rome. The old dragon became worried. It was now time for the seed of the dragon to appear.

The Seed of the Dragon

For centuries, Satan had tried to destroy God's people through the violent opposition of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Through violence and persecution, he had failed to stamp out the truth. So what he could not do through force, the dragon would now attempt by strategy and deception. He would organize his own counterfeit religious system. He would bring in pagan doctrines and philosophy from the old empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome and combine them with Christian teaching. Thus, he attempted to destroy millions through deception.

In what form did the seed of the dragon appear? It was brought forth as the beast of Revelation 13. It is very significant that the beast is actually made up of parts of the lion, the leopard, the bear and the nondescript animal of Daniel 7. God's illustrative depiction of the papacy reveals that she was made up of parts from all those old pagan kingdoms. In particular did she draw her strength from the pagan Roman nation. According to Revelation 13:2, the dragon gave the beast his power and seat and great authority. We have learned that the dragon actually symbolizes the pagan Roman Empire, as well as the devil himself.

Did the pagan Roman Empire actually bestow any authority upon the papacy? The fact is that in AD 330, Constantine, the Roman emperor, turned the whole city of Rome over to the Pope

as the seat of his authority. History uses almost the words of the prophecy in describing it. I shall quote from one Catholic source and one history book on this point: "When the Roman Empire became Christian, and the peace of the Church was guaranteed, the Emperor left Rome to the Pope, to be the seat of the authority of the Vicar of Christ, who should reign there independent of all human authority, to the consummation of ages, to the end of time." *Papal Rights and Privileges*, pp. 13, 14.

"The removal of the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in AD 330, left the western church practically free from imperial power, to develop its own form of organization. The Bishop of Rome, in the seat of the Caesars, was now the greatest man in the west, and was soon forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head." *The Rise of the Medieval Church*, p. 168. How clearly these statements show that the papacy received her seat and power from pagan Rome! But where did Rome get it? From Greece. And where did Greece get her power? From Medo-Persia. And where did Medo-Persia get hers? From Babylon. And where did Babylon get it? From the dragon. So we begin to understand why God has given such fearful warnings against the beast power. The dragon is actually behind it all.

Counterfeits in Pagan Dress

Let us consider for a moment how pagan doctrines were able to find a place in this counterfeit religious system that Satan introduced. Because a mark of the dragon power is to counterfeit and substitute, we will be able to see in this religio-political system the operation of Satan at his infernal best. Just as was the case with Cain, substitutes were fashioned to meet the commandments of God. Many relics of sun worship actually came to be accorded Christian status. A whole set of counterfeit doctrines was added so that the papacy could gain prestige with the pagan peoples of that

age. Pagan idols were left at the door, but idols of Peter, Mary, and the saints took their place.

As an example of the way in which pagan concepts came into the church, consider the example of Christmas. Do you know where the observance of Christmas originated? Christmas, as a festival, existed long before Jesus was born into this world. December 25 was actually celebrated hundreds of years before Christ was born. The pagans worshiped the sun, and they noticed that in December, the days were becoming shorter and shorter and the sun was getting farther away from them. Fearing that the sun would leave them altogether, they prayed and offered sacrifices. Then on December 25, for the first time, they could tell that the sun was coming back closer; the days were beginning to lengthen out again. So these people said, "The sun is reborn to us." They called December 25 the birthday of the sun or sun god. It became a great religious festival with them.

Only the pagans celebrated the day until the counterfeit papal system was taking form. At that time, the day was adopted by the papacy and called the birth of the SON, instead of the birthday of the SUN. Dr. Gilbert Murray, M.A., D. Litt., LL.D., F.B.A., professor of Greek at Oxford University, has written this: "Mithraism had so much acceptance, that it was able to impose on the Christian world its own Sunday in place of the Sabbath; its Sun's birthday, 25th of December, as the birthday of Jesus." *History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, Chapter III; cited in *Religion and Philosophy*, pp. 73, 74. New York: 1929.

Actually, we do not know the date of Christ's birth. As you can readily see, the adoption of December 25 was based purely upon the heathen observance of the festival of sun worship. Please take note how easily a pagan institution can slip into Christian churches and can even be passed along in Protestantism.

And what about Easter? It is a well-known Christian observance in our modern churches. Yet, it was also celebrated by pagans long before the resurrection of Christ. All Christian groups

recognize that Easter Sunday is often as much as five weeks apart from one year to the next. Few know that it is all governed by the heavenly bodies. Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the equinox.

The pagans of long ago noticed that everything seemed to take on new life in the early spring, as soon as the sun crossed the equinox. So they designated a day in the spring to honor the goddess of reproduction. That day was dedicated to Ishtar, the goddess of reproduction, because of the new life and growth in nature. The very word Easter has been transliterated from the name of the goddess Ishtar, whose worship was memorialized by the adoption of Easter.

Many times Christian laymen have asked just what the bunny rabbit and Easter egg have to do with the resurrection of Christ. Of course, they have nothing to do with it. Those pagans chose the rabbit as a symbol of Ishtar's day because it was the most prolific reproducer. The egg was also chosen because it was a symbol of fertility. Among the heathen, the day was associated with the most licentious practices.

During the time the papacy was developing, Ishtar's day was adopted by the Church and called Easter. Even the symbols, the bunny rabbits and eggs, are retained as reminders of its pagan origin. These examples have been presented merely to show how easily the devil was able to impose pagan ideas upon that church. As the papacy developed, it was open to the reception of unbiblical customs that marked it clearly as the real counterfeit power described by God in Revelation 13.

The question comes to our minds at this point: Are we really following the Bible in all our doctrines? If tradition and heathen custom have crept so easily into the church, what about other doctrines? The things mentioned so far have not been opposed to the direct commandments of God. We do not have any commandments concerning the observing of Christ's resurrection or His birth. We can think of His resurrection and birth at any time

and on any day of the year. In the next chapter we shall discover, though, that other pagan doctrines were introduced which strike at the very heart of true Bible religion. We are not so concerned, except for those things which contravene a plain command of God.

The growing power of the papacy continued its program by counterfeiting some of the most vital truths contained in God's Word. May our eyes be opened to recognize these counterfeits and to remain loyal to the exact truth in its original form.

III. THE NUMBER AND MARK OF THE BEAST

Two of the most important aspects of the beast's power are brought to light in Revelation 13: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Revelation 13:16–18. So far in our study, we have described nine identifying marks of the beast power and its application to the papacy. Right here we will add the *tenth* point to our list by explaining the number of his name.

According to Revelation 13:17, the number of his name will also be the number of a man. Undoubtedly this refers to the man who heads the beast power. The ancient method of deriving the number of a name is to take the numerical value of all letters and add them up to get the sum. If we want to apply this test to the papacy, we must find the official name of the pope, who is the head of his church. If this is the number of a man, it would naturally be the man who is the head of the organization.

It is interesting to note that there is an official Latin title for the pope, a title which has been granted by the Church itself. This title is found repeatedly in the publications of Rome. But in the weekly Catholic newspaper, *Our Sunday Visitor*, of April 1915, we have the interesting statement that the letters of the official title are inscribed in the pope's miter. Here is the actual quotation: "The letters inscribed in the pope's miter are these; *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is the Latin for 'Vicar of the Son of God.' Catholics hold that the Church, which is a visible society, must have a visible head; Christ, before His ascension into heaven appointed St. Peter to act as His representative. Hence, to the Bishop of Rome

as head of the church, was given the title, ‘Vicar of Christ.’” At present, the pope’s miter does not contain the Latin title, but the words are incorporated into the coronation ceremonies of each newly crowned pope.

So with this official name of the pope in hand we can proceed to apply the test of the Scripture. How do we derive the number of his name? By getting the numerical value of the Roman numerals of the title Vicarius Filii Dei, we actually come to a definite number 666. Notice how it is worked out below as each letter is given its numerical value:

V	—	5	F	—	0	D	—	500				
I	—	1	I	—	1	E	—	0				
C	—	100	L	—	50	I	—	1				
A	—	0	I	—	1							
R	—	0	I	—	1							
I	—	1										
U OR V	—	5										
S	—	0										
		112	+			53	+			501	=	666

Someone might object that this could be a coincidental occurrence. We grant that it is possible for such a thing to be a mere happenstance if we had only this one mark of identity to lean upon. But the fact is that this is the tenth of a long list of characteristic marks that the Bible uses to identify the beast power. It only adds weight and strength to that which has already been said in making the application to the papal power. It is the capstone proof in conjunction with all the other marks laid down so clearly in the Scripture.

The Mark—A Master Counterfeit

We are now prepared to consider the climax of counterfeits as far as the beast power is concerned. We have already learned that this power was to counterfeit many of the great truths of God. It was a combination of pagan ideas with Christian doctrine which formed a conglomeration of confusion, well designated as “Babylon” in the Scripture.

A few of the counterfeits might be listed as follows: instead of the word of God, *tradition*; instead of the Holy Spirit, *the pope*; instead of baptism, *sprinkling*; instead of communion, *transubstantiation*; instead of the eternal law of God, *the changed law*; instead of tithe, *taxes and indulgences*; instead of death, *purgatory*; instead of the seal of God, *the mark of the beast*.

Here we are especially concerned about the mark of the beast. In Revelation 14:9, 10, we read, “If any man worship the beast ... and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.” This is a matter of life or death. We must know exactly what this mark is and how we can avoid it.

We first of all notice in the Bible that the mark is always opposed to the seal of God. In Revelation 7:2, 3, we learn that the seal of God is placed in the forehead, just as the mark of the beast is set in the forehead. The two things seem to be in direct contradistinction to each other. Both are received in the forehead. Now we ask, “What is the seal?” If we can establish this point, it will help us to identify the mark.

The Seal of God

A seal is something that has to do with legal affairs. Official documents are always stamped with the seal of the governing

body. Every government has a seal that is placed upon its legal documents. Its purpose is to show that there is authority behind the document. This is especially true of the laws of the country. Every new law has a seal to show that there is power and authority to back up the law.

Notice that each seal has three things in it. It must contain the name of the authority, the office or title of the authority, and the territory over which he has power. The seal of America's president contains the following words: Bill Clinton, President, United States of America. When that seal is placed upon a law or an official document, it shows that the president's authority is supporting that declaration.

Does God's seal have to do with His law also? If so, how and where is it impressed? Let's read Isaiah 8:16, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." This proves that the seal is connected with the law. In fact, His law is sealed among the disciples of God. But where is the law actually placed upon those who are faithful? The answer is found in Hebrews 10:16, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

This, then, is how the Lord's seal is placed on the disciples. It is written on their minds or, symbolically, on their foreheads. Proverbs 7:2, 3 makes it even plainer: "Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart." The law, you see, is observed both by the hand and in the mind; thus, it is spoken of as being applied to the hand and forehead.

The Sign of God's Authority

We want to search in God's law to see which part actually does constitute the seal. But first, let's find out what constitutes

God's power and authority. The President exercises authority by virtue of his office as President. God claims power based on His office as Creator of the universe. Notice the words found in Jeremiah 10:10–12: “But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: ... Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power.” Again, Psalm 96:5, “For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.” Put with these texts one more found in Isaiah 40:25, 26: “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.”

We are impressed that the great thing that distinguishes the true God is His creative power. He bases His claims of authority as the true and only God upon His power to create. But what is the sign or memorial of His creation? Genesis 2:2, 3 gives the answer: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” The Sabbath is a memorial of the creative power that distinguishes Him from the false gods.

The Seal in the Law

We are now prepared to search God's law to determine what His seal of authority really is. Remember that a seal must contain the name, office, and territory of the authority. One by one, we study through the ten commandments of the Decalogue. Gradually all are eliminated except one. The three requisites of a seal will be found only in the one that includes name, title, and territory of God.

Right in the heart of the law is the memorial of His creative power, and behold, in that fourth commandment we find also the three components of the seal. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God [name]: ... For in six days the LORD made [office—Creator] heaven and earth [territory], the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.” Exodus 20:8–11. In other words, the Sabbath is the seal of God—the mark of the only one who can create and who is authorized to rule the earth. And to make His law authoritative, He has placed the seal in it, showing that He stands behind every single commandment in that law.

You may ask, “Is the Sabbath really the seal of God?” Let’s look at Ezekiel 20:12, “Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.” Here the Sabbath is called the “sign” of God. Is that the same as a seal? Romans 4:11 reveals that “seal” and “sign” are the very same thing, being used interchangeably in the Scripture. “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.”

Seal and Mark in Competition

Let us see what the relation is between the seal of God and the mark of the beast. The two things are in competition with each other. In Revelation 14:9, 10, the third angel’s message portrays those who have the mark: “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, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

In verse twelve we have another group identified by these words, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” In other words, those who keep the commandments of God do not have the mark of the beast and those who have the mark of the beast do not obey the commandments of God. The Ten Commandments, containing the seal of God, are set up in competition with the mark of the beast. The seal is the Sabbath; therefore, the Sabbath is opposed to the mark. Then what is the mark?

An Attempted Change

To answer this question we are pointed back again to Daniel 7:25, where the papacy is described as a power who would “think to change times and laws.” We have learned already how the second commandment was removed and the tenth commandment divided in the catechisms of the papacy. But what about the “times” mentioned in the text? Where only is time mentioned in the law? It is in the fourth commandment. Did the papacy think to change the Sabbath, the only time designated by the law? Yes, it did, and it happened in a most interesting way.

The pagans had a system of religion based on sun worship. Their sacred day was the first day of the week, which they named Sun-Day in honor of the sun god. Sunday was observed by the pagans in contrast to the Sabbath observance of Christians. But in the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine, a significant thing happened. Constantine professed conversion to Christianity and opened the doors of the church to all his heathen followers.

In order to gain power, prestige, and greater numbers to the church, he accepted many of the customs of sun worship from the pagans. Many of these compromises, such as Christmas and Easter, have already been described. Another of those customs was the observance of Sunday. It appeared more convenient to

let the pagans keep their own day of worship on Sunday and ask the Christians to join them in it. So Constantine actually made the first law about keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath. Papal church councils strengthened that law until it became firmly entrenched in Christianity and the world.

The Testimony of History

Turning now to the witness of secular historians, you may read the facts for yourself. Every statement is clearly defined in the historical records. From the *Encyclopedia Britannica* under the article “Sunday” we read: “It was Constantine who first made a law for the proper observance of Sunday, and who ... appointed that it should be regularly celebrated throughout the Roman Empire.” Here are the words of Dr. Gilbert Murray, M.A., D. Litt., L.L.D., F.B.A., professor of Greek at Oxford University: “Now since Mithras was ‘The Sun, the Unconquered,’ and the Sun was the ‘Royal Star,’ the religion looked for a King whom it could serve as the representative of Mithras upon earth. ... The Roman Emperor seemed to be clearly indicated as the true King. In sharp contrast to Christianity, Mithraism recognized Caesar as the bearer of the divine Grace, and its votaries filled the legions and the civil service. ... It had so much acceptance that it was able to impose on the Christian world its own Sun-Day in place of the Sabbath, its Sun’s birthday, twenty-fifth of December, as the birthday of Jesus.” *History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge.*

Dr. William Frederick states the same historical truth: “The Gentiles were an idolatrous people who worshipped the sun, and Sunday was their most sacred day. Now, in order to reach the people in this new field, it seems but natural, as well as necessary, to make Sunday the rest day of the Church. At this time, it was necessary for the Church to either adopt the Gentiles’ day or else have the Gentiles change their day. To change the Gentiles’ day would

have been an offense and stumbling block to them. The Church could naturally reach them better by keeping their day.” *Sunday and Christian Sabbath*, pp. 169, 170.

The North British Review gives the following reasons for the Christians adopting the heathen Sunday: “That very day was the Sunday of their heathen neighbors and respective countrymen, and patriotism gladly united with expediency in making it at once their Lord’s day and their Sabbath. ... That primitive church, in fact, was shut up to the adoption of the Sunday, —until it became established and supreme, when it was too late to make another alteration.” Volume XVIII, p. 409.

Catholic Agreement

Since the prophecy of Daniel predicted that the papacy would “think to change times and laws,” let us ask her if she had anything to do with this change of the Sabbath. We want to be fair to everyone, and get authentic testimony from all. The next several quotations are taken from well-known Catholic authorities that express clearly the claims of the papacy on the attempted change. From the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IV, p. 153: “The Church ... after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, to the first, made the third commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord’s day.”

Salvation History and the Commandments, p. 294, 1963 edition, by Rev. Leo. J. Trese and John J. Castlelot, S.S. describes it in these words: “Nothing is said in the Bible about the change of the Lord’s day from Saturday to Sunday. We know of the change only from the tradition of the Church—a fact handed down to us from earliest times by the living voice of the Church. That is why we find so illogical the attitude of many non-Catholic, who say that they will believe nothing unless they can find it in the Bible and

yet will continue to keep Sunday as the Lord's day on the say so of the Catholic Church."

Another well-known Catholic writer gave this explanation of the change: "The Catholic Church transferred the observance from the seventh to the first day of the week. ... The Catholic Church deemed it more fitting to appoint this day, rather than Saturday, the festival day of Christians." *This Is Catholicism*, 1959 edition, John Walsh, S. J., p. 325.

A 1958 catechism by Killgallen and Weber entitled *Life in Christ—Instructions in the Catholic Faith* explained it thus: "Why did the Church change the Lord's day from the Sabbath to Sunday? The Church, using the power of binding and loosing which Christ gave to the Pope, changed the Lord's day to Sunday." Page 243.

Rev. Stephen Keenan's *A Doctrinal Catechism* has this to say: "Question—Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer—Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority." Please note the word "substituted," a term we have used over and over to describe the activities of this power.

Cardinal Gibbons, in his book, *The Question Box*, p. 179, makes this startling admission: "If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is *right* in observing the Saturday with the Jew. ... Is it not *strange* that those who make the Bible their *only teacher*, should inconsistently follow in this matter the *tradition* of the Catholic Church?"

Rev. John A. O'Brien in the book, *Understanding the Catholic Faith*, p. 13, 1955 edition, states: "The Bible does not contain all the teachings of the Catholic religion, nor does it formulate all the duties of its members. Take, for instance, the matter of Sunday observance, attendance at divine service, and abstention from unnecessary servile work on that day. This is a matter upon which

our Protestant neighbors have for many years laid great emphasis; yet nowhere in the Bible is the Sunday designated as the Lord's Day; the day mentioned is the Sabbath, the last day of the week. The early Church, conscious of her authority to teach in the name of Christ, deliberately changed the day to Sunday."

One of the greatest challenges ever cast into the face of Protestantism is contained in a statement by Father Enright, President of Redemptorist College in America: "It was the Holy Catholic Church that changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week. And it not only compelled all to keep Sunday, but also urged all persons to labor on the seventh day under pain of anathema. Protestants ... profess great reverence for the Bible, and yet by their solemn act of keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the power of the Catholic Church. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But the Catholic Church says, 'NO: Keep the first day of the week' and lo, the entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."

You must answer that challenge! Whom are you going to obey? Listen to these words by C. F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons, in answer to a letter regarding the change of the Sabbath: "Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act. And the act is a *mark* of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." Thus, the issues become plain—God says that He is the true God: He has given the Sabbath as a seal of His authority as the Creator of all. By keeping the Sabbath, we recognize His authority as the true God. But the Catholic Church appears and says in effect, "No, don't keep the Sabbath; keep the first day of the week. We changed it, and that change is a *mark* of our power to overrule God's law and authority."

The mark of the beast, then, is the counterfeit Sunday by which the beast power is trying to be recognized as an authority greater than the Creator Himself. The sign, or seal, of God's authority (Sabbath) is displaced by the papal institution of a substitute mark (Sunday) that she claims as her authority. Oh, that the world would see clearly

the tremendous issue before us today! To whom will we yield our obedience—to God or to the beast? When we understand the issues we must make a tremendous decision either to keep the true Sabbath and recognize God’s authority, or to take the false Sabbath and recognize the Catholic Church’s claims. We must finally receive the seal of God or the mark of the beast. There are only two sides—God and the dragon, truth and error, Bible and tradition.

A book published in 1956 entitled *The Faith of Millions* and currently available from the Catholic Book Store as a textbook on the Catholic religion has this interesting statement on page 473: “But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn’t it curious that non-Catholic who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the Church, observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes, of course, it is inconsistent; but this change was made about fifteen centuries before Protestantism was born, and by that time, the custom was universally observed. They have continued the custom, even though it rests upon the authority of the Catholic Church and not upon an explicit text in the Bible. That observance remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away—like a boy running away from home, but still carrying in his pocket a picture of his mother or a lock of her hair.”

Long ago Cardinal Gibbons summarized the issue facing every individual on the Sabbath question: “Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.” *Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893.

Protestants Concur

Perhaps you are wondering what the Protestant bodies think of these things we have been considering. They will speak for

themselves. Here are some candid admissions of those churches upon the Sabbath question. All statements are taken from the most authoritative spokesmen. Here is a quotation from Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, the author of the *Baptist Manual*: "There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week. ... Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament—absolutely not. ... Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers, and other sources. But *what a pity* that it comes branded with the *mark of paganism*, and christened with the name of the sun god, when adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!" (From a paper read before a New York ministers' conference held November 13, 1893.) This great Baptist leader condenses into a few sentences all that has been said in the pages of this booklet.

The Presbyterian *Christian at Work* said this: "Some have tried to build the observance of Sunday upon apostolic command, whereas the apostles gave no command on the matter at all. ... The truth is, as soon as we appeal to the *litera scripta* (the literal writing) of the Bible, the Sabbatarians have the best of the arguments." Ed. April 19, 1883. The *Methodist Theological Compendium* states: "It is true that there is no positive command for infant baptism ... nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week."

Dr. W. R. Dale (Congregational) in *The Ten Commandments*, pp. 106, 107, says: "It is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday. ... There is not a single line in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday."

The Lutheran position, as revealed in the *Augsburg Confession of Faith*, states: “The observance of the Lord’s day (Sunday) is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the church.” Episcopal spokesman Neander writes in the *History of the Christian Religion and Church*, p. 186: “The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them and from the early apostolic church to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.”

In *Ten Rules For Living*, by Clovis G. Chappell we read: “We ought to remember that the Sabbath is God’s gift to man. We realize, of course, that our Sabbath is not the same as that observed by the Jews. Theirs was the seventh day of week, while ours is the first. The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command. One will search the Scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first. The early Christians began to worship on the first day of the week because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. By and by, this day of worship was made also a day of rest, a legal holiday. This took place in the year 321. Our Christian Sabbath, therefore, is not a matter of positive command.” Page 61.

Mark Enforced

We could give statements from dozens of other denominational sources, but space does not permit. What is your answer to these things? Clearly, we have seen that God predicted the rise of a power who would try to change the Sabbath; history records that the power attempted the change; the power herself admits that she tried to change it; and Protestants confess the change was made. How many will take their stand on the side of Bible truth?

The world is rapidly approaching the time when God’s Sabbath becomes a great test of obedience. Its claims will be placed before

all Earth's inhabitants. At that time, when the issues stand clearly revealed, individuals will accept the seal of God or the mark of the beast. The book of Revelation describes a final edict of this earth's governments that will actually seek to enforce the mark upon all the world. "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads." Revelation 13:16.

It is evident that no one has the mark until it is pressed upon all through this legislative act of human government. Then, the true Sabbath and the counterfeit (Sunday) will be so revealed that no one can escape a decision—a decision to keep the true Sabbath with mind and hand, or to submit to the counterfeit Sabbath of the papacy. In the next chapter you will learn the identity of the nation which will influence the world to accept the counterfeit Sabbath, and which will seek to enforce that mark of loyalty to the papacy.

IV. THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY

Any person should be proud to be an American. Certainly there is no spot on earth where freedom is so fully enjoyed as in our own United States. Have you ever wondered why this is true? There is a reason for the rise of democracy in this hemisphere. It is not just a happenstance that America is the freedom capital of the world. Actually, the beast power of Revelation 13 had a lot to do with the rise of America.

You may be asking, “How could the papal power be responsible for the United States of America?” It was because of the persecutions of the beast power in Europe that the United States came into existence. The Pilgrim Fathers, to escape the religious persecutions of the papacy, fled to the New World of America where they could follow their conscience in worship.

Let’s get the picture now from the pages of prophecy in God’s Word. The first ten verses of Revelation 13 describe the papacy in its rise to power. We have already studied this prophecy in detail. Verse 10 closes with the description of the Pope’s capture in 1798: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” Then immediately John saw a second beast in vision that he describes in the next verse. “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” Revelation 13:11. Let us be very careful in identifying this second beast. There are several points that will reveal the identity of this power.

First of all, it is seen “coming up” as the first beast received his deadly wound. Since the first beast (papacy) received its wound in 1798 when General Berthier took the Pope captive, we should look for the second beast to be coming up at that time. This means that around 1798 this power would be rising in the world. Secondly, this second beast would come up “out of the earth.” This is in contrast to the first that rose out of the water. We found in Revelation

17:15 that water symbolizes peoples and nations. The second beast, coming out of the earth, would depict a nation rising in some area of the world where there were no previous civilizations and multitudes. The absence of water denotes a dearth of people.

Thirdly, this nation had two horns like a lamb, and they had no crowns on them, as did the first beast. It came up peacefully, like a lamb, and the absence of crowns reveals that there were no kings at the head. It was not a monarchy, or dictatorship. Everything about this beast indicates a peaceful democracy.

Second Beast Identified

We are now ready to identify this second beast. There can be no doubt as to its identity. There is only one nation in history that meets the description. The United States of America was the only nation “coming up” to power in 1798, as the first beast received its deadly wound. The Constitution had been voted in 1787, and the Bill of Rights adopted in 1791. Also, it was in 1798 that America was first recognized by a world power. Historians record that there was something wonderful and providential about the rise of this country.

In exact fulfillment of the prophecy this nation arose in the New World, where no former civilizations had existed. It came up peacefully, democratically, and established itself upon the two great principles of Protestantism and republicanism. Church and state were to be kept separate. Our forefathers had seen enough of the evils of a church/state government.

Let us read a statement by John Wesley, a marvelous student of the Bible, and the architect of the Methodist Church. Writing in 1754 in his *New Testament with Explanatory Notes* after applying the first beast of Revelation 13 to the papacy, he said, “Another ... beast ... But he is not yet come, though he can not be far off; for he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first

beast.” Page 427. Please note that Wesley was looking for a nation to be rising within a very short time that would meet the description of the prophecy. Only the United States could have fulfilled his expectation.

It would be good if we could stop right here in our study, but we would not be true to the Scripture if we did not read the rest of the prophecy. Verses 11 and 12 continue: “He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” In other words, the time would come when the United States would change its peaceful, democratic tone. Under some influence, it would begin to compel worship, “saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:14–17.

A nation speaks through its laws. It may seem incredible to us as we read these things today that the United States would ever be persuaded to enact religious laws, and try to force people to worship a certain way, but prophecy has never failed. She will make an image to the papacy, or develop a system that resembles that power. Church and state will be united enough to enforce religious laws and will thus closely resemble the papal system.

According to the prophecy, America will finally enforce the mark of the beast. What does this mean? What is the mark? Based on God’s Word we have shown it to be the counterfeit Sabbath set up by the beast power. The keeping of Sunday instead of the Bible Sabbath is claimed as a mark of allegiance to the Catholic Church by her own priests and leaders. Will the United States,

then, seek to enforce the keeping of Sunday? That is exactly what is predicted, and it is also exactly what is shaping up right now in American politics.

No matter how much we might prefer to believe otherwise, our own beloved country will begin to use its influence to compel the keeping of Sunday. Already the groundwork has been laid. Right now, most of the states have such Sunday laws on the books. In some places these religious laws have created economic hardships on Sabbathkeepers. A few large cities have been urged to boycott those who refuse to keep Sunday. The prophecy in Revelation 13:17 indicates that economic sanctions will be applied, “and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark.”

National Sunday Law Near

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that Sunday laws are not unconstitutional or discriminatory. This opens the way for all the present confused, contradictory local state laws to be replaced by a national law that will standardize the enforcement of Sunday all over America. With the incredible strides being taken toward federal control of individual freedoms, this step to regulate the day of worship will not seem so drastic when it actually does take place.

Mark this well: These developments are already on the horizon. Those who refuse to accept the false day of worship will face fines, boycott, prison and finally, the threat of death. When the Sabbath question is thus made a national issue, people will be forced to accept one side or the other. Every single person will have to make a decision. The mark of the beast will then be placed upon all who choose to disobey the commandment of God to keep the Sabbath day holy. By accepting the mark of allegiance to the papacy (Sunday), they reject the mark that God claims as His sign of authority—the seventh-day Sabbath.

Decision

One might well raise the question, “What does all this have to do with me?” That is an important question, and the answer is even more important. Your eternal salvation hinges upon your decision now. You cannot shrug off the implications of this revelation concerning obedience to the Sabbath commandment. There is no question of convenience or inconvenience. We are dealing with the Ten-Commandment law that was written by God Himself. To break one of those commandments is to commit sin, and no willful sinner will be saved. The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath has been made the test of loyalty and love to God. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17.

Rapidly, the world is confederating under the two banners. Time is running out. The great controversy is entering its final stages. While ecumenism draws one block of denominations into a liberal camp, based largely upon disobedience to the Sabbath of God’s holy law, another group is distinguished as those who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. As the test becomes more severe, every individual must choose to obey God or man, to follow the commandments of God or tradition, to keep the true Sabbath or the counterfeit, to receive the seal of God, or the mark of the beast. Now is the time to settle the issue. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

GOD'S LAW AND YOU! —A BIBLE STUDY

This Bible lesson has been adapted from the Amazing Facts Study Guide series by Bill May. For more information, visit afbookstore.com.

In light of the message of warning presented in this book, it's easy to see why the law of God and the discussion of the fourth commandment is such a heated debate today. It is Satan's aim to divert humanity from living out the principles of love, to cause as many people as possible to depart from the path that brings peace, joy, and security. Through various means, especially deception, he seeks to represent God's law as a restrictive burden. But is this true?

It is important in these last days that each one of us has a personal knowledge of the Word and will of God. If we are to stand against the deceptions of the devil, we need the help of God's Spirit—and an "it is written"—in order to emerge victorious, as Christ was victorious. Thus, it is the aim of this short Bible lesson to further equip you in having a firm foundation on which to stand as the world is being swept away by lawlessness.

May God help you to be found among the faithful of Rev. 14:12:

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

I. Does God have a law? What is it?

"The LORD said to Moses, ... 'I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written'" (Exodus 24:12). "He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:13).

ANSWER: The foundation of every government is the laws that govern its citizens. Laws help to maintain order and provide justice. (Even nature is governed by laws, such as the laws of heredity and gravity.) The law that God instructed His people to obey is the Ten Commandments, which are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

2. Who gave the Ten Commandments?

“He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. ... Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets” (Exodus 31:18; 32:16).

ANSWER: The Bible tells us that “Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire ... and the whole mountain quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18). There were “thunderings” and “lightning flashes” (Exodus 20:18). At this time, the God of heaven spoke the Ten Commandments aloud to the children of Israel, and then He wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone with His own finger.

3. Why did God give us the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER: The Bible details the following reasons for God's law:

- A.** “Happy is he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29:18). “Keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you” (Proverbs 3:1, 2).

God's law is a guide that leads to happy and abundant living. God created us to experience happiness, peace, long life, contentment, accomplishment, and all the other great blessings for which our hearts long. God's law is a roadmap that points out the right paths to follow in order to find this true, supreme happiness.

► *True, inner joy follows those who keep God's commandments. We were created to live in harmony with these eternal principles.*

- B.** “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). “I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet’” (Romans 7:7). “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4 KJV).

God's law shows sinful hearts like ours the difference between right and wrong. Sin is wrong; it is transgressing, or breaking, the law. Without a law to declare what sin is, there would be no standard with which to judge wrongdoing. God's law is like a mirror (James 1:23–25). It points out wrongdoing in our lives much like a mirror points out dirt on our faces. The most accurate way for us to know we are sinning is to carefully check our lives by the mirror of God's law. Hope for this mixed-up world is found in God's Ten Commandments. It tells us where to draw the line!

- C.** “The LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes [commandments] ... for our good always” (Deuteronomy 6:24). “Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe Your statutes continually. You reject all those who stray from Your statutes” (Psalm 119:117, 118).

God's law protects us from danger and tragedy. It is like an alarm system that protects your home from burglars and criminals. It protects us from falsehood, murder, idolatry, theft, and many other evils that destroy life, peace, and happiness. All good laws protect, and God's law is no exception. How powerful then is Christ's quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3 when tempted by Satan in

the wilderness: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4)!

D. In fact, God's law is actually His character in written form—written so that we can better comprehend Him. See this chart for all the different ways God's law reflects God's character:

CHARACTERISTICS	GOD IS	THE LAW IS
GOOD	Luke 18:19	1 Timothy 1:8
HOLY	Isaiah 5:16	Romans 7:12
PERFECT	Matthew 5:48	Psalms 19:7
PURE	1 John 3:3	Psalms 19:8
JUST	Deuteronomy 32:4	Romans 7:12
TRUE	John 3:33	Psalms 19:9
SPIRITUAL	1 Corinthians 10:4	Romans 7:14
RIGHTEOUS	Jeremiah 23:6	Psalms 119:172
FAITHFUL	1 Corinthians 1:9	Psalms 119:86
LOVING	1 John 4:8	Romans 13:10
UNCHANGABLE	James 1:17	Matthew 5:18
EVERLASTING	Genesis 21:33	Psalms 111:7, 8

4. Can God's law ever be changed or abolished?

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17). “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips” (Psalm 89:34). “All His precepts [commandments] are sure. They stand fast forever and ever” (Psalm 111:7, 8).

ANSWER: No. The Bible is clear that the law of God cannot be changed. Unlike human-made laws, which can be amended

or even abolished by lawmakers, God's law never has changed and never will change. The simple reason is because God, the Lawmaker, never changes: "For I am the LORD, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). (See the chart on the previous page.)

► *"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).*

5. Did Jesus abolish God's law while He was here on earth?

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law. ... I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ... Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18).

ANSWER: No! How could Jesus Christ, God with us, abolish His own law when God's law can never be abolished? Indeed, Jesus' specific purpose on this earth, which He Himself revealed, was "to fulfill," or keep, the law in order to magnify it (Isaiah 42:21). It was humanity that had succeeded in distorting and misunderstanding God's law, so Jesus came to restore it. For example, He explained that murder means indulging in hatred (1 John 3:15) and being "angry ... without a cause" (Matthew 5:22); He clarified that lust is a form of adultery (vv. 27, 28). No, Jesus did not abolish God's law while on Earth; He kept it perfectly. His earthly life remains powerful evidence that the law is the perfect guide for holy living. Moreover, Christ was crucified on account of our breaking God's law. That's a steep price to pay. If the law had been abolished or obsolete, why did Christ have to die?

► *Far from abolishing the law of God, Jesus' death on the cross reveals just how much God cares about His law.*

6. Will people who break God's commandments be saved?

“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “To him who knows to do good and does not do it, ... it is sin” (James 4:17). “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26).

ANSWER: We have already learned that sin is the breaking of God's law, and the result of sin is death. So those who sin will not be saved. According to Romans 3:23, that means everybody: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But thank God that is not all! The latter part of Romans 6:23 goes on to say: “but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That means “if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). God forgives anyone who genuinely repents of his sins and accepts Christ's blood to cover them. Not only that, but Christ then gives anyone who repents the *power to overcome sin* (1 John 1:9).

On the road to this change of character, people regularly fall and ask for forgiveness multiple times. God's mercy covers that: “A righteous man may fall seven times and rise again” (Proverbs 24:16). Hebrews 10:26 though talks about *continuous, deliberate sin*. If a person sins repeatedly, ignoring the Holy Spirit's prompting to repent or putting off what he knows he should do, he is in danger of hardening his heart to sin until, one day, he may not want to change his sinful ways or may not even see them as sinful anymore. That's why it is important that we listen to the Holy Spirit when He says, “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7, 8).

7. Can a person be saved by keeping the law?

“By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:20). “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

ANSWER: A sinner is not saved by keeping the law. Salvation comes by Christ alone through the gift of His grace; and we receive this gift by faith, not by our works. Besides, no amount of obedience in the future can make up for the sins of the past. Remember, the law really serves as a mirror that points out our defects. Its purpose is to lead us to see our need of the Savior. Once we see what He has done and is doing for us, we will naturally desire to keep His law.

▶ *“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).*

8. How should we understand God's law in the time of the New Covenant?

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them” (Hebrews 10:16). “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

ANSWER: We by ourselves cannot keep God's law. But when we see that we are sinful, with an honest and broken heart, we can call out to God for deliverance from sin. It is then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that God is able to transform our sinful characters to reflect His sinless character! We are given a new heart. We will be able to keep His law fully (1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 5:4).

The beauty of this covenant—called the “new covenant” in Hebrews 8—is that it provides a *real* solution to the deadly disease of sin. God promises to write His law on our hearts and make us new creatures who keep His commandments. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Romans 8:14, 15). With the Holy Spirit leading us, we are equipped with divine strength to resist Satan and his influence!

9. Do I have to keep all the Ten Commandments?

“Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

ANSWER: If we choose to ignore one of the Ten Commandments, we neglect an essential part of the divine blueprint. Think of the law of God like many ropes knotted together to hold up a bridge. If even just one knot is unraveled or broken, the bridge, that pathway to safety, will fall apart, even if the rest of the rope is unbroken. Likewise, breaking one commandment will ultimately lead you to fall from grace even if you keep the other nine.

10. Should we also keep the Sabbath commandment?

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no

work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

ANSWER: In the fourth of the Ten Commandments, God says we should work six days and rest with all our household on the seventh day, just as God did at the beginning of Creation. God knew people would later be prone to forget His Sabbath, so He began this commandment with the word “remember.”

▶ *God sanctified the seventh day at the beginning of Creation, which means He set it apart for holy use. (See Genesis 2:1–3.)*

II. Which day is the Sabbath?

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God” (Exodus 20:10). “Now when the Sabbath was past, . . . very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen” (Mark 16:1, 2).

ANSWER: According to Scripture, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week—that is, Saturday. In more than 100 languages around the world, the word for the seventh day is the equivalent of the English word “Sabbath.” For example, in Spanish, it is *sábado*; in Indonesian, it is *Sabtu*.

▶ *The seventh day of the week (Saturday) is the Sabbath.*

12. On what day did Jesus customarily worship?

“He [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read” (Luke 4:16).

ANSWER: Jesus' custom was to worship on the Sabbath. All His life, He honored the Sabbath.

▶ *Jesus gave us an example that we should follow after His footsteps (1 John 2:6).*

13. But wasn't the Sabbath changed to Sunday?

ANSWER: No. There is no suggestion anywhere in the Scriptures that Jesus, His Father, or the apostles changed the seventh-day Sabbath to any other day. Indeed, the Bible teaches the opposite. Consider the evidence for yourself:

- A. God blessed the Sabbath.** “The LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:11). “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (Genesis 2:3).
- B. Christ expected His people to be keeping the Sabbath in AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed.** Knowing full well that Jerusalem would be destroyed by Rome in AD 70, Jesus warned His followers of that time, saying, “Pray that your flight may not be in winter *or on the Sabbath*” (Matthew 24:20, emphasis added). Jesus made it clear that His people would be keeping the Sabbath after His resurrection.
- C. The women who came to anoint Christ's dead body kept the Sabbath.** Jesus died on “the day before the Sabbath” (Mark 15:42), which is often called “Good Friday.” (See also verse 37.) The women prepared spices and ointments to anoint

His body, then “rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56). Only “when the Sabbath was past” (Mark 16:1) did the women come “on the first day of the week” (v. 2) to continue their sad work. They then found that Jesus had “[risen] early on the first day of the week” (v. 9), commonly called “Easter Sunday.” That means Jesus had also, as the women had, rested on the Sabbath, the day preceding Easter Sunday, the day we now call Saturday.

D. Luke, the author of Acts, doesn't refer to a change of the day of worship. In the book of Acts, Luke says that he wrote his Gospel (the book of Luke) about “all” (Acts 1:1) of Jesus' teachings. But he didn't write about a change to the Sabbath commandment.

E. The Sabbath will be kept throughout eternity. In the new heavens and the New Earth, which will be restored from the blight of sin, the Sabbath will continue to be a day of worship and rest for all of God's people! “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, ... so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that ... from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD” (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

► *The Sabbath will forever remain a day to rest and worship the Creator!*

14. Shouldn't I keep Sunday holy in honor of Christ's resurrection?

“Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of

life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:3–6).

ANSWER: The Bible has much to say about Christ’s resurrection, but it never suggests that God’s people are to keep Sunday holy in honor of it—or for any other reason. Instead, we honor Christ by obeying His commandments (John 14:15), not by substituting human traditions in place of His eternal law.

▶ *Jesus instituted baptism—not Sunday-keeping—in honor of His resurrection.*

15. If keeping Sunday as the Sabbath isn’t in the Bible, whose idea was it?

“He ... shall intend to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25).

“You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. ... And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:6, 9).

“Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things. ... Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, ... saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD had not spoken” (Ezekiel 22:26, 28).

ANSWER: About 300 years after the resurrection, partly because of hatred against the Jews, misguided religious leaders suggested that God’s day of worship be changed from Saturday to Sunday, from the seventh day to the first day of the week. God predicted it would happen, and it did! This error was passed on from generation to generation. Thus, Sunday-keeping is a mere human tradition. Only God can make a day holy. God blessed the Sabbath, and when God blesses, no man can “reverse it” (Numbers 23:20).

16. How does God feel about religious leaders ignoring the Sabbath?

“Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, ... and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. ... Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them” (Ezekiel 22:26, 31).

ANSWER: While some religious leaders believe Sunday is sacred because they don't know any better, those who knowingly keep Sunday instead of the Sabbath profane what God has called holy; they have also caused others to profane it. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for doing this in general with His commandments, deliberately disobeying them in favor of their tradition (Mark 7:7–13).

17. Does Sabbath-keeping really affect me personally?

“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). “He [Jesus] said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

ANSWER: The Sabbath reminds us of God's power to create by His word, including how He creates in us a clean heart. When God, by His word, created the world, He set the Sabbath apart as a sign, or seal, of His perfect handiwork. So too does God seal His children “for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30) by transforming their characters to reflect His own (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Sabbath is a major part of how we are given this new heart: “I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me,

that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them” (Ezekiel 20:12). Its observance—and the observance of the other nine commandments—is the natural result of a heart that loves God and has been reclaimed from sin.

God has given us a time where we may cease from our labors and spend time with our Creator! In it, we may worship God in study of His Word, come together in fellowship, enjoy God's beautiful nature, do good deeds for others, and much more!

By our observance of the Sabbath, we proclaim our loyalty to the Creator God above all other kings. While Satan and earthly powers make a bid to change God's law, we, like the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace, can take a stand for God and honor Him. If we do this, then God will also honor us, and He promises us that we will eat from the tree of life.

▶ *“I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8, 9).*

18. Will you accept God's offer to make you a new creature and honor Him by keeping His commandments?

YOUR ANSWER: _____

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