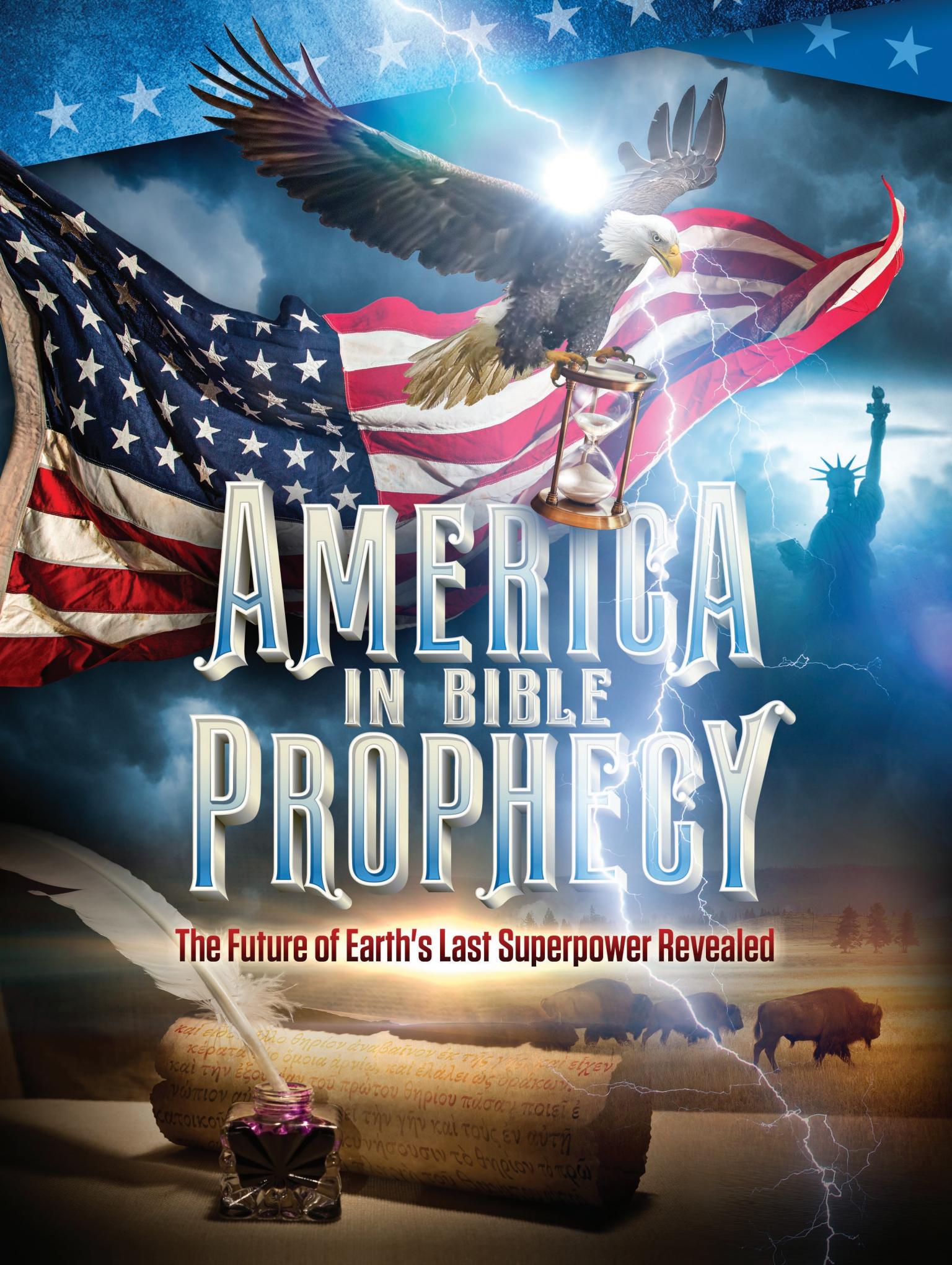




AMERICA IN BIBLE PROPHECY

The Future of Earth's Last Superpower Revealed





America in Bible Prophecy
The Future of Earth's Last
Superpower Revealed

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"I saw another beast coming
up out of the earth, and he
had two horns like a lamb
and spoke like a dragon."

—Revelation 13:11



God *Blessed* America



It's happened just once in all of American history. On August 24, 1814, Washington, D.C., was overrun by an invading army. The British wanted America back. They overwhelmed U.S. defenders and began to burn down government buildings. Extreme temperatures that summer, which may have exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit, kept fires burning into the next day.

Citizens and government officials alike, including President James Madison, had fled the city earlier that day; thus, British soldiers rampaged unhindered through the seat of government, burning down the brand-new capitol building, the White House, the Treasury, the War Department, and other structures.

However, the next day, the British army seemingly paid little heed to the rumble of distant thunder and the gathering clouds overhead. While city residents took shelter, the British underestimated the power of a Maryland summer storm.

Around 2:00 PM, as the mounting winds shrieked and hurled, a violent tornado dropped from the dark sky into the center of the capital, touching down on Constitution Avenue and heading toward the British on Capitol Hill.

The twister uprooted both trees and buildings, and even sent two British cannons sailing; many of the invaders also perished in the maelstrom. Moreover, after two hours of heavy rainfall, the fires had been completely extinguished.

The following day, the decimated British army left town.

Sweet Land of Liberty

Many historians believe that God miraculously intervened to protect the fledgling nation during this conflict—and that it wasn't the only time—preserving a unique and historic republic built on the principles of Protestantism and known worldwide as a champion of civil and religious liberty.

Yet while the Bible speaks of several powerful nations and empires that once ruled vast territories, does it have anything to say about the United States of America? After all, it is the most influential nation on Earth today, the greatest military power, and the world's economic engine.

If it is true that "the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7), it certainly is possible that the USA is mentioned in Bible prophecy. Could it be that the United States is destined to play a pivotal role in world events in these momentous last days—events that will usher in the second coming of Christ and the end of the world? And if so, in what way?

Today, America is no longer a fledgling nation; it is a venerable, savvy global superpower. Yet a more violent storm is coming upon our world. Even now, dark clouds are gathering all around the planet. In these pages, you will learn in what way, according to the Bible, the United States will play a key role in the final events.

Are you ready?





The BEAST from the SEA

An Amazing Fact:

What mammal kills the most humans each year? According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the world's deadliest beasts for humans include bears, lions, tigers, and even elephants. But the deadliest? Human beings! As "the world's most efficient killers of other humans," people intentionally kill approximately 400,000 people each year.

Did you know that in Bible prophecy, different kingdoms or nations are often described as "beasts"?

Scripture also says that in the last days, two such "beasts" will exercise tremendous political and religious control over the world—and when they unite, as the Bible predicts they will, the result will place them as the most dangerous

"beasts" to have ever roamed the earth.

But who are they? And are they in the world today? Get ready—because you're about to find out!

Bible symbols can be confusing and even intimidating at first, but like a jigsaw puzzle, once you put all the pieces together, the picture becomes clear and conclusive.

Let's begin our investigation by looking at a central prophecy found in the book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament. Revelation is a mysterious letter written by the apostle John while he was on Patmos, a secluded island in the Mediterranean where he had been banished for his faith. He penned it around AD 96, during a time when Christians were being persecuted by pagan-controlled Rome.

In Revelation 13, the Lord revealed to John two world powers that would rise to prominence in Earth's last days. To determine whether the USA will play a role, we must carefully examine these two powers and what their symbols tell us about them.

Let's begin by looking at the first beast:

And I saw a *beast* rising up out of the sea (v. 1).

As already mentioned, in the Bible, the term "beast" is used as a symbol for a world power. How do we know? Because Scripture itself clearly says so! In the book of Daniel, God's prophet was shown four beasts in vision



and was told directly by God’s angel, “Those great beasts ... are four kings” (7:17).

This is one of many clues that the book of Daniel provides about Revelation’s beast from the sea. In fact, the books of Daniel and Revelation are like a key and its lock. In Daniel 12:4, we learn that Daniel has been instructed to lock up some of the prophecies given to him:

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end.

It is in Revelation 10 that we discover “a little book open” (v. 2). In Revelation lies the complementary half of Daniel’s prophecies, and it is by studying both books together that we can understand what God wants you to know about this “time of the end.”

The Daniel Connection

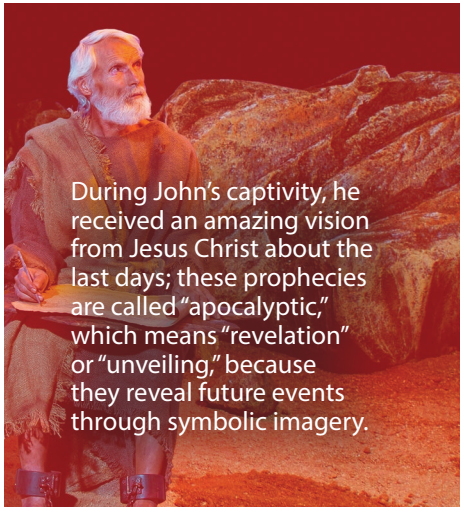
One important connection is Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. From the beginning of Daniel’s vision, you find noticeable similarities between these two chapters. For instance:

And four great beasts came up from the sea (Daniel 7:3).

And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea (Revelation 13:1).

Not only do both chapters contain the symbol of “beasts,” but all the beasts depicted rise “out of the sea.” So what does “the sea” in Bible prophecy represent? Thankfully, we don’t have to guess—because an angel plainly explains:

The waters ... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues (Revelation 17:15).

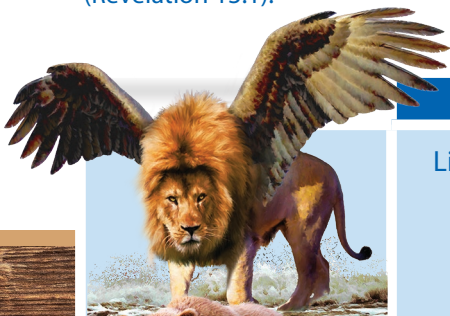


During John’s captivity, he received an amazing vision from Jesus Christ about the last days; these prophecies are called “apocalyptic,” which means “revelation” or “unveiling,” because they reveal future events through symbolic imagery.

Remember, a beast represents a kingdom or nation. Here we learn that waters represent multitudes of people or large populations. That means these kingdoms arise from an area that is already heavily populated.

Moreover, in Daniel 2, we’re told about a statue that is composed of several types of minerals, representing successive world powers that would hold sway over God’s people—the first four of which are Babylon, Medo-Persia,

The four beasts of Daniel 7 have characteristics that correspond to the real-world qualities of those world powers in Daniel 2.

	BEAST	VERSE	KINGDOM	QUALITY
	Lion with wings	Verse 4	Babylon	Lion with eagle’s wings, a common depiction of Marduk, the primary Babylonian god
	Bear raised up on one side	Verse 5	Medo-Persia	Two kingdoms, one greater than the other
	Leopard with four heads and four wings	Verse 6	Greece	Alexander the Great’s kingdom divided four ways
	Dreadful, terrible, exceedingly strong, iron teeth, different from all other beasts	Verse 7	Rome	Devoured nations by strength and cruelty, ascended to power as no other nation had before it



Greece, and Rome. The four beasts mentioned in Daniel 7 are these same world powers.

Out of the four beasts, the prophet Daniel is most interested in the fourth and last beast, which depicts the Roman Empire. Notably, this beast has “ten horns” (Daniel 7:7). These horns represent “ten kings” (v. 24) or kingdoms into which pagan Rome was eventually split, what is now called Western Europe.

Daniel 7 goes on to reveal this fourth beast in more detail:

*I was considering the horns, and there was **another horn, a little one**, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking [proud] words (v. 8).*

The Bible provides ten characteristics in Daniel 7 to help God’s people identify who or what this “little horn” power is. Let’s look at them now.

Ten Characteristics of the “Little Horn”

- 1** It would come “up among them”—that is, from among the ten horns (Daniel 7:8). So it would be a little kingdom found somewhere in Western Europe.
- 2** It would rise from “the Great Sea,” a Hebrew term for the Mediterranean (Daniel 7:2).
- 3** It would have a man at its head who would speak for it (Daniel 7:8).
- 4** It would eradicate—pluck out—three of those ten horns/kingdoms (Daniel 7:8).
- 5** It would “be different from” the ten kingdoms (Daniel 7:24).
- 6** It would make war with and persecute God’s people—“the saints” (Daniel 7:21, 25).
- 7** It would emerge from the fourth kingdom—the pagan Roman Empire (Daniel 7:7, 8).
- 8** The saints would “be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25).
- 9** It would “speak great words against the most High”—that is, it would blaspheme God (Daniel 7:25 KJV).
- 10** It would “intend to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25).



Have you made the connection yet? Don’t forget—all these identification points come from the Bible. They are not mere human opinion or speculation.

Historians can tell you quickly what power is being described here because only one power in history perfectly fits all ten points: the Holy Roman Catholic Church—the papacy.

But don’t just take their word for it; see it for yourself as we now carefully examine all ten criteria one by one to determine whether the papacy actually is the power being identified.



Ten Characteristics of the Papacy

- 1** *It came up among the nations of Western Europe.* The geographical location of the papal power is in Rome, Italy—a peninsula in the heart of Western Europe.
- 2** *It rose from the Great Sea.* The papacy arose in a population-dense area of the Mediterranean.
- 3** *It has a man at its head who speaks for it.* The papacy does have one man at the head—the pope—who speaks for it.
- 4** *It plucked up three kingdoms.* Most emperors of Western Europe supported the papacy. Three Arian kingdoms, however, did not—the Vandals, Heruli, and Ostrogoths. The Catholic kingdoms decided these nations must be subdued or destroyed. History affirms that this took place between AD 476 and AD 538.
- 5** *It was (and still is) different from the other kingdoms.* The papacy came on the scene as primarily a religious power, in contrast to the secular nature of the other ten kingdoms.
- 6** *It made war with and persecuted the saints.* The papacy admits to its persecution of heretics, especially during the Dark Ages and the Spanish Inquisition. Historians estimate that the papacy has killed at least 50 million people over matters of faith.



Identifying the “little horn” power does not in any way condemn Catholics; please keep in mind that these prophecies describe a kingdom—not individuals. There are sincere, devout Christians in all churches, including the Catholic faith.

- 7** *It emerged from the fourth kingdom—pagan Rome.* “The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire [baptized]. ... The very capital of the old Empire became the capital of the Christian Empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus was continued in that of Pope.”¹
- 8** *It overpowered God’s people “for a time and times and half a time.”* Several items need clarification here:
 - A.** In the original language, Aramaic, “a time” is designated as one complete cycle of the seasons, also known as one year; “times” is a pair of years, and “half a time” is half of a year. Thus, the Amplified Bible translates it: “three and one-half years.”²
 - B.** This same time period is mentioned seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5): three times as “a time and times and half a time”; twice as 42 months; and twice as 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day lunar calendar used by the Jewish people with 360 days in a year, these time periods are all the same amount of time: 3½ years = 42 months = 1,260 days.
 - C.** One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). Thus, the “little horn” was to have power over the saints for 1,260 prophetic days, that is, 1,260 literal years.
 - D.** The uncontested reign of the papacy began in AD 538, when the last of the three opposing Arian kingdoms was uprooted.



Its rule continued until 1798, when Napoleon's general, Berthier, took Pope Pius VI captive in the hopes of destroying both the pope himself and the political power of the papacy. This period of time, the Dark Ages, is an exact fulfillment of the 1,260-year prophecy. (Learn more about the end of this period on page 12.)

9 *It speaks pompous words of blasphemy against God.* Blasphemy has two primary definitions in Scripture:

1. Claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21).
2. Claiming to be God (John 10:33).

Does this point fit the papacy? Yes. Let's first look at the evidence for its claim to forgive sins, taken directly from its own literature:

Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ.³



By its system of confession, whereby people reveal their sins to a priest and are then pardoned and assigned penance, these men essentially substitute themselves for Jesus Christ, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 8:1, 2) and only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

This evidence is made even more clear in the papacy's claim to be God:

We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.⁴

The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.⁵

10 *It intends to change times and law.* Later, we'll look at the "times" part of this verse, but what about changing "law"? The reference is to God's law. Of course, no one can actually change His law, but has the papacy attempted to do so? Yes. In its catechisms, the Catholic Church has omitted the second commandment against idolatry, has shortened and changed the meaning of the fourth commandment (more on this later), and has divided the tenth commandment into two commandments.

*Check this for yourself.
Compare the Ten
Commandments in
any Catholic catechism
with God's list of the
commandments in
Exodus 20:2–17.*

There can be little doubt that the "little horn" power of Daniel 7 is the papacy. No other organization fits all ten points.

So what does Daniel 7 have to do with Revelation 13? Everything!

Daniel's Time of the End

In Daniel 12:4, the prophet was told to seal the book till "the time of the end." In verse 6, an angelic voice asked, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Verse 7 says, "It shall be for a time, times, and half a time." The angel assured Daniel that the section of the book dealing with end-time prophecies would be opened *after* the end of the 1,260-year period of papal control, which was 1798. Thus, the time of the end began in the year 1798.





Forward to Revelation 13

What similarities does the following passage have with Daniel 7?

I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name (Revelation 13:1).

This beast in Revelation seems like the fourth beast in Daniel 7! Besides both rising “out of the sea,” each has “ten horns” (Daniel 7:7). But there are more connections.

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority (Revelation 13:2).

These three beasts are the same three from Daniel 7—the lion, the bear, and the leopard. This sea beast in Revelation, a Frankenstein-like conglomeration of different beasts, is like nothing anyone has seen before. The prophet Daniel was likewise unable to associate the fourth beast of his vision with any other earthly creature because it “was different from all the others” (Daniel 7:19). But this also tells us that the sea beast of Revelation must have characteristics of those former empires of Babylon, Persia, and Greece. (We will discuss these characteristics later.)

As for the dragon, we learn who he is from Revelation 12:9:

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, **called the Devil and Satan**, who deceives the whole world.

In that same chapter, we also see that the beast from the sea closely resembles the dragon in many ways: Both have “seven heads,” “ten horns,” and “diadems” (v. 3) or crowns. *Interesting.* It does seem fitting, then, that the sea beast gets its power from the dragon. In essence, Satan is guiding this beast.

Let’s now look at Revelation 13:5, 6 to find more parallels:

And he [the sea beast] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

Forty-two months? We’ve seen that number before—in our study of Daniel 7! Recall that 42 months is the same amount of time as 1,260 days. This verse is referring to the same time prophecy as in Daniel 7:25, the period of history when the “little horn,” the papacy, reigned without significant opposition.

The “little horn” had “a mouth” (v. 8) on him too. He used it to “speak pompous words against the Most High” (v. 25), just

as this beast also
"opened his mouth
in blasphemy."

Does this beast
attack God's people? Yes.

It was granted to him to
make war with the saints
and to overcome them.
And authority was given him
over every tribe, tongue, and
nation. All who dwell on the
earth will worship him, whose
names have not been written
in the Book of Life of the Lamb
slain from the foundation of the
world (Revelation 13:7, 8).

As we know, from AD 538 to
AD 1798, the duration of the 1,260-year
prophecy, the "little horn" especially made
"war against the saints, and [prevailed]
against them" (Daniel 7:21).

Indeed, the "little horn" power of Daniel 7 is the
sea beast of Revelation. They are one and the same. This
means that the sea beast is none other than the papacy.

But Revelation does not stop there. It gives us more
evidence regarding the identity of this beast:

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been
mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was
healed. And all the world marveled and followed
the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave
authority to the beast; and they worshiped the
beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able
to make war with him?"
(Revelation 13:3, 4).

The prediction that
this beast power was
"mortally wounded"
was fulfilled in 1798
when General
Berthier, head of
the French army,
entered Rome,
declared that papal
rule had come
to an end, and
took Pope Pius
VI as a prisoner
to France. When
Pius later died, it
certainly seemed
that the papacy
had reached its end.

But everyone today
knows that to be far
from true.

More than a century
later, Italian dictator Benito
Mussolini signed an agreement
with the Vatican that established the
papacy as a political state and protected it from Italian
government interference. A gradual political and
religious healing of the wounded papacy has been
taking place ever since.

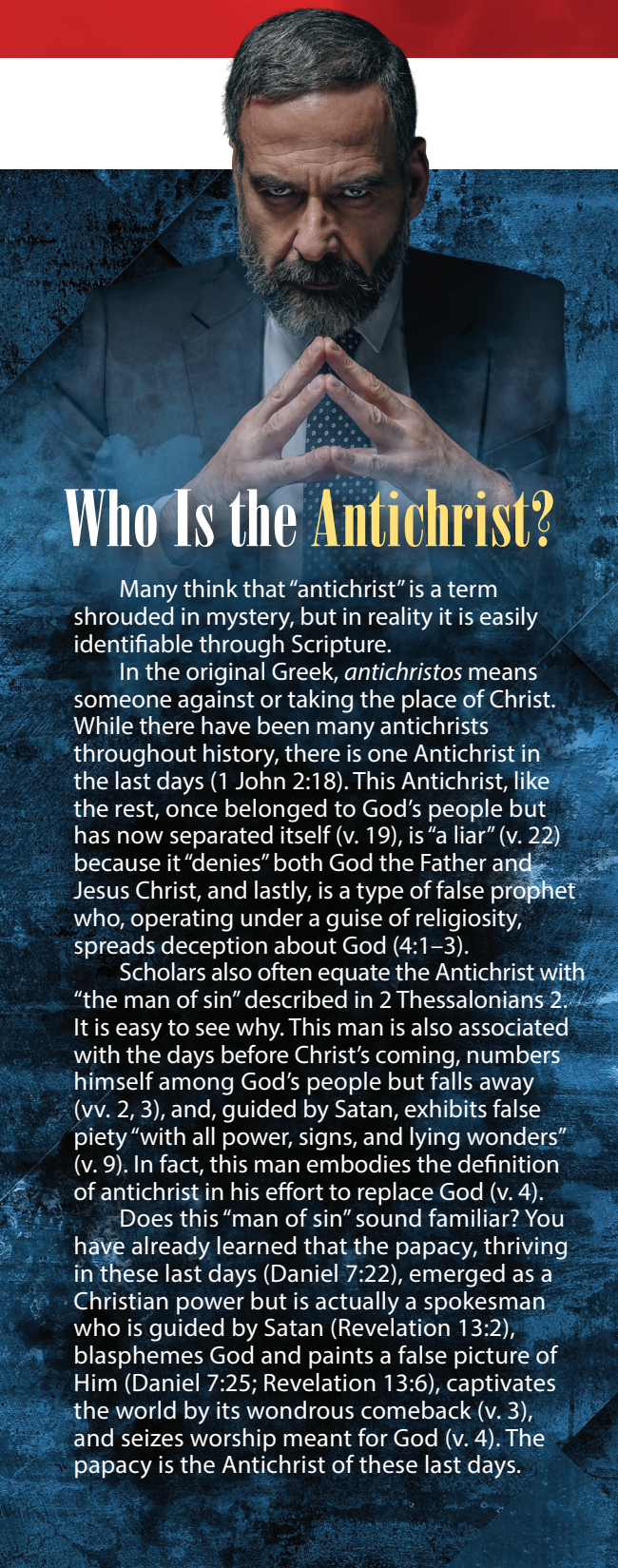


Today, Vatican City is the world's smallest
country. And less than a century after the
Vatican-Mussolini concordat, the papacy's
political reach is greater than ever. The
Vatican now has ambassadors, called "papal
nuncios," in every corner of the globe. In 1984,
it established diplomatic relations with the United States.

In 2017, the year which marked the 500th
anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the
Catholic Church took notable steps toward Protestant
denominations, advocating for a putting aside of
differences in favor of a united Christian front.

Have we been seeing the fulfillment of prophecy?





Who Is the Antichrist?

Many think that “antichrist” is a term shrouded in mystery, but in reality it is easily identifiable through Scripture.

In the original Greek, *antichristos* means someone against or taking the place of Christ. While there have been many antichrists throughout history, there is one Antichrist in the last days (1 John 2:18). This Antichrist, like the rest, once belonged to God’s people but has now separated itself (v. 19), is “a liar” (v. 22) because it “denies” both God the Father and Jesus Christ, and lastly, is a type of false prophet who, operating under a guise of religiosity, spreads deception about God (4:1–3).

Scholars also often equate the Antichrist with “the man of sin” described in 2 Thessalonians 2. It is easy to see why. This man is also associated with the days before Christ’s coming, numbers himself among God’s people but falls away (vv. 2, 3), and, guided by Satan, exhibits false piety “with all power, signs, and lying wonders” (v. 9). In fact, this man embodies the definition of antichrist in his effort to replace God (v. 4).

Does this “man of sin” sound familiar? You have already learned that the papacy, thriving in these last days (Daniel 7:22), emerged as a Christian power but is actually a spokesman who is guided by Satan (Revelation 13:2), blasphemes God and paints a false picture of Him (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:6), captivates the world by its wondrous comeback (v. 3), and seizes worship meant for God (v. 4). The papacy is the Antichrist of these last days.



But let us remember who the real enemy is. Let us remember who the world is really following when it follows “after the beast.” The power “who gave authority to the beast” is the dragon, the devil. It is the devil who used the power of pagan Rome to persecute the early Christian church. But when this approach caused the church to grow instead, it was the devil who, through the papacy, corrupted the church from within—through a much more effective counterfeit religion.

The description of the sea beast ends with these words:

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (Revelation 13:9, 10).



This prophecy encourages us to study deeply and to persevere, standing firm against the deceptions of the devil and his beast by keeping our faith focused on Christ. He is the only one “able to make war with him [the beast]” and emerge victorious. This will be necessary for, as we near the end of time, things will get much worse: The dragon (Satan), working through Rome (the papacy), will seek a third ally in crushing God’s people.

Who is this ally? Turn the page to find out ...

1. Alexander Clarence Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church and Its Influence on the Civilisation of Western Europe from the First to the Thirteenth Century* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 148, 149.
2. Amplified Bible, La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2015.
3. Joseph Deharbe, S.J., *A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion*, trans. John Fander (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1912), 279.
4. *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, Encyclical Letter (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1903), 304.
5. *Catholic National*, July 1895.

Catholic Teachings vs. God's Word

The Bible teaches that we are not to bow down to statues.

Exodus 20:4, 5.

The Roman Catholic Church says that we should bow down to statues.

The Bible teaches that all but Jesus have sinned.

Romans 3:10–12, 23; Hebrews 4:15.

The Roman Catholic Church says that Mary was sinless.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only Mediator between man and God. 1 Timothy 2:5.

The Roman Catholic Church says Mary is co-mediator with Christ.

The Bible teaches that Christ offered His sacrifice on the cross once and for all.

Hebrews 7:27, 28; 10:10.

The Roman Catholic Church says that priests sacrifice Christ on the altar at every mass.

The Bible teaches that all Christians are saints and priests.

Ephesians 1:1; 1 Peter 2:9.

The Roman Catholic Church says that saints and priests are special castes within Christianity.

The Bible teaches that all Christians should know that they have eternal life. 1 John 5:13.

The Roman Catholic Church says that Christians cannot know that they have eternal life.

The Bible teaches that we should call no religious leader "father."

Matthew 23:9.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that we may call the priests and the pope "father." The word "pope" is derived from the Italian word for "father": *pappas*.

The Bible teaches to not pray in vain repetition. Matthew 6:7.

The Roman Catholic Church says to pray the Lord's Prayer or the Hail Mary repetitiously.

The Bible teaches to confess sins to God for only God can forgive.

Isaiah 43:25; Luke 5:24.

The Roman Catholic Church says we must confess sins to a priest to obtain forgiveness.

The Bible teaches that the dead know nothing and do nothing until Christ's second coming.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:5.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that purgatory exists and that we should pray for the dead.

Quotes

from Famous Theologians

While it might be new information to some, the teaching that the papacy is the Antichrist has long been taught in Christendom by respected theologians throughout history. Here are just a few sayings from a selection of Christian thought leaders that reveal this to be true:

Martin Luther | German Protestant Reformer

"The Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God" (*The Smalcald Articles*, II, IV).

John Calvin | French Protestant Reformer

"It is certain that the Roman Pontiff has impudently transferred to himself the most peculiar properties of God and Christ, there cannot be a doubt that he is the leader and standard-bearer of an impious and abominable kingdom. ... Although the Pope, who is Antichrist, be set in God's sanctuary, ... he is not worthy to be taken and accounted for a minister" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 4).

J.A. Wylie | Scottish Historian of Religion

"In the life of Christ we behold the converse of what the Antichrist must be; and in the prophecy of the Antichrist we are shown the converse of what Christ must be, and was. And when we place the Papacy between the two, and compare it with each, we find, on the one hand, that it is the perfect converse of Christ as seen in his life; and on the other, that it is the perfect image of the Antichrist, as shown in the prophecy of him. We conclude, therefore, that if Jesus of Nazareth be the Christ, the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist" (*The Papacy: A Demonstration*).

John Knox | Scottish Theologian

"Yea, to speak it in plain words; lest that we submit ourselves to Satan, thinking that we submit ourselves to Jesus Christ; for, as for your Roman kirk, as it is now corrupted, and the authority thereof, whereon stands the hope of your victory, I no more doubt but that it is the synagogue of Satan, and the head thereof, called the pope, to be that man of sin, of whom the apostle speaks" (*The History of the Reformation in Scotland*).

Thomas Cranmer | Leader of English Reformation, Archbishop of Canterbury

"Whereof it follows Rome to be the seat of antichrist, and the pope to be very antichrist himself. I could prove the same by many other scriptures ... and strong reasons" (*The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, Vol. 1).

John Wesley | English Theologian

"[The pope] is ... the man of sin, as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled, the son of perdition, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers, destroyed innumerable souls, and will himself perish everlastingly. He ... exalts himself above all that is called God, ... claiming the highest power, the highest honor; suffering himself not once only to be styled God or vice-god. Indeed, no less is implied in his ordinary title, Most Holy Lord, or, Most Holy Father. So that he sits—enthroned, ... declaring himself that he is God—claiming the prerogatives which belong to God alone" (*Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*).

Charles Spurgeon | English Baptist Preacher

"It is the duty ... of every Christian to pray against Antichrist, and as to what Antichrist is no sane man ought to raise a question. If it be not the Popery in the Church of Rome, ... there is nothing in the world that can be called by that name. If there were to be issued a hue and cry for Antichrist, we should certainly take up this church on suspicion, and it certainly would not be let loose again, for it so exactly answers the description. Popery ... is contrary to Christ's gospel, and is the Antichrist, and we ought to pray against it. It should be the daily prayer of every believer that Antichrist might be hurled like a millstone into the flood ... because it wounds Christ, because it robs Christ of His glory, because it puts sacramental efficacy in the place of His atonement, and lifts a piece of bread into the place of the Savior, and a few drops of water into the place of the Holy Ghost, and puts a mere fallible man like ourselves up as the vicar of Christ on earth" ("Pray for Jesus," 1866).

The BEAST from the LAND



An Amazing Fact:

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution begins: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." However, according to the Bible, this amendment—designed to ensure that the government would never impose a national religion or mandate how its citizens worship—will someday be abandoned.

In the 20th century, America came to Europe's rescue in World War I and then repeated the feat in World War II, where its unprecedented military utilized the most potent weapon ever devised: the atomic bomb.

For the decades following, America has often been called the "world's policeman," from its fight against communistic dominion to its war on terrorism.

It's almost impossible to imagine today's world without American military, financial, and political power. As the world's sole

Name

the most powerful nation in the world today.

Ask anyone on any street corner in any part of the world this question and you'll almost always get the same answer—the United States of America. Since its humble beginnings in the late 18th century, the United States has grown to become the preeminent power in the world today.

By the close of the 19th century, the United States was on the rise, gaining footholds in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as global gamesmanship brought the nation into conflict with Spain and other nations.

U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH

The United States is ranked by Credit Suisse as having the world's most powerful military. It has not only the largest military budget of all nations but also the largest number of military bases outside its borders, the largest air force, and the largest navy. It currently has nearly 6,000 nuclear weapons.



remaining superpower, its influence is unparalleled in human history.

With all of this being true, you would think the Bible would have something to say about the United States' role in last-day prophecy. Does it? Let's find out ...

Out of the Earth

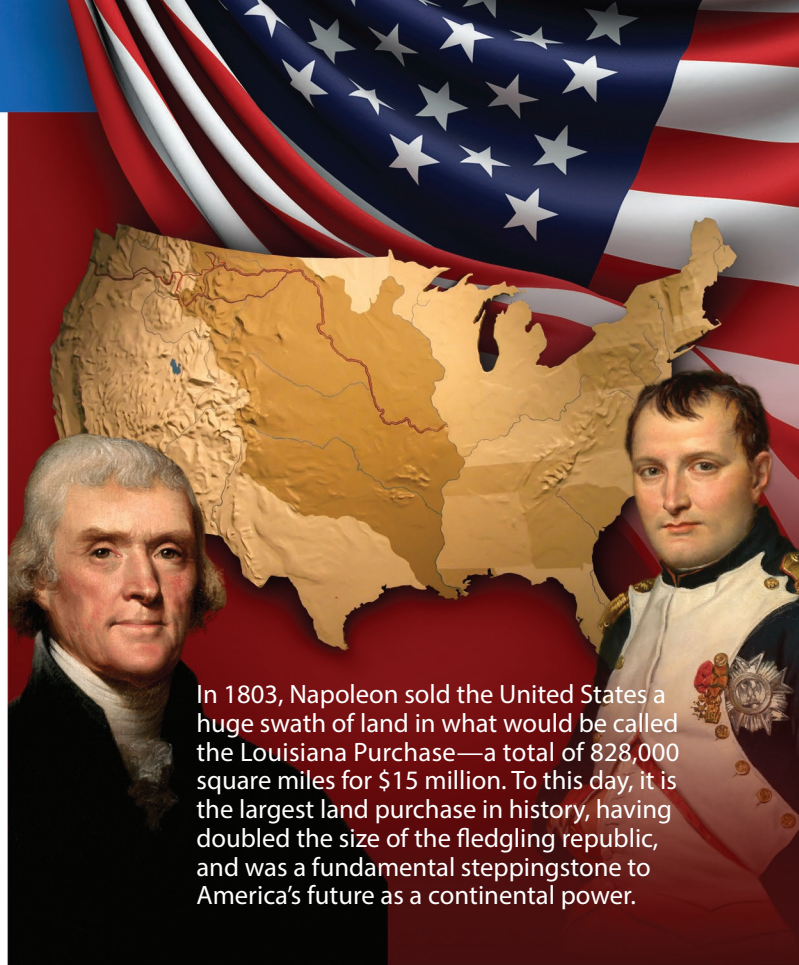
We learned in Chapter 1 that the prophetic book of Revelation uses the imagery of beasts to symbolize two "kingdoms" that rise to prominence in the last days. We also discovered through many identifying marks that the first "beast rising up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1) represents the papacy, defined repeatedly in Bible prophecy as a predominantly religious power whose ambition is to appropriate worship meant only for God. But after 1,260 years of uninterrupted dominance, its power would be seriously crippled by a "deadly wound" (v. 3). Recall that this occurred in 1798, when the pope was taken captive by Napoleon's army and, while imprisoned, eventually met his death. Thus were the words of verse 10, in one historical sense, fulfilled: "He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword."

Scripture documents that at the same time these things take place, a second beast—in other words, a second nation—would emerge on the world stage:

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon (Revelation 13:11).

What nation was birthed around the time of the Roman Catholic Church's apparent demise? The United States declared its independence in 1776, voted to adopt its constitution in 1787, and by 1798, had been recognized by other nations as an independent power. America fits the Bible's timing perfectly.

What does it mean that this beast was "coming up out of the earth" instead of out of the water, as did the first beast of Revelation 13 and the four beasts in



In 1803, Napoleon sold the United States a huge swath of land in what would be called the Louisiana Purchase—a total of 828,000 square miles for \$15 million. To this day, it is the largest land purchase in history, having doubled the size of the fledgling republic, and was a fundamental steppingstone to America's future as a continental power.

Daniel 7? Remember, we know that in Bible prophecy, water symbolizes densely populated areas of the world (Revelation 17:15).

Since earth, or land, is the opposite of sea, this second beast from the earth would arise in an area of the world that was as yet sparsely populated. That meant that it could not be born out of the crowded nations of the Old World. But it could rise up in the uncharted territory of the Western Hemisphere, aptly called the New World—the exact location where the United States of America was founded.

"Two Horns Like a Lamb"

The Bible also describes this nation as having two lamb-like horns. Horns in Bible prophecy, we have already learned, represent kings and kingdoms (Daniel 7:24; 8:21)

In 1800, the population density of Europe was approximately ten times that of the United States.



—in other words, ruling powers. In the case of the United States, a republic instead of a monarchy, the horns represent its two essential governing principles: civil and religious liberty.

These two tenets, established in the country's founding documents, the Constitution and its first group of amendments, the Bill of Rights, define the fundamental objective of the United States. It is a nation that exists to serve the common individual and to preserve the individual's inalienable rights.

Notice also the absence of crowns in contrast to the horns of the sea beast, further signifying a government without a king.

You might have heard America called "the great democratic experiment," a singularly innovative nation. Likewise, this second beast is also unique. Indeed, there is no other beast in prophecy illustrated by the horns of a lamb. Like a lamb, the United States ...

- Is comparatively young, a nation that is only a couple of centuries old.
- Is not a predator or persecutor, but considers itself a champion of freedom and the welfare of its people—and even those in other nations.

Israel began as a nation of shepherds. Keenly familiar with domestic animals, its people understood that the goats and sheep with the largest horns dominated their respective flocks. Horns filled with oil were also used in anointing kings and the high priest. See Genesis 47:3; Exodus 29:7; and 1 Samuel 16:1.



Perhaps most intriguing, the United States patterned itself after the quintessential Lamb, Jesus Christ, in that it is largely founded on Christian principles. In fact, most signers of the Declaration of Independence were Christians, as were all of the early Supreme Court justices.

At its inception, in a world where most citizens were taxed to support a state-endorsed religion and religious dissidents were often oppressed, the fledgling nation stood apart as the standard-bearer of freedom. This is a pillar of the Christian faith. Worship of the true God is one that is done without coercion. The Bible tells us that God *invites* all to come to Him (Matthew 11:28); that He knocks on the door of our hearts, awaiting admittance (Revelation 3:20); that His gifts are without strings or payment (James 1:5). "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which *if a man does*, he shall live by them" (Leviticus 18:5, emphasis added); the true God leaves the choice up to each of us.

"Of the liberty of conscience in matters of religious faith, of speech and of the press; of the trial by jury of the vicinage in civil and criminal cases; of the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus; of the right to keep and bear arms. ... If these rights are well defined, and secured against encroachment, it is impossible that government should ever degenerate into tyranny."

—James Monroe, U.S. Founding Father
and Fifth President of the United States



A bright beacon in a world of tyranny, the United States is known the world over as a champion of freedom, evidenced not only by its religious liberty, but also by its principles of free speech, free press, and free market. For all these reasons do multitudes of people around the world risk life and limb to become its citizens year after year. But could all this someday change?

Like a Dragon

Scripture tells us that at first, the United States will look like a lamb, but it will ultimately speak and act “like a dragon.”

The dragon, as we already learned from Revelation 12:9, is Satan. Revelation 12 illustrates in detail how Satan works. He is violent, ruthless, and persecuting (vv. 4, 12, 13, 15, 17). He conquers by brute strength; he hates God and, therefore, all followers of God. His aim is the same as it has always been: to usurp God’s throne and force people to worship and obey him (Isaiah 14:12–14).

A nation “speaks” through its policy. So, when Scripture reveals that the United States

speaks as a dragon, it means that it will use some form of legislation to enforce Satan’s bidding.

This may come as a shock. How could a “sweet land of liberty” ever do such a thing? Consider what the Bible plainly says regarding the second beast:

- 1 ***“Exercises all the authority of the first beast” (Revelation 13:12).*** As was papal Rome (Daniel 7:21, 25; Revelation 13:7), the USA will eventually become a persecuting power that will compel worship out of harmony with Scripture and against individual conscience.
- 2 ***“Causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12).*** The USA will not seek worship for itself but instead will urge everyone in the world to declare allegiance to the Antichrist.
- 3 ***“Telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived” (Revelation 13:14).*** An image is a likeness or representation. An image of the first beast would be a representation of the papacy—in other words, a mirror image of it. In order for the USA to make a copy of the papacy, a church-state government, it would have to set aside its founding principles and combine church and state. Upon doing so, in



Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.



St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican, Rome

imitation of the papacy at the height of its power during the Dark Ages, the USA will then legislate religious observance in accordance with the papacy. It will then influence all the nations of the world to follow its example.

- 4 *"And cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed" (Revelation 13:15).* Just as the papacy slew millions for their faith in the Dark Ages, the USA will then use its influence to impose a death sentence upon those who persist in refusing to worship the beast or his image.

Signs and Wonders

It may seem far-fetched that the United States, stalwart paradigm of religious liberty, would ever propose worship of any entity—no less the papacy.

Yet immediately after verse 12, prophecy foretells that this second beast will do "great signs" (v. 13) and that these signs will serve to deceive people all over the world to bend the knee to the first beast (v. 14). Furthermore, it will be a "false prophet" who will perform these miracles (19:20).

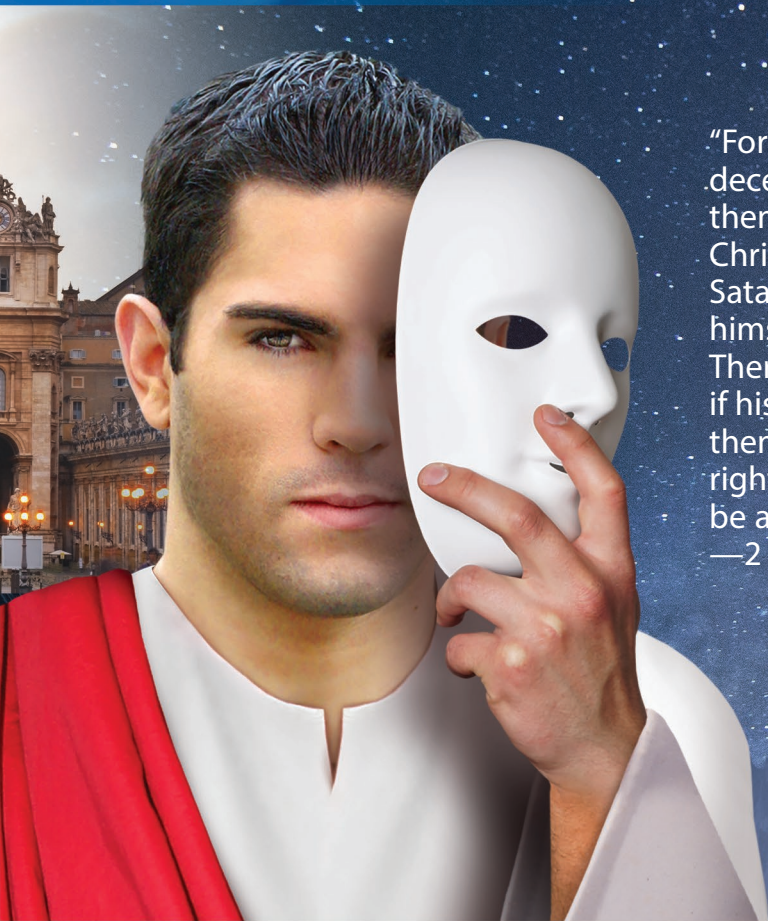
Who is this "false prophet"? Jesus defines "a prophet" as His "messenger" (Matthew 11:9, 10); so a "false prophet"

A Babylonian king once erected a mammoth golden idol of himself to be worshiped by everyone in his kingdom. According to Daniel 3, those who disobeyed were threatened with death.

All the same, three Jewish men refused to worship the image and were thrown into a flaming furnace. But they were unharmed. Moreover, the king noticed a fourth person in the fire, someone divine, "like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25). Then the three Hebrews came out of the furnace, untouched by the flames.

There is a strong parallel between this story and Revelation 13: "He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak *and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed*" (v. 15, emphasis added). Just as those three faithful Hebrews refused to bow to the image, so will God's last-day people refuse to worship the image of the beast, but will "worship Him who made heaven and earth" (Revelation 14:7).





"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."
—2 Corinthians 11:13–15

would be someone who appears to have a message from Christ but actually does not—a religious, not a secular or atheistic, entity. What religious entity would most likely work in tandem with a secular government to enact these signs and wonders? The role may naturally fall to Protestantism, America's founding faith, the one with which it has most identified and currently its most popular form of Christianity at just under 50 percent of the population. But as a "false prophet," Protestantism will become apostate Protestantism, rejecting its once beloved biblical doctrines.

Its miracles will be false demonstrations as well, counterfeits fulfilled by "sorcery" (Revelation 18:23). Revelation 13:13 outlines in particular one of these chief miracles: to "[make] fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

There is another example of this in the Bible: when the prophet Elijah prayed for God to rain down fire as proof that He was the only true God (1 Kings 18:20–39). When Elijah's prayer was answered, all the people worshiped God immediately.

Now a similar miracle will be used to deceive billions into worshipping a counterfeit god.

Who will they really be worshipping? None other than the one who has always desired to supplant God: Satan. Remember, behind every lie—behind the beast and the false prophet—is Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44). He will perform these counterfeit wonders (Revelation 16:13, 14). Just as he embodied the serpent to beguile



Eve in the garden of Eden, so will he disguise himself as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Scripture tells us that Satan's followers, his angels, can even pose as "apostles of Christ" (v. 13). If his underlings can accomplish that, what could Satan, with his immense power, achieve? Could he, for instance, impersonate Christ Himself? What greater lie could there be to accomplish his purpose? Indeed, in these last days, the Bible affirms that "false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24).

What happens when the devil plays God? What kinds of morals will he instill in his believers? What kinds of laws will he put into place in the name of justice, in the name

of goodness? As Jesus said, "The time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2).

With the dragon in control, it will always be about worship.

Most Influential Religious Power in the World

Just how influential is the papacy today? It is arguably the strongest religiopolitical power in the world. Notice the following:

A In response to journalist Charlie Rose's question regarding Pope Francis as "the most famous, the most desirous" man alive, Cardinal Timothy Dolan had this to say: "The more he tries to de-emphasize the prestige and the power of the papacy, ... the more people pay attention to him." —*CBS This Morning*, September 22, 2015

B The stated aim of the pope is to unify the Christian world. In January 2014, Francis led an ecumenical worship service at St. Paul's Basilica. In attendance were, among others, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and Orthodox representatives. Francis said, "It is unacceptable to consider 'divisions in the Church as

something natural, inevitable,' because 'divisions wound Christ's body [and] they impair the witness which we are called to give to him before the world.'" —*Catholic Herald*, January 27, 2014

C Virtually every leading country has an ambassador at the Vatican, and world leaders often turn to the pope for peace. Francis hosted a prayer summit at the Vatican with Israeli and Palestinian leaders. He has twice met with Russia's president, Vladimir Putin. "Then, the pope, who as a Latin American had a lot of credibility in Havana, helped pave the way to the U.S.-Cuba thaw." —*Sylvia Poggioli, National Public Radio*, April 14, 2016

D Francis' visit to the United States in 2015 carried both pastoral and political implications as well as elicited an unprecedented response from American officials: President Obama personally greeted the pope as he arrived at a U.S. airbase, a decision the White House said was a symbol of the high level of respect Americans have for the pontiff. Francis'



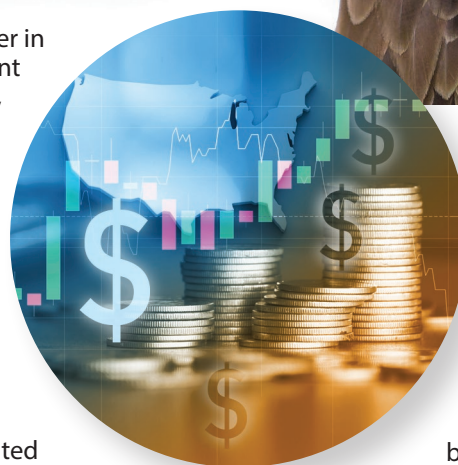


visit also included the first address ever in American history by any pope to a joint session of Congress. —*Irish Daily Mail*, September 23, 2015

Strongest Military and Economic Power in the World

Just how strong and influential is the United States today? It is regarded as the world's most powerful military and economic force and the world's center of influence. Note the following:

- A** The USA finished 2019 with an estimated \$21.5 trillion nominal GDP.
- B** "In the key categories of power, the U.S. will remain dominant for the foreseeable future." —Ian Bremmer, *Time*, May 28, 2015
- C** "What ultimately makes the difference between war and peace ... is not good intentions, or strong words, or a grand coalition. It is the capability, credibility, and global reach of American hard power." —Senator John McCain, November 15, 2014
- D** "The United States is and remains the one indispensable nation. That has been true for the



century passed and it will be true for the century to come." —Former U.S. President Barack Obama, May 28, 2014

E In 2020, the USA spent \$732 billion on national armed forces; that's more than the military budgets of China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, and Brazil combined. —Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Though certainly facing challenges from such world powers as China and Russia, America continues to dominate the world in every vital aspect.

These are sobering facts. However, God gave them not to frighten us but to encourage us, that we may be prepared, that we may watch and pray, that we may trust in His Word. The devil will steal our liberties—but God promises to set us free.

Want to see how? Read on!

The MARK of the BEAST

What Is It?

An Amazing Fact:

During the peak of the Cold War, hundreds of U.S. Minuteman nuclear missiles were housed in silos across America and Europe. In order to safeguard against accidental launches, President John F. Kennedy issued an order in 1962 requiring all the missiles to be fitted with a complex security code to prevent unauthorized arming or detonation. However, the Strategic Air Command, concerned about the ability to launch missiles quickly, secretly set all the codes to 8 zeros.

Passwords.

You probably have dozens of them. You need one to unlock your phone, to access your bank accounts and emails—to do just about anything. Some need these secret codes to enter office buildings or even unlock a car door. Multiple passwords are simply the reality of our day and age.

But did you know that passwords have been around for centuries? In the ancient tale, “Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves,” you’ll find one of the most famous passwords in all of history: “Open Sesame!”

However, an even older password can be found in Revelation 13. It is called the “mark of the beast,” and having it will unlock access to buying and selling in the last days.



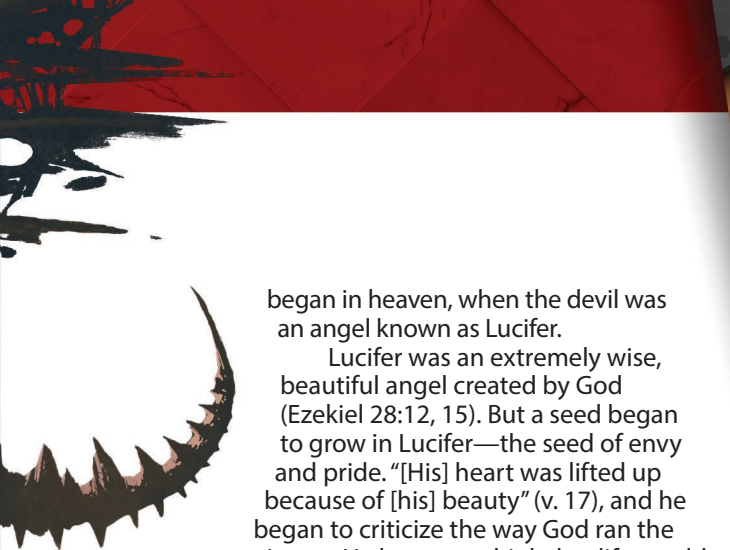
In the two thousand years since the book of Revelation was written, the true meaning of the mark has been distorted and confused. Many have taught that it is a tattoo of the number “666,” or that it is a computer chip placed under the skin, or that it was the use of a coin in circulation in the first century AD that bore the image of the Roman emperor Nero.

The beast of Revelation 13 and its mark are some of the most misinterpreted prophecies in all of Scripture—yet it is a vitally important message to understand. So what is this mark? And how is the United States connected to it?

In this eye-opening chapter, you’ll find out directly from the Bible. Just keep reading ...

A Cosmic War

As you have learned, the devil is the mastermind behind the persecution of millions of Christians. But did you know that his war against God began long before Earth was ever created? In fact, it



began in heaven, when the devil was an angel known as Lucifer.

Lucifer was an extremely wise, beautiful angel created by God (Ezekiel 28:12, 15). But a seed began to grow in Lucifer—the seed of envy and pride. “[His] heart was lifted up because of [his] beauty” (v. 17), and he began to criticize the way God ran the universe. He began to think that life would be better off with him in charge instead of God, saying to himself, “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; ... I will be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14).

Soon, through a web of deceit (Revelation 12:4; Isaiah 9:15), Lucifer emerged as the head of an open rebellion against God. His proposed order was one diametrically opposed to God’s government of love and truth. So began the first civil war:

War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Revelation 12:7–9).

Ever since, Satan’s determination to control the universe has only intensified. He has been waging war against God on Earth to this day—and it is this same war that culminates in the prophecy of Revelation 13.

There have only ever been two sides in this war: God’s and Satan’s. As Jesus said, there are only two kinds of people: the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:37–39). The wheat belong to God, and the tares belong to the devil. And much like a password is tied to your specific identity, the book of Revelation points out two marks that will *identify* which side a person is on. God has a mark for His people, the wheat, and Satan has one for his, the tares.

What are these marks? How do you receive one or the other?

Read on to gather the evidence, that you may “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15).



Ever since the beginning of our world, human beings have had the freedom to choose sides in this cosmic war. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain chose to invent his own form of worship, then persecuted and ultimately killed his own brother. Abel, on the other hand, chose to worship God by obeying His commandments. (See Genesis 4:1–8.) History has and will repeat itself (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

God’s Mark of Authority

In the Bible, the words “seal,” “sign,” “mark,” and “token” are used interchangeably.¹ In Revelation, God’s mark is actually called His “seal.” A seal is known as a person’s symbol of authority. Take a notary’s stamp, for example. A notary’s stamp has three elements required to be official: the

notary's name, the notary's title, and the notary's jurisdiction or area of commission. It was much the same for any ancient seal in Bible times.

Fortunately, the Bible gives a clear indication of what God's seal is. First and foremost, the seal of God is the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30). Those who have this seal also have His Spirit. But there will also be a specific, outward evidence in the lives of the redeemed:

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).

The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath ... as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth (Exodus 31:16, 17).

The actual text of the Sabbath commandment seals the deal:

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).

Did you notice? This commandment has all three features of a seal. It contains God's name and title: "the LORD your God"; it also contains His territory, the planet Earth: "the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them." It is His verifiable mark as our Creator, a covenant between Him and us of His power to create and His power to recreate us anew.

Revelation 7:3 says that the seal will be upon the "foreheads" of God's people. Hebrews 10:16 further identifies this



What day is the Sabbath?²

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (Genesis 2:1–3).

According to Scripture:

1. The time when God made the Sabbath was at the end of the Creation week. Notice that Scripture identifies a day "from evening to evening" (Leviticus 23:32). (See also Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.) So the seventh day is from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.
2. The way in which God made the Sabbath was by taking a day—the seventh day—and resting on it, blessing it, and sanctifying it. In other words, the Sabbath was not something He placed on the day. It is the day itself.

We can be sure, then, that the day God blessed, the seventh day, can never be taken from the Sabbath, and the Sabbath can never be taken from the day that God blessed. These cannot be separated because they are one.

as God's law written in our "hearts" and "minds." This is not just lip service, nor is it forced service. The forehead is where the frontal lobe of the brain resides. It is the area of the brain that is known as the seat of a person's decision-making, will, and spirituality. A person who has God's law in his mind believes in God with all his heart, and he will keep the biblical Sabbath because he will "follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Revelation 14:4).

Might the mark of God's challenger—the beast—also involve a holy day? Let's see.

God made the Sabbath holy not only for Jews but for all humanity: "The Sabbath was made for *man*, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, emphasis added). It is a day that He desires everyone to keep, and that includes not just literal Israel but spiritual Israel—all those who believe and follow God, regardless of race or nationality. Furthermore, the Sabbath will continue to be observed by all throughout eternity (Isaiah 66:23).



The Papacy's Mark of Authority

Just as the Sabbath is the specific seal of God's authority, the mark of the beast refers to the identifying sign associated with the first beast of Revelation 13—the one symbolizing the papacy. However, remember that this beast received all its power from Satan, the dragon. This mark, therefore, is actually the devil's mark.

You might assume at first that the archenemy of God would have a mark so opposite of the Sabbath seal that it would be easy to tell the difference. But remember that the devil is the master of deception. He tricked Eve into eating the forbidden fruit by mixing in doubt with truth (Genesis 3:1–4); he twisted the

meaning of Scripture in an unsuccessful effort to tempt Jesus (Matthew 4:5–7). Scripture shows us that the devil produces counterfeits, forgeries, and façades—and his mark is no different.

Do we have any examples of the devil producing counterfeits through the agency of the first beast, the papacy? Yes. We have already learned that the Catholic Church's Ten Commandments are different from those in the Bible.

Let's take a closer look at one of these changes: the fourth commandment.

In the Catholic catechism, the fourth commandment is written like so: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

The longest of the Ten Commandments is shortened to just eight words. What has been cut out? Every one of the elements that made the seventh day God's seal of authority: His name, His title, His jurisdiction. Written in this way, the Sabbath can refer to any other day—and as we will discover, it does.

Notice the following section from a Catholic catechism:

Q: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

A: 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.³

So, as evidence of its "authority," the Catholic Church points to the mass majority of Protestant churches that have accepted its new holy day. Indeed, there is no denying that Christians around the world predominantly



go to church on Sunday. Certainly, “the world [has] marveled and followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3).

Notice the following section from another Catholic catechism:

Q: Which is the Sabbath day?

A: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

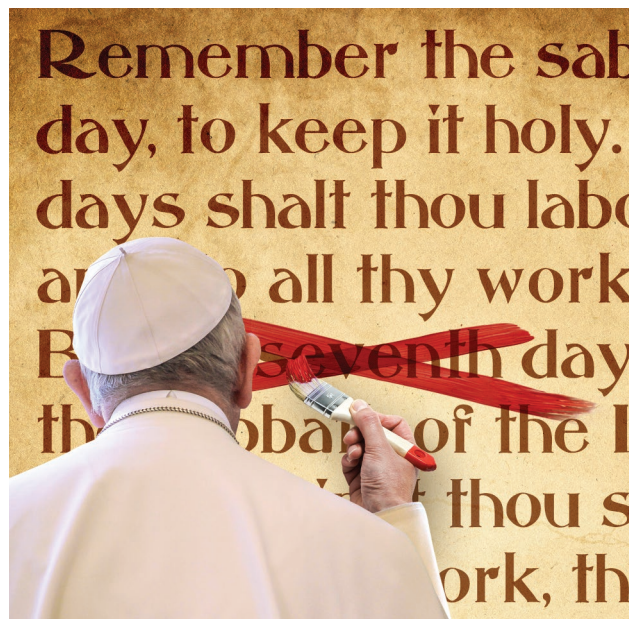
Q: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

A: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.⁴

Here, a statement by a Catholic newspaper further illuminates matters: “The Church is above the Bible; and this transference of Sabbath observance from Saturday to Sunday is proof.”⁵

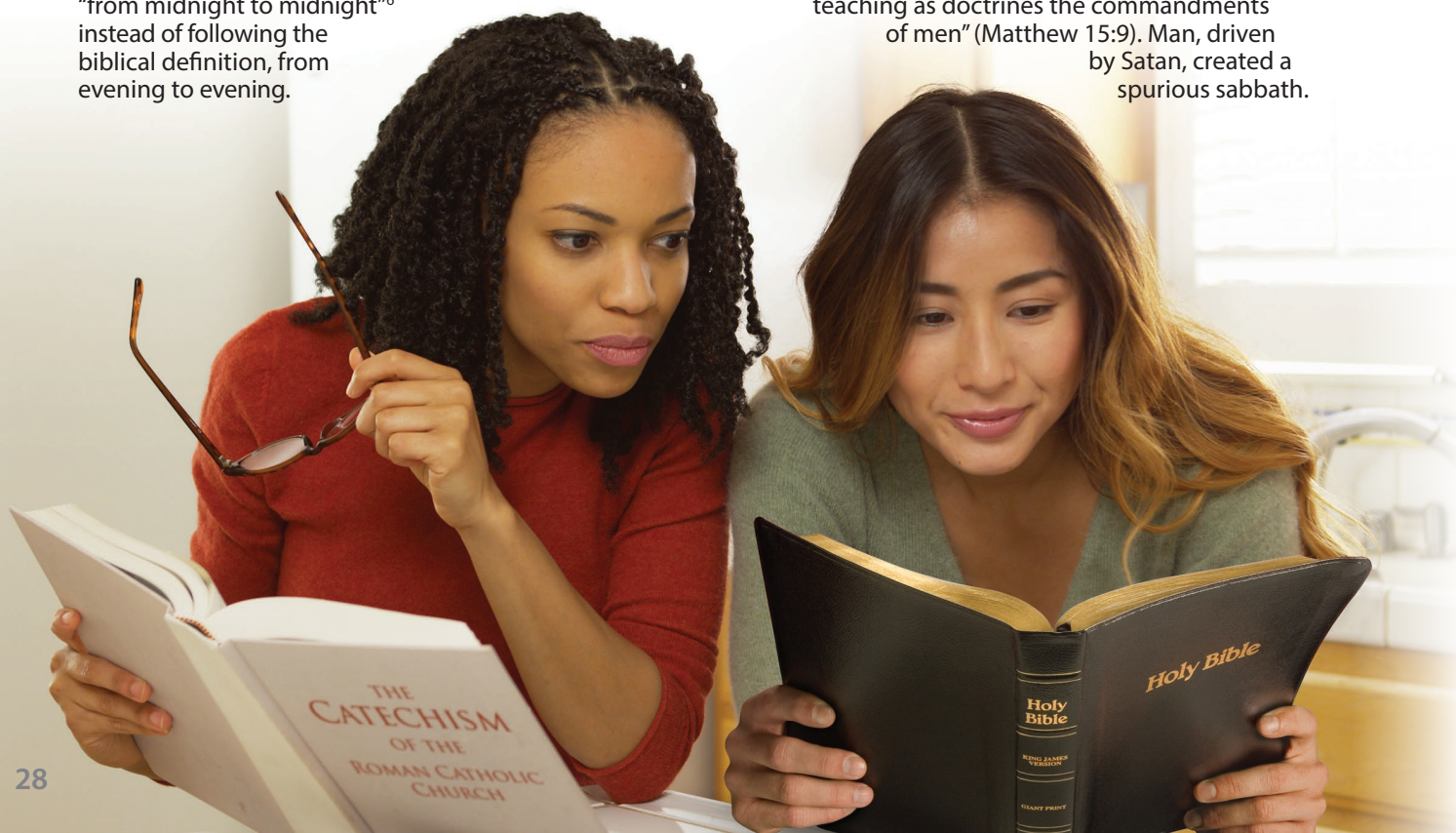
Thus, the Catholic Church admits to deliberately changing God’s laws. Its ability to make these changes, it claims, was bestowed by God: “We have in the authoritative voice of the Church the voice of Christ Himself.”

What is more, Scripture predicted that it would do just that. Remember, Daniel 7:25 states that the little horn will “intend to change *times* and law” (emphasis added). Here is a change not only of God’s law but of God’s “times,” from the seventh day to the first day. Furthermore, the papacy also adopted the pagan Roman custom of counting the day “from midnight to midnight”⁶ instead of following the biblical definition, from evening to evening.



But make no mistake: God did not make those changes. His law never changes: “Whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it” (Ecclesiastes 3:14). The Scriptures declare about God: “You have blessed it, O LORD, and it shall be blessed forever” (1 Chronicles 17:27); and “the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

When in doubt, know that the Bible never lies—but men do (8:20). It was man, in the form of the papacy, who made those changes: “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). Man, driven by Satan, created a spurious sabbath.



More Counterfeits

Recall that the first beast of Revelation 13 is described as a composite of the four beasts of Daniel 7, meaning that it has characteristics derived from those four empires. Note the alignment between the two sets of Scripture, written 700 years apart, in this quick comparison:

	Daniel 7	Revelation 13
Babylon	Lion-like beast (v. 4)	"mouth of a lion" (v. 2)
Medo-Persia	Bear-like beast (v. 5)	"feet of a bear" (v. 2)
Greece	Leopard-like beast (v. 6)	"like a leopard" (v. 2)
Rome	Ten-horned beast (v. 7)	"having ... ten horns" (v. 1)

Note that these four former empires were all pagan. That the first beast resembles them means the papacy incorporated certain pagan beliefs and practices from each empire.

The papacy copied its governmental hierarchy from pagan Rome, such as the pope's adoption of the title and privileges of Pontifex Maximus, Rome's emperor. It copied its philosophy and culture from ancient Greece, "[having] preserved and made fruitful the philosophical intuitions of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle."⁷ Its legal structure resembles that of Medo-Persia such that it has and will (with the help of the United States) legislate religious persecution. (See Daniel 6.) Lastly, it mirrored Babylon's religious practices in that it promotes worship not only of graven images but of the pontiff himself. (See Daniel 3.)

This false religion, paganism, pervades the papal system; it is to this day clothed in Christian garb and then promoted to the world as Christ's teachings.



The Number of a Man

Revelation 13 tells us that the mark of the beast is connected to "the number of a man" (v. 18). This makes sense. We know this beast to be the papacy, a man-made—not divine—entity headed by a man, the pope. But is there an even more definitive connection that prophecy wants to ensure we know?

The Bible gives us very specific details regarding this number:

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Additionally, Revelation 15:2 refers to it as "the number of his name."

The papacy's leader, the pope, has one principal title, given in Latin, and cited here by one of the Catholic Church's mainstream newspapers:

The title of the Pope of Rome is *Vicarius Filii Dei*.⁸

But how do you count a name? Roman numerals are composed of letters from the Latin alphabet. As the papacy is a Roman institution, it is an appropriate way to count letters. Indeed, a footnote for Revelation 13:18 in some Douay versions of the Bible—a translation into English from the Vulgate, itself a Latin translation



"Blue laws," laws concerning religious restrictions, came to be known more commonly as "Sunday laws" due to the day of the week that was mainly affected. They began to be put into practice in the USA during the 1600s and prohibited travel, work, and even sales on Sundays. Some of these are still in existence in certain counties and states—and also in different countries around the world.

completed all the way back in the fourth century—says, "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number." Watch what happens when we total up the Roman numeral value of the letters of the pope's title:

VICARIUS FILII DEI

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	+ 501	
I	1				
U*	5	+ 53			
S	0				
112					

TOTALS:
112 + 53 + 501
= 666

*Historically, in the Latin alphabet, the letter "U" did not exist, though its vowel sound did—and was written using the letter "V." Thus, "V" and "U" both count as the Roman numeral "V."

Thus, the pope's principal title adds up to "the number of the beast." So what? Some say that one could perform this feat with many names—world leaders, celebrities, other religious icons. The problem with that line of reasoning is that none of those other names fit all the rest of the information given in Bible prophecy regarding the identity of the beast.

The papacy does.

Perhaps most fascinating is the title's actual meaning, translated in English as "Vicar of the Son of God." "Vicar" is another word for substitute. Another way to view someone considered to be the substitute of the Son of God is as a counterfeit.

Receiving the Mark

At this time in Earth's history, the beast's mark and God's seal have yet to be received—but the time is soon coming.

War, natural disasters, and diseases are shocking the world with greater and greater frequency—and all these Jesus foretold would happen en masse near the end of the

Could the U.S. Government Control Buying and Selling?

During World War II, the United States government rationed consumer purchases of gasoline, oil, rubber, meat, and sugar. Additionally, the United Nations has controlled buying and selling through economic sanctions in order to punish nations for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, much of the world is moving to a cashless society, making the control of an individual's buying and selling easy.



world (Matthew 24:7, 8). There will be crimes of passion and hate, social unrest, and utter chaos (vv. 9–12).

At some point, conditions will become so intolerable that people will beg, pray, and die for order, control, and safety. Then will the time be ripe for Satan's biggest deception. As you have read, the United States will herald in the world's greatest counterfeit revival!

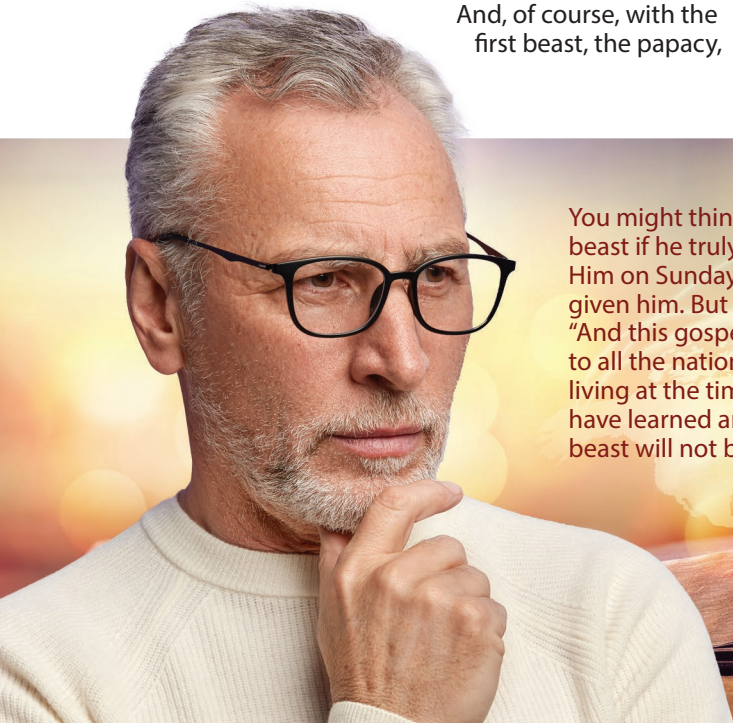
And as the so-called "great signs" (Revelation 13:13) amaze on a global scale, how easy would it be to declare the only solution for all the world's problems to be a day of rest and worship? A day of rest would ease the pollution in the environment, even mitigate all the natural disasters. A day of rest would restore family unity, vastly lowering the crime rate.

And, of course, with the first beast, the papacy,

and the false prophet, apostate Protestantism, at the helm of this movement, how easy would it be for the restoration of Sunday laws to take place? It's even possible that Satan himself, impersonating Christ, could appear and claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday.

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Revelation 13:16, 17).

Unlike the seal of God, the mark of the beast can be either on the forehead or the hand. Just as we learned that the forehead represents the mind, the hand is a symbol of work (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Whether a person fully believes that Sunday is the true Sabbath or whether he just goes



You might think that it would be unfair for a person to receive the mark of the beast if he truly believed in God but had been erroneously taught to worship Him on Sunday. God is just. He judges every person according to the light given him. But the Bible makes very clear what is to happen in the last days: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Every person living at the time of the final Sunday laws will have had the opportunity to have learned and accepted the truth. The choice to receive the mark of the beast will not be by default.

Factors That Could Set the Stage for a Worldwide Law

It may seem unlikely that you will wake up one morning to discover that the president and the pope have joined forces to form a new world government, but it remains a fact that radical changes in world leadership almost always come on the heels of some unforeseen catastrophic event. How probable would it be for the strongest economic and military power in the world to unite with the strongest religiopolitical power in the world, especially if promoted under the guise of peace and stability following a difficult global crisis?

And consider this: When people see their world falling apart, are they more willing to sacrifice their freedom for a sense of security? In the face of sudden, life-threatening circumstances, do they more readily turn to religion? Absolutely. Historically, it is following some great disaster that governments and churches lock arms and assure frightened citizens they can restore peace.

There are many factors, therefore, that could set the stage for a worldwide law. We cannot name them as certainties, but a few looming possibilities include:

- A.** Major terrorist attacks
- B.** Riots and escalating crime and evil
- C.** Drug wars
- D.** An international economic crash
- E.** Global pandemic
- F.** Nuclear threats from radical nations
- G.** Political corruption
- H.** Gross miscarriage of justice by the courts
- I.** Social and political issues
- J.** Increasing taxes
- K.** Severe natural disasters

In the last several years, haven't we seen events such as these multiply, not only domestically, but globally? In early 2020 alone, the governors of many U.S. states issued executive orders shuttering businesses and limiting what could and could not be sold during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even more stunning were laws closing churches and restricting worship with the threat of imprisonment and other penalties. Such a momentous time like this helps us recognize how fear and financial collapse can suddenly change the laws of the land.

along with the Sunday laws for social or economic benefits is of no concern to the devil. As long as a person is worshipping him instead of God, the devil is satisfied.

Revelation tells us that at first, the penalties for breaking the Sunday laws will be economic sanctions—forbidding countries and individuals who do not comply from buying or selling. Then the stakes will be raised, and the world's one and only superpower, the United States, will “cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (13:15).

So the mark of the beast and the seal of God are not barcodes or chips or anything material. They are marks of your character. You will, in essence, mark yourself by choosing whom to obey.

Some have wondered if people who worship on Sunday have the mark of the beast now. No! No one will have the mark of the beast *until* Sunday worship becomes an issue enforced by law.

However, those who expect to refuse the beast's mark in the future must step under Jesus' banner now; “behold, *now* is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2, emphasis added).

How can you be ready? We'll look at that next!

1. Compare Genesis 17:11 with Romans 4:11 and Ezekiel 9:4 with Revelation 7:3.
2. Adapted from Carlyle B. Haynes, *The Attempt to Change God's Holy Day from Sabbath to Sunday* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 13, 14.
3. Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, 3rd American rev. ed. (New York: Edward Dunigan & Bro., 1876), 174.
4. Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), 50.
5. “Sabbath Observance,” *Catholic Record* (London, Canada), Sept. 1, 1923.
6. Pliny (the Elder), *Pliny's Natural History*, vol. 1, trans. John Bostock and H.T. Riley (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), 110.
7. André Rétif, “The Catholic Spirit,” trans. Dom Aldhelm Dean, in *The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, vol. 88, ed. Henri Daniel-Rops (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1959), 85.
8. “Bureau of Information,” *Our Sunday Visitor* (Huntington, Indiana), Nov. 15, 1914.

Timeline of the Healing of the “Deadly Wound”

Most of America's early pilgrims were Protestants fleeing from religious persecution in Europe. As Protestants, they were wary of Catholic involvement in the New World, especially in the political sphere. But over the years, see how that gaping divide has been gradually healing:

1929: Under the terms of the Lateran Treaty, Vatican City, a mere 109 acres inside Rome, is established as an independent state governed by the pope, who has executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

1961: John F. Kennedy is inaugurated as the first—and, thus far, only—Catholic U.S. president.

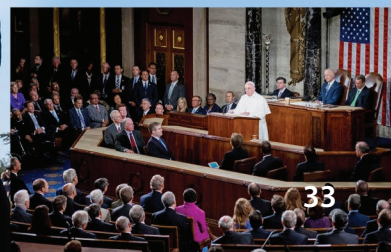
1982: President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II form a clandestine alliance against communism.

1983: Congress passes legislation ending a prohibition on funding an American ambassador to the Holy See with taxpayer dollars. Several months later, the U.S. initiates formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

2005: Three U.S. presidents—George W. Bush, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton—kneel before the remains of Pope John Paul II as he lays in state in the Vatican.

2010: With the retirement of Justice John Paul Stevens, there are no Protestants on the U.S. Supreme Court for the first time in history. And at the time of this writing, the majority of the justices are Catholic.

2015: Pope Francis holds the first-ever address by a pope to a joint session of the U.S. Congress.





GET READY!

An Amazing Fact:

The Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 killed more than 230,000 people across 14 countries. It began at 7:59 AM local time on December 26, 2004, when a 9.1-magnitude quake struck off the northern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia.

much like the PTWS, alerts people to the tidal wave of dangers coming in these last days, trumpeting the ultimate lifesaving message.

This message, found in Revelation 14, allows us to fully understand the role of America in prophecy.

The Pacific Tsunami

Warning System (PTWS) is a

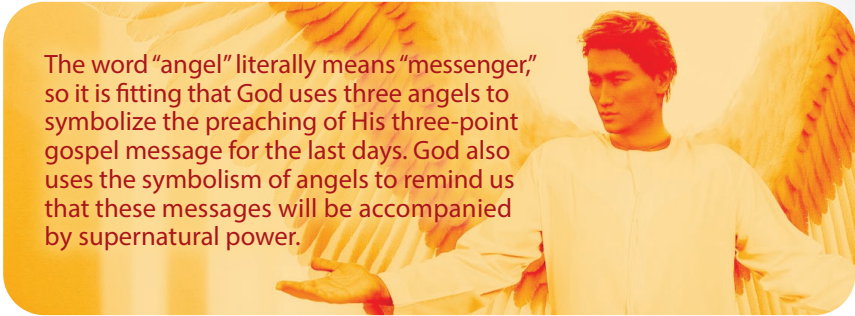
partnership of 26 nations that uses a sophisticated network of buoys and ocean floor sensors to detect earthquakes and dangerously large waves within the Pacific Ocean.

If a potential tsunami is detected, the system communicates with satellites to notify endangered coasts within seconds, and various alarms are then triggered—among them blaring sirens warning people to flee inland.

The Boxing Day tsunami was an example of one of the many signs the Bible predicted would herald our planet's final events (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:25). The book of Revelation also contains a special warning that,

Three Angels, Three Messages

Remember that the gospel will be preached to everyone on Earth before Jesus comes again (Matthew 24:14). Since Jesus made this declaration, the gospel has



The word “angel” literally means “messenger,” so it is fitting that God uses three angels to symbolize the preaching of His three-point gospel message for the last days. God also uses the symbolism of angels to remind us that these messages will be accompanied by supernatural power.

been preached around the world, but it is particularly fulfilled in the last days by this message:

I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel** to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6).

The everlasting gospel is portrayed as being proclaimed to the world in three phases by three angels:

I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, ... saying with a loud voice ... (vv. 6, 7).

And another angel followed, saying ... (v. 8).

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice ... (v. 9).

But these solitary angels are not literally the ones broadcasting the good news. Who did Jesus commission to take the gospel to the world? His disciples! (Mark 16:15). For followers of God living in these last days, sharing the three angels' messages with people is our highest joy, privilege, and responsibility. These three angels illustrate a Spirit-filled evangelistic movement that will circle the earth before the return of Christ.

The First Angel's Message

Now let's look at the substance of these messages. What are the elements of this everlasting gospel? Notice again what the first angel proclaims in Revelation 14:

Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water (v. 7).

Four distinctive points are covered in this first angel's message:

- 1 It tells us *who* to worship.** Right away, we are told that God alone deserves worship. To "fear God" does not mean to be terrified of Him. The Greek word actually means "to reverence." So we are to adore, trust, and devote ourselves to God. Doing so is for our own good: "By the fear of the LORD one departs from evil" (Proverbs 16:6).
- 2 It tells us *how* to worship.** The language used here denotes a fullness in the worship of God—mentally, physically, and spiritually. When you "fear God," you receive "wisdom" (Job 28:28). You also "keep His commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). When you "give glory to Him," you honor the body He gave you: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). When you "worship Him," you worship in spirit and truth" because God Himself "is Spirit" (John 4:23, 24). We are to worship God unreservedly, with our whole being. We learned in the previous chapter that the people who are completely committed to



following God are the ones who have the seal of God upon their foreheads.

3 It tells us *when* this message is being proclaimed. “The hour of His judgment has come”; the days approaching the final judgment are here! Jesus is coming soon, and we must tell the world this lifesaving message! The fact that the first angel relays his message “with a loud voice” emphasizes the importance.

4 It tells us the *reason* to worship. God is deserving of worship for this crucial reason: He created *and* redeemed you. No other creature—not the devil, not the beast, not the false prophet—can claim this. What commandment is the first angel echoing here? The fourth commandment: “In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11). This is undeniable evidence of the Sabbath’s imperative role as the seal of God’s authority in these last days.

The first angel’s message is a call to worship God now and a guide that reveals how to receive His seal at the end of time.

The Second Angel’s Message

The second angel comes directly after:

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

We have been learning about America and the papacy, so where did Babylon come from?

The ancient city of Babylon was originally known as Babel, where more than four millennia ago, its inhabitants decided to build a tower. Their objective was to “make a name for [themselves],” to become great and famous; they intended for their edifice to reach into “the heavens” (Genesis 11:4). This might sound familiar to you, for Satan also plotted to “ascend above the heights of the clouds” (Isaiah 14:14). Scripture refers to the devil as “the king of Babylon” (v. 4).

But the Tower of Babel was never finished. God proceeded to “confuse their language” (Genesis 11:7) so that the builders could not communicate and, therefore, could not work with one another. The project unraveled in strife and chaos. Thus, the names Babel and Babylon came to be defined as “confusion.” (See verse 9.)

Babylon soon fell into ruin before it was reconstructed 1,600 years later by its most famous king, Nebuchadnezzar. During his reign, Babylon became known as a lap of luxury, a mecca of sophistication and domination. We have already learned of its ruthless enforcement of idol worship (Daniel 3).

But by divine judgment, Babylon was eventually destroyed (Isaiah 13:19, 20). Symbolically though, it has lived on. The first Christians were known to

have called ancient Rome “Babylon” due to its persecution of Christians. (See 1 Peter 5:13.)

Thus, Babylon in Revelation signals a Satanic counterfeit system aimed at dethroning God, one that enforces worship through confusing or deceiving the masses. Its goal is the complete destruction of God’s people. In essence, Babylon represents any and every apostate religion that persecutes God’s people.

Later in Revelation, another angel explains how people should respond to the message:

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.” ... And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people” (18:2, 4).

This is a clarion call for God’s people everywhere to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39) and examine our own beliefs. Have we been worshiping gods of our own making instead of “the only true God”? (17:3). Have we embraced doctrines founded on mere human tradition? (Mark 7:9). This applies to those who have no religion as well as to those who do. Humbly ask God to “see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:24). In doing so, we will come out of Babylon before she is destroyed (Revelation 18:8).

Babylon the Great

In the book of Revelation, Babylon is depicted as an unfaithful woman (14:8; 17:2, 4; 18:3; 19:2). In chapter 17, the apostle John received a vision of a woman sitting on the first beast that he had seen in chapter 13. The woman has this written on her forehead: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (v. 5). This is a depiction of the religious and state powers of the papacy.

In the Bible, a woman symbolizes a church (Ephesians 5:23; 2 Corinthians 11:2). Indeed, the Catholic Church is aptly known as “The Mother Church,” but she has been an unfaithful bride. She has cheated on God with multiple false religions and has struck up intimate foreign relations with many other countries, seducing or intoxicating them to do the same. Her daughters are “harlots,” other churches that have adopted her apostate practices. The papacy is the ultimate manifestation

of mystical Babylon in these last days,
“that great city which reigns over
the kings of the earth”
(Revelation 17:18).



The Third Angel's Message

In a study of America in prophecy, the solemn message of the third angel is of special interest.

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:9–11).

Notice the direct relation to the language and events of Revelation 13. This establishes the three angels' messages as a warning and response to the coming confederacy of the first and second beasts.

The context leading up to Revelation 14 is that the USA, partnering with the papacy, will enact a religious law punishable by death. The devil will stop at nothing to convert or kill those who have God's Sabbath seal.

But God saves His people (Revelation 14:14). Those with His seal will escape death, and instead, those who perpetrated Satanic principles will reap what they have sown. In fact, they will receive exactly what they wanted: They refused to rest on God's holy Sabbath; thus, "they have no rest day or night" (v. 11). At last, justice is done. All the brutal persecution, the lies rewarded, the corruption

cultivated—it will end. Those "who [kill] with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (13:10).

Many mistakenly think that "smoke ascending forever" means that the wicked are alive and will be burning for all eternity. Not only is this impossible to align with the character of God (1 John 4:8), it is wholly unfounded in Scripture. The rising smoke is a depiction of complete destruction: "Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever" (Isaiah 34:10). The prophet Malachi further clarified that at the end of time, "all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up, ... that will leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1). Revelation confirms that the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet will all be *destroyed* for good—experiencing the second death (19:20; 20:14).

This should be a source of great joy! Never again will the beast only seem to be defeated, its "deadly wound" to be healed. No! Sin will be eradicated for all eternity; "affliction will not rise up a second time" (Nahum 1:9). That is the meaning of "forever and ever."

This sobering message is not a threat—it is a merciful warning from God. He is "not willing that any should



perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God has disclosed the whole of this three-point message to us so that we can be saved!

True Worldwide Revival

The three angels' messages are being sounded this very hour. At about the same time that the USA and the papacy join hands and consolidate power, the three angels' messages will do their awesome culminating work, and the gospel will illuminate the world in true, biblical revival. People from all nations will decide to step under Christ's banner of love and truth and receive God's seal.

Satan will be "enraged" by this and will "make war with" those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). God's people will have to undergo the greatest test of their faith. They will be accused, slandered, derided, "hated by all nations" (Matthew 24:9); they will be seen as divisive, radical, unpatriotic, and above all,

dangerous. But in this darkest of times, the Bible again gives us hope:

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

The original Greek word for "patience" means "cheerful endurance." Through the trials of these last days, God's people will not only stand steadfast for Him, they will do it with "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). They will do so by having God's commandments—and yes, God's seal—written on "their minds" and "hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).

They will do so by faithfully "[following] the Lamb wherever He goes" (Revelation 14:4), constantly "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Just as Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame," so must they endure. Just as Jesus, with His last breath, uttered, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), so will His remnant eagerly await His second coming, when He will once more utter those joyous words, "It is done!" (Revelation 16:17).

But these beautiful promises are not only for God's people in the future—they are for us right here, right now! God has unfolded these imminent events so that we can be ready. If you plan to refuse the beast's mark in the future, you must prepare your heart today to follow God.

You have the choice to come out of Babylon now. You too can have "the faith of Jesus"; you too can have His character written upon your forehead. God's "power" (Acts 1:8) is available to all "who obey Him" (5:32). Without Him, "you can do nothing" (John 15:5). With Him, "all things are possible" (Mark 10:27)!

As long as you follow the Lamb, you have nothing to fear for the future!



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