

EARTH'S FINAL WARNING

THE THREE ANGELS OF REVELATION



Earth's Final Warning
The Three Angels of Revelation

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THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

Then 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—saying with a loud voice, “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.”

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.”

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.”

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

—*Revelation 14:6–12*

A king with a long grey beard and a silver crown with yellow jewels is shown in profile, looking upwards. He wears a red and white patterned robe with a black fur collar. In the background, a large, ornate, circular wall carving is visible. The title 'THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL' is overlaid in large white letters.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

An Amazing Fact: *Tsunamis are among nature's most destructive forces. One of the deadliest ever was triggered by a 9.1 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Catastrophic waves, some up to 100 feet high, destroyed communities in 14 countries and killed 228,000 people. Thousands on beaches who had heard the warning sirens but did not flee were among the many who perished.*

More than 2,500 years ago, Belshazzar, the grandson of the famous Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, had a history of ignoring critical warnings. And like those who didn't heed the sirens that warned of the tsunami, his decision cost him his life—and destroyed his kingdom.

Why does this story matter today? Because Belshazzar's story speaks to what will soon come upon our world, and your life depends on what you do when you hear the warning.



During a beautiful evening, Belshazzar was celebrating with the many dignitaries of his opulent kingdom. But as joyful music played, the Medo-Persian army was amassing, led by King Cyrus, outside the gates of the city.

Even so, Belshazzar wasn't at all concerned. The city of Babylon was fortified by impenetrable walls—164 feet wide and 328 feet tall, according to the Greek historian Herodotus. Moreover, the life-giving waters of the Euphrates River flowed under the city's gates, providing inhabitants with an endless supply for drinking and growing food. Babylon was the most secure place on Earth. Thus, the proud Belshazzar fearlessly feasted.

But then he called for the spoils of war that had been taken from the Jewish captives. Those precious vessels, used in the worship of Jehovah, were now being used to toast false “gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone” (Daniel 5:4). In doing so, Belshazzar was proclaiming that his false gods were more powerful than the God of Israel.

Suddenly, a bloodless hand appeared and wrote a cryptic message on the wall. No one in the royal halls could read it—except a distinguished

Jewish prophet named Daniel. He fearlessly interpreted the message of judgment against the king and his kingdom, who had neglected to heed the warning sirens: “[You], Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this” (v. 22).

That same night, Medo-Persian soldiers stormed the city. Providence opened the gates (Isaiah 45:1), and Cyrus' army captured the city and slew its king, just as Daniel had predicted.

Do You Hear the Alarm?

Five hundred years later, a warning message was given from heaven to the prophet John, an apostle of Jesus and exile on the Isle of Patmos. Across seven astonishing verses in the book of Revelation, this final warning to the world is illustrated in a familiar way: the fall of Babylon. This message is to spread like wildfire in these last days, to be boldly proclaimed everywhere by God's people.

In this magazine, you will learn about this critical warning, what it says, why it matters, and how you can be prepared for the final events.

The handwriting is on the wall. Will you heed the message?



THE FIRST ANGEL

Then 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—saying with a loud voice, “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. —Revelation 14:6, 7

giving us the most important warning for these last days: the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14.

These mysterious messages are the last sent out to a world rapidly coming to an end, before the final judgment. The three messages given by three distinct angels constitute a full warning that serves to counteract the maze of lies erected by Satan, the enemy deliberately working against your salvation:

The devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time (Revelation 12:12).

Imagine going on vacation with your child to a beautiful rainforest. You’re having the time of your life hiking together through the tropical paradise when you decide to look at a map of the trail. You notice a big warning: The trail will soon end abruptly at a precipice, leading to a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. There are no guardrails or fences.

As you look up from the map, you see your child far ahead of you, laughing and running as fast as his legs can carry him—heading straight for that cliff. What would you do?

Your perspective of this scene is similar to how God sees you in this world. He knows what is going to happen before it happens. Just as loving parents would react to their child approaching danger, so God is shouting out to us. He does so by



Are you like the child unknowingly heading for the cliff? Do you know what's about to come upon the earth? Many on our planet are unprepared; many are oblivious to the danger. They haven't heard the sirens. The reason to study this threefold angelic message is that your life depends on it.

Let's find out what the first angel has to say about your future.

“HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL”

In Revelation 14:6, the Bible reveals that this angelic warning is not to discourage or terrify us—because this message is about “the everlasting gospel.” The word gospel means “good news.” What is the good news? While “the wages of sin is death, ... the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:23). Although you have been condemned to die for your sins, through Jesus' sacrifice, the path of eternal life is now open to you.

We are also told that this gospel is “everlasting.” Indeed, God established the plan of salvation even before He created our world:

Jesus is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

God “hath saved us ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9 KJV).



How do we know that the three angels' messages are God's final warning? After the warning is given to the world, the apostle John next sees Jesus returning in the clouds at the Second Coming (Revelation 14:14).

Even better, the gospel is everlasting because it results in everlasting life and because God is everlasting. He loves “you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3).

“TO EVERY NATION, TRIBE, TONGUE, AND PEOPLE”

The message of the first angel, coming from “the midst of heaven,” is universal; it is meant for everyone, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race, occupation, or station in life. That's why the warning must be sent to everyone living on the earth.

Jesus said, “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, emphasis added).

After everyone in the world has had the opportunity to hear and respond to the everlasting gospel, Christ will come





God's mission has always been to save you from eternal death. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, ... but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

"FEAR GOD"

We now come to the actual message of the first angel. His first two words are: "Fear God." But didn't we just learn that He is a God of love? Yes—and the Bible does not contradict itself. Rather, we must allow God's Word to interpret itself by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Let's look closer at the word "fear." The Bible says, "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Psalm 34:4). Then, several verses later, it says, "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (v. 7). These are two different kinds of fear.

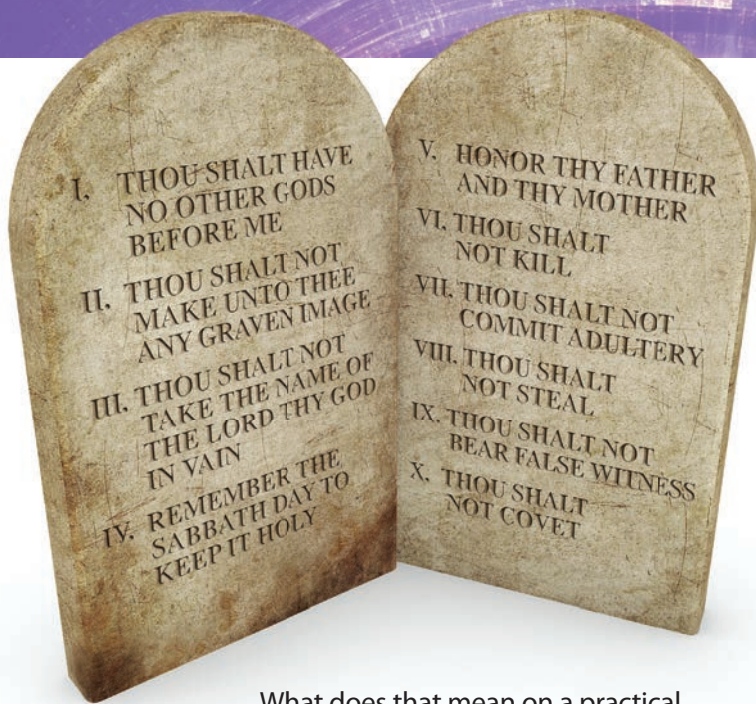
The first kind is the fear that we commonly think about: worry or dread. In contrast, the "fear of God" is having a sense of deep awe and respect for our Creator. When you "fear God," what you are actually doing is trusting, honoring, worshiping, revering, and loving Him.

again. Only a loving, merciful God would take such measures for an undeserving people—and that is because it is His desire to save every person on Earth!

The Messengers

The introduction to this first message tells us who is commissioned to give the warning. The word "angel" comes from the Greek *angelos*, which simply means "messenger." It doesn't always refer to a supernatural being. While the three angels' messages do originate in heaven, the messengers here are God's people on the earth. We know this because Christ commissioned His people to deliver the gospel: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15; see also Revelation 10:11).

If you are a follower of God, then you are called to spread this message of hope to a world dying in darkness, for "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14).



What does that mean on a practical level? The Bible says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments (Psalm 111:10). Here's another way of putting it:

I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it (Psalm 34:11–14).

The message is clear: To fear the Lord means to obey Him. Keeping His commandments is doing good and departing from evil.

Now notice the results of fearing God: "He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him. ... The LORD preserves all who love Him" (Psalm 145:19, 20). Those who fear God will be sustained and ultimately delivered! "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him" (34:8, 9). This is the abundant life Christ has promised you (John 10:10). Does that sound like something to dread?

"AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM"

Moses once asked God, "Please, show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18).

In response, God said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I

will proclaim the name of the LORD before you" (v. 19).

In the Bible, one's "glory" is synonymous with one's "name." God said, "I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8). One's name, in turn, is synonymous with one's character. When God showed Moses His glory, He described His own character:

The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty (Exodus 34:6, 7).

This word picture was brought to life in the person of Jesus, who came from heaven and was born as a man, as "Immanuel, ... God with us" (Matthew 1:23). "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of



the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Through Jesus, the character of God was demonstrated to humanity.

What does it mean to "give glory" to God? While it certainly can mean to reverently praise the Lord, the Bible also instructs us to honor Him in our speech (Psalm 86:12), in our deeds (James 2:14–17), and in

God's Law and Character

Compare these verses, which demonstrate that God's law mirrors His character:

Character Trait	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
Just	Deuteronomy 32:4	Romans 7:12
Righteous	Jeremiah 23:6	Psalms 119:172
Love	1 John 4:8	Romans 13:10
Unchangeable	James 1:17	Matthew 5:18
Everlasting	Genesis 21:33	Psalms 111:7, 8

our hearts and minds (1 Corinthians 6:20). "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (10:31).

This isn't easy. We are sinful. Our characters are marred with wicked thoughts, unkind words, and hateful deeds. By ourselves, we are unable to give glory to God, but He has promised, "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).

Jesus taught, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit. ... If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just

as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:8–10). Both fearing God *and* giving glory to God mean keeping His commandments. This message is what the first angel wants to convey to us right away.

"FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME"

Here, the angel reveals the reason behind his call to "fear God and give glory to Him." It's because of God's judgment:

God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

God's judgment is the process by which every person is determined as either being saved or lost—and given either eternal life or eternal death.

But notice that His judgment *has* come. We have learned that the three angels' messages are to be proclaimed by God's people to all the world *until* Christ's second coming. But isn't Christ's return when the judgment occurs? How could judgment have already come?

It is important to understand that "the hour of ... judgment" is not a literal hour. The Greek word translated as "hour" can represent a short but

God's description of Himself in Exodus 34:6, 7 presents both His mercy and His justice. As we will see through our study of the three angels' messages, these two parts of His nature are inseparable.

undefined period of time. Also, notice what comes with Christ at His return:

Behold, I am coming quickly, and *My reward is with Me*, to give to every one according to his work (Revelation 22:12, emphasis added).

If Christ has everyone's "reward"—that is, their sentence of judgment—when He returns, then the people must have already been judged. After all, that's how a trial works: Evidence is collected, shown, and then reviewed by a judge or jury *before* judgment is passed and sentences are executed.

The Bible describes God's judgment occurring: "I watched till ... the Ancient of Days was seated. ... The court was seated, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9, 10). Because Christ comes with a reward, this judgment is known as the "pre-advent judgment." This is "the hour of ... judgment" to which the first angel is referring—and it has already begun.

The Good News of the Judgment

In short, the first angel is telling us that time is running out, and God wants to make sure that we know it. But this urgency is also why the three angels'

messages are good news: Your judgment hasn't been decided yet! Time may be short, but there is still time. Even if you think you are too lost in the darkness of



After a person has been judged in the final judgment, there are no second chances. That's why God wants you to know the time in which we are living.

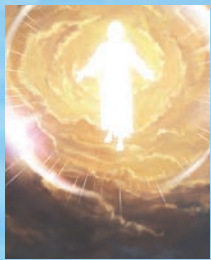


The Three Phases of the **Final Judgment**



come." This pre-advent judgment will finish just before the Second Coming.

FIRST PHASE: The judgment proclaimed by the first angel begins with the church, the "house of God," prior to Christ's return. "The time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17, emphasis added). Compare this to the first angel's message: "His judgment *has*



SECOND PHASE: At His second coming, Jesus gives to each person a sentence, or reward, in the judgment, either eternal life or eternal death (Matthew 16:27). Those who receive eternal life ascend to heaven with Christ, where they will spend 1,000 years, known

as the millennium, also taking part in a judgment. (See Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2.) The saved will *not* be determining salvation but will be able to see the reasons why a certain person was lost.



THIRD PHASE: After the millennium ends, the third and final phase of the judgment begins—it is known as the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11). Here, the lost

will be able to review "the books," examining their own lives and God's judgment upon them. After this, the final sentence will be executed upon the lost. The devil, his angels, and all humans who rejected Jesus will die (Malachi 4:1–3). The final judgment is concluded.

sin, there is still time for Christ's light to draw you out. Yes, God can save even you!

**"AND WORSHIP HIM WHO MADE
HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA
AND SPRINGS OF WATER"**

Just as in the previous parts of the first angel's message, this last call is clear. Your final judgment depends upon whom you worship.

The truth is that everyone worships. Christians, Buddhists, even atheists—we all submit to something, giving it our highest priority in life, whether another person, an object, or ourselves.

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Romans 6:16).



Each one of us is like a slave to one of two masters: either the devil or God, either sin or righteousness.

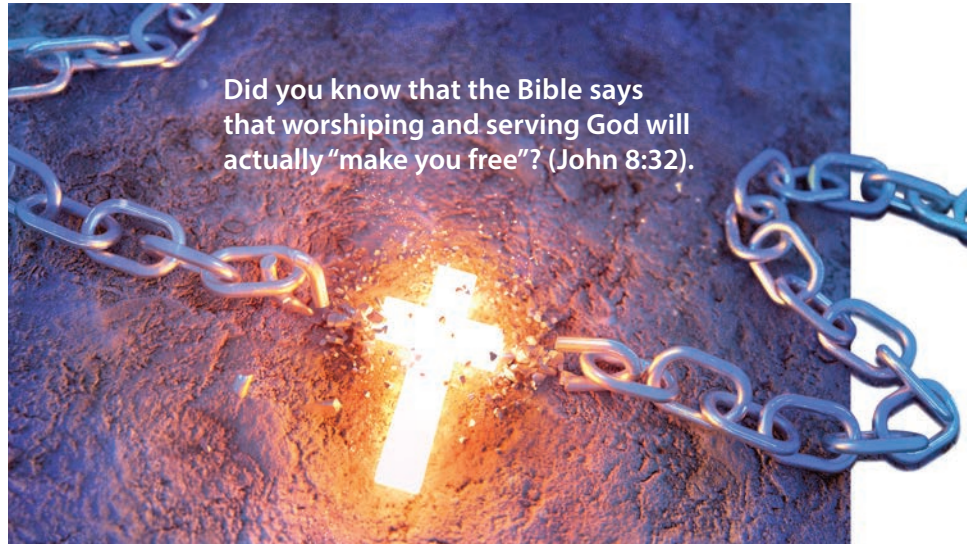
Thus, true worship implies obedience. When the devil tempted Him in the wilderness, Jesus said, "You shall *worship* the LORD your God, and Him only you shall *serve*" (Matthew 4:10, emphasis added).

Concerning the religious leaders in His day, Jesus said, "[They] honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8, 9). They were not truly worshiping the Creator because they were not obeying His commandments.

The Sabbath and the Creation

The first angel's message also tells us to worship God because He is the Creator. The language used here by the angel is crucial: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." It is a deliberate reference to the fourth 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, emphasis added).



Did you know that the Bible says that worshiping and serving God will actually "make you free"? (John 8:32).

Hallowing the Sabbath—that is, declaring it holy—happened at the culmination of the Creation week: "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 2:3). The Sabbath was instituted as a memorial to God's creation of our world and everything in it. The Sabbath, therefore, serves as a sign of God's

Creatorship. We keep the Sabbath holy because God is our Creator.

"Fear God," "Give glory to Him," and now "worship Him." For the third time, the first angel's message is calling us to keep the commandments of the Lord! Can it be any clearer? In these last days, God's law will be front and center on the world's stage.

Who stands against God's law in the last days? We're about to find out ...





THE SECOND ANGEL

PART 1

*And another angel followed,
saying, "Babylon is fallen,
is fallen, that great city."
—Revelation 14:8*

The Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, were located in the most powerful empire of the ancient world: Babylon. Their architecture and beauty were indicative of the kingdom's opulence, ingenuity, and supremacy. But it would not last.

Babylon ruled from about 612 BC until its downfall in 539 BC at the hands of the Medo-Persians. "Babylon is fallen" was surely uttered 2,500 years ago by the inhabitants of the doomed city—but what does that have to do with the message of the second angel in Revelation 14?

Babylon: Empire of Rebellion

During its golden age, the Babylonian empire was ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar.

In the sixth century BC, he ordered the construction of a giant statue in defiance of a dream given to

him by God. In that dream, the king saw a statue of a man made of different kinds of metals and minerals and with a head of gold. The meaning of the dream was interpreted by the prophet Daniel, who told Nebuchadnezzar, "You are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours" (Daniel 2:38, 39). God was warning Nebuchadnezzar that his pompous empire, for all its splendor, would be short-lived.



In response, the king built his statue entirely of gold, with none of the other materials, to arrogantly signify that his kingdom would last forever. In

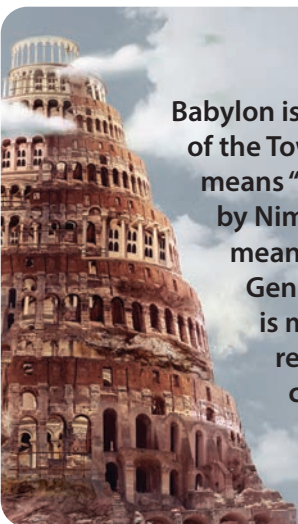
doing so, he mandated a state religion: "Whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace" (Daniel 3:6). Embodied in Nebuchadnezzar was a spirit of rebellious self-exaltation; the king sought, using coercion, to replace God by receiving worship meant for God.



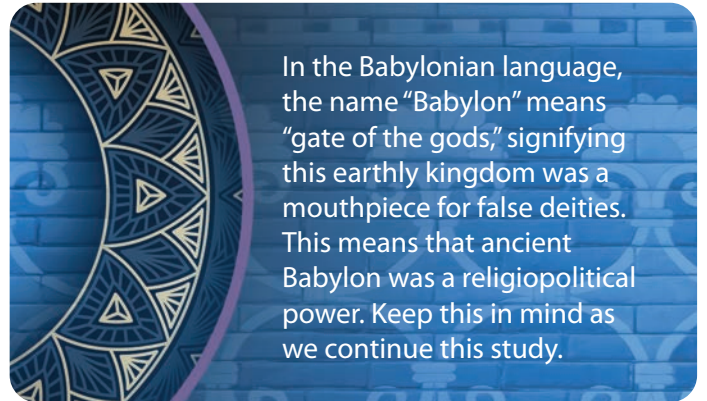
"The King of Babylon"

Long before Babylon existed, another rebel—Satan—rose up to defy the Creator in heaven. Note the similarities between Satan's rebellion and Babylon's. About Satan, the Bible says,

You have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14).



Babylon is a spiritual descendent of the Tower of Babel, which means "confusion," built by Nimrod, whose name means "we shall rebel." (See Genesis 11:5–9.) Babylon is marked by its spiritual rebellion and the confusion caused by its pagan doctrines.



Here is what the Bible says about Babylon:

You have said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one else besides me" (Isaiah 47:10).

Satan and Nebuchadnezzar both sought ascendancy above the Creator in heaven. Yet the Bible makes clear that there is only one God. "I am God, and

there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me" (Isaiah 46:9). Anyone else reaching for God's throne is a counterfeit.

This is why the Bible calls Satan "the king of Babylon" (14:4). This is to be understood not politically, but spiritually. God's Word says, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning" (1 John 3:8; see also John 8:44). If you do the deeds of the devil, then you are a representative of the devil. You are furthering his will. Remember, you worship the one whom you obey.

Babylon, in all its forms, has set itself as the standard of Satan's worshipers. In its worship of the created above the Creator, Babylon is the earthly representation of Satan's ideals, schemes, and objectives. The devil is the true "king of Babylon,"

the true author of confusion, the prime instigator behind all opposition to God.

“BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN”

The main point of the second angel's message is what happens to Babylon: It falls. It is destroyed. The repetition “is fallen, is fallen” emphasizes the certainty and permanence of its destruction.

Notice also that Babylon's fall is said to have already happened. In a way, it has. The earthly empire of Babylon fell in 539 BC. Likewise, Satan also has fallen: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isaiah 14:12; see also Revelation 12:9).

But there is still another fall to come.

Remember, the three angels' messages warn of the rapidly approaching judgment. It is meant to alert you to what's *about* to come. Thus, the second angel is telling us that, just as in the past, Babylon is again going to be overthrown. We can trust the Bible, its history and prophecy: “I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe” (John 14:29).



Babylon's destruction, including its king, is a foregone conclusion. Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). The Savior was not talking only about what has already occurred, but also about the devil's ultimate end. Our adversary, “who [accuses us] before our God day and night,” will be defeated (Revelation 12:10).

However, we know that “the king of Babylon,” the devil, is still alive today. As we will see, the book of Revelation says that there is a form of Babylon still in existence, a spiritual one. Do you know where you are—inside or outside of this Babylon?



Saddam Hussein's territory encompassed ancient Babylon. The former leader of Iraq fancied himself a modern Nebuchadnezzar and attempted to rebuild the ancient city. He did not succeed. Scripture prophesied: “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms ... will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation” (Isaiah 13:19, 20). The literal kingdom of Babylon will never rise again.

THE SECOND ANGEL

PART 2



*Because she has made
all nations drink of
the wine of the wrath of
her fornication.”
—Revelation 14:8*

In the book of Revelation, we are reintroduced to Babylon, the maker of a particular kind of wine. But this is not the literal kingdom of Babylon; this is spiritual Babylon:

I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ... And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH (Revelation 17:3, 5).

What is spiritual Babylon?

Kingdoms in Time

Together, we will investigate several Bible prophecies to fully comprehend the identity of spiritual Babylon. In these prophecies, God uses a method of revealing truth that biblical scholars call “repeat and expand.” A prophecy is *repeated*, given in several visions to various people. It is also

expanded, with more detail given about the prophecy each time it is repeated. It’s like a camera at a bird’s-eye view zooming closer and closer upon a target.

We have already highlighted the first prophecy in Daniel 2: the dream of the image given to Nebuchadnezzar, whose kingdom was identified by the statue’s head of gold. The subsequent parts of its body are identified as notable future kingdoms that would rise and fall until God’s own kingdom would be established on Earth for eternity.

History reveals that after Babylon came Medo-Persia, symbolized by the statue’s “chest and arms of silver” (v. 32) followed by ancient Greece, symbolized by the “belly and thighs of bronze”



(v. 32); followed by ancient Rome, symbolized by the “legs of iron” (v. 33). However, Rome wasn’t conquered but was instead divided into ten kingdoms, symbolized by “feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (v. 34). God’s kingdom is represented in the vision by a “stone ... cut out of the mountain without hands” (v. 45), which pulverized the statue, afterward “[becoming] a great mountain and [filling] the whole earth” (v. 35).

The Beasts of Prophecy

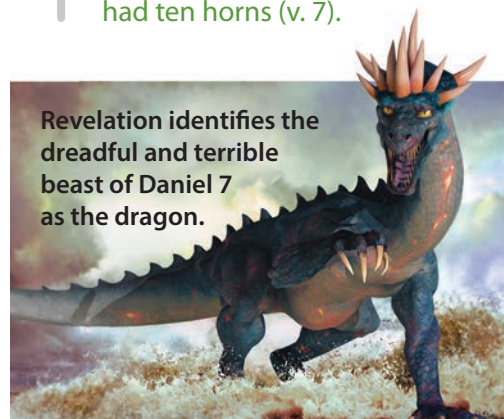
Half a century later, God repeated the prophecy to Daniel in another vision. This time, however, different animals, “beasts” (7:3), represented these kingdoms (vv. 17, 23).

- The winged lion is Babylon (v. 4).
- The bear is Medo-Persia (v. 5).
- The four-headed winged leopard is Greece (v. 6).

These three beasts are presented in the same order, chronologically, as the statue. But something unique happened with the next beast—the fourth and last beast of the vision. Daniel

was unable to identify it with an animal; it was unlike anything he had ever seen:

Dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns (v. 7).



Revelation identifies the dreadful and terrible beast of Daniel 7 as the dragon.

The rest of the vision focuses on this fourth beast, signifying God’s emphasis on this kingdom. Following the statue’s timeline, we can know that this fourth beast represents Rome; it “had huge iron



In Daniel 7, the beasts’ descriptions correspond to the defining characteristics of their kingdom. Lions with wings were frequently depicted in Babylonian art, as seen on the panel of the famous Ishtar Gate displayed at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The bear was “raised up on one side” (v. 5) to represent the more dominant Persians, who eventually swallowed up the Medians. The four heads of the leopard represented the four Greek generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy—who fought over Alexander the Great’s empire after his death. Note how the vision *expanded* this second time with more detail.

teeth”—remember, the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream had iron legs.

But why does God spotlight Rome?

The Little Horn of the Fourth Beast

Daniel’s vision continued to unveil the exploits of the fourth beast, most notably a mysterious king, depicted as a little horn, who would rise to challenge “the Most High,” which is a name for God (v. 25; see also 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 57:2).

Scripture gives ample evidence as to the identity of this little horn: the Roman Catholic Church. Though this fact may surprise you, we encourage you to “[search] the Scriptures” for yourself” to find out whether these things [are] so” (Acts 17:11). Now, let’s consider the following identifying points:

- 1 A little horn “[came] up among” (Daniel 7:8) the fourth beast’s “ten horns” (v. 7). History records that ten barbarian tribes invaded and broke apart the Roman Empire, eventually evolving into ten Western European nations. These tribes are the ten horns, which are symbolized by the iron and clay feet of the statue



vision. While Rome lost power, it was never extinguished; rather, it shifted into another form: the papacy. As the little horn arose from the ten horns, so papal Rome emerged from the heart of Western Europe. Notably, the Vatican, the seat of the church, is the *littlest* country in the world.

- “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

- 2 The little horn had “the eyes of a man” (Daniel 7:8). At the papacy’s head is, literally, “a man,” the pope.

- 3 As the little horn rose to power, “three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots” (v. 8), meaning that the little horn “[subdued] three kings” (v. 24). Between AD 476 and AD 538, the papacy eradicated three barbarian tribes—the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths—that opposed it.

- 4 The little horn has “a mouth speaking pompous words” (v. 8) and “[speaks] pompous words against the Most High” (v. 25). The little horn blasphemes God. The Bible defines blasphemy as claiming to be God (John 10:33) and claiming to “forgive sins” (Luke 5:21), which only God can do. This is a serious charge, but the Catholic Church’s own records reveal it has done both:

- “We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”²
- “The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ.”³
- “The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.”⁴

- 5 The little horn’s power lasted “for a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25), better understood as 1,260 years. The duration of 1,260 years is arrived at by translating the original Aramaic. “A time” in Aramaic equals one year. “Times” is more accurately translated as “two times,” or two years. “Half a time” is half a year. Summed up, this length of time equals three and a half years.

But this is prophetic time. In Bible prophecy, time is calculated differently: One prophetic

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 *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, Encyclical Letter (New York, Benziger Brothers, 1903), 304.

3 Joseph Deharbe, S.J., *A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion*; trans. John Fander (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1912), 279.

4 *Catholic National*, July 1895.

day equals one literal year. (See Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6.) Following the Jewish calendar, where a year is equal to 360 days, three and a half years is the same as 1,260 days. Therefore, “a time and times and half a time” equals 1,260 *prophetic* days, which equals 1,260 *literal* years.

After defeating the three Barbarian tribes by AD 538, the papacy had free reign, legitimized by Roman law, to dominate the then-known world, which it did for the next 1,260 years. Its reign was stopped by Napoleon Bonaparte’s General Louis-Alexandre Berthier, who led an army into Rome and seized Pope Pius VI at the Vatican in AD 1798. Six months later, the pope died in captivity.

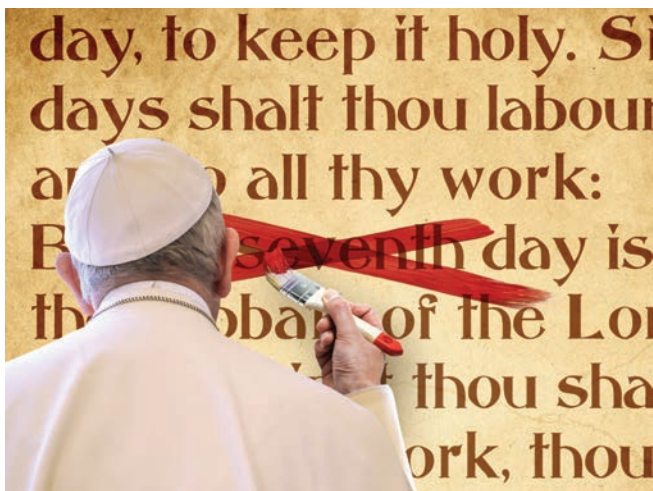


6 During those 1,260 years, the little horn “[persecuted] the saints of the Most High” (Daniel 7:25). During this period of papal supremacy, dubbed the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church labeled as heretics those who followed the Word of God over its own doctrines and, sources state, it condemned more than 50 million people to death.⁵

7 The little horn “[intends] to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25). The Bible refers to the Ten Commandments as God’s law. (See Romans 7:7.) The Catholic catechism’s version of the Ten Commandments does not match those in the Bible (Exodus 20:2–17). The second commandment against worshiping idols is absent (Exodus 20:4–6). To get back to ten commandments, the tenth against covetousness (v. 17) is split into ninth and

tenth: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,” and “you shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.”

8 Moreover, the Sabbath commandment (vv. 8–11), the longest, is modified to a single sentence: “Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.” The Catholic Church claims that Sunday is “the Lord’s Day,” observing the first day of the week, a practice that has been adopted by most Protestant churches. The Bible is clear that “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God” (v. 10). (See also Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:8.) According to the Bible’s reckoning, the seventh day is Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (Leviticus 23:32). Remember, the first angel’s message directly references the fourth commandment.



This message is not an attack on people, as there are many true believers within the Catholic faith. Rather, these prophecies point out a religious system that has existed long before any of us were born. Why? “The Holy Scriptures ... make you wise

⁵ W.E.H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865; New York: Braziller, 1955), 40.

for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). God gave this divine knowledge to save you. Though this may be a difficult truth to accept, please prayerfully consider it.



Many Christians identify Greek King Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the little horn. But we can know that this is not possible. The little horn is part of the fourth beast, not the leopard (Daniel 7:7, 8, 19, 20); the little horn would have had to arise *after* the establishment of the fourth beast, the Roman Empire.

The Little Horn Revisited

Yet again, a few years later, Daniel received another vision. This third vision *repeats* and *expands* upon the previous two, this time with different animals, a ram and a goat, which the Bible identifies as Medo-Persia (Daniel 8:20) and Greece (v. 21). However, the bulk of the vision again belongs to Rome—this time represented by the “little horn” in both its pagan and papal phases (v. 9):

And out of one of them came a little horn. ... And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down (vv. 9–11).

Do you see what was described? The little horn “grew up to the host of heaven”—*just like Babylon tried to do*. Additionally, “he shall exalt himself in his

heart” (v. 25), which echoes what “the king of Babylon,” Lucifer, did (Isaiah 14:13). Now look at these verses:

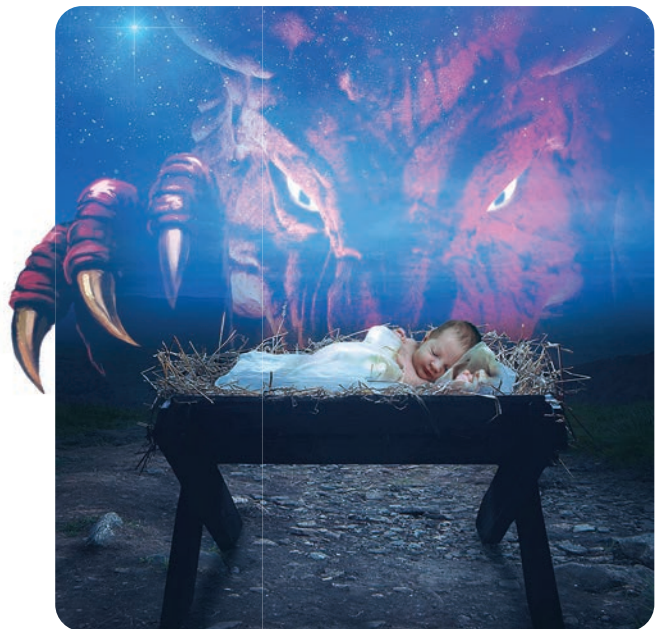
He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host (Daniel 8:11).

He shall even rise against the Prince of princes (v. 25).

“The Prince of the host” and “the Prince of princes” refer to Jesus Christ, “the prince of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5 KJV). How did Rome “rise against” Christ?

The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born (12:4).

This “Child” is Jesus, and “the dragon” is “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (v. 9). At the birth of Christ, Herod the Great ruled the Jews as a vassal of the Romans. When news reached him that a new “King of the Jews” had been born (Matthew 2:2), Herod plotted to murder the baby to defend his



throne (v. 13). Though Christ was spared, Herod “put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under” (v. 16).

Again, the Bible attributes this heinous act to the dragon, the devil, who acted *through* the agency of

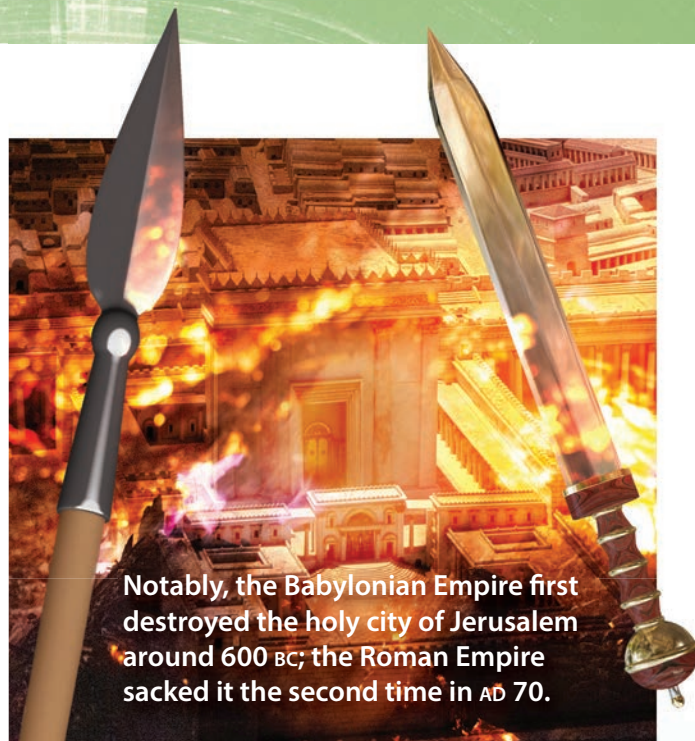
pagan Rome. Three decades later, he again used the Roman government to attack Jesus: “Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot. . . . So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray [Jesus]” (Luke 22:3, 4).

Satan had formed a new “Babylon” in the empire of Rome, the kingdom being spotlighted in these prophecies. Rome was revealed to be staging an all-out assault on God. Rome is spiritual Babylon.

The Sea Beast in Revelation

But hasn’t papal Rome changed? The Catholic Church isn’t burning Christians at the stake today. Pope Francis has even apologized for the church’s role in persecuting Protestants.⁶ Rome today couldn’t possibly still represent spiritual Babylon, could it? Let’s see what the Bible says.

Revelation 13 begins with a familiar “beast rising up out of the sea” (v. 1). Notice John’s description: “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*” (v. 2, emphasis added). Do you recognize these animals? They are the beasts



Notably, the Babylonian Empire first destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem around 600 BC; the Roman Empire sacked it the second time in AD 70.

in the vision of Daniel 7, here presented in reverse order, as John was looking backward from his day.

The only one missing is the fourth beast—or is it? This strange sea beast has “ten horns” (v. 1), just like the fourth beast (Daniel 7:7). It has “seven heads . . . , and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name” (Revelation 13:1), just like

⁶ Colleen Barry and Nicole Winfield, “Pope apologizes for Catholic wrongs against other Christians,” *CTV News*, January 25, 2016, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/pope-apologizes-for-catholic-wrongs-against-other-christians-1.2751425>.



Church State

Like literal Babylon and pagan Rome before it, the Catholic Church is a religiopolitical power, controlling both church and state affairs.

the little horn blasphemed (Daniel 7:8, 20, 25). Furthermore, “the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2), just like the dragon empowered Rome (12:4). Moreover,

He 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. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them (13:5–7).

Yes, this sea beast is the same little horn that spoke “pompous words against the Most High” (Daniel 7:25), “grew up to the host of heaven” (8:10), and persecuted “the saints of the Most High,” who were “given into his hand” (7:25).

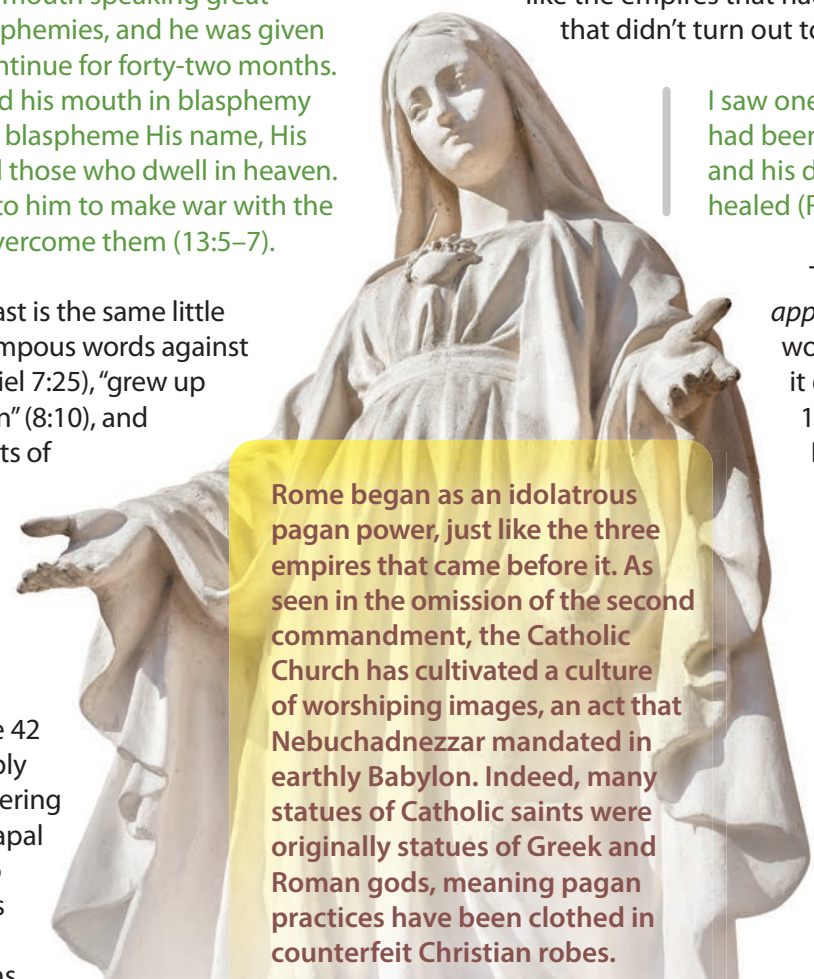
The Healing of the Deadly Wound

What about the 42 months? This is simply another way of rendering the 1,260 years of papal dominance. How do 42 *prophetic* months equal 1,260 *literal* years? All the months

in the Jewish calendar span 30 days. So, 42 *prophetic* months come to 1,260 *prophetic* days (30 days times 42 months), which equal 1,260 *literal* years.

In 1798, struck down by Napoleon’s army, the papacy seemed just another bygone power like the empires that had come before it. But that didn’t turn out to be the case:

I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed (Revelation 13:3).



Rome began as an idolatrous pagan power, just like the three empires that came before it. As seen in the omission of the second commandment, the Catholic Church has cultivated a culture of worshiping images, an act that Nebuchadnezzar mandated in earthly Babylon. Indeed, many statues of Catholic saints were originally statues of Greek and Roman gods, meaning pagan practices have been clothed in counterfeit Christian robes.

The papacy only appeared to be “mortally wounded”; indeed, it exists today. In 1929, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty, granting sovereignty to Vatican City, a 0.17-square-mile enclave situated in Rome, with the pope as its head. Not even a century later, the world’s littlest country has, arguably, the world’s most

recognizable person at its helm. The papacy's "deadly wound" has indeed been healing.

This prophecy reveals a crucial point: Today's Catholic Church is the same Roman power revived from the Dark Ages. The Bible states:

The same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom (Daniel 7:21, 22, emphasis added).

Though it may seem otherwise, papal Rome today has the same foundation and objectives as it always has. It remains the devil's primary agent in warring against God's kingdom.

Beauty and the Beast

In Revelation 17, we see this same seven-headed, ten-horned beast again (v. 3)—except now John's vision shows that it is being ridden by a woman, "the great harlot" (v. 1). Who is this woman?

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church (Ephesians 5:23).

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name (Isaiah 54:5).

I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2).

A woman symbolizes a church, God's body of believers. The Christian church is "married" to Jesus. He is the husband; the church is the wife.

The Bible also discerns between a faithful church and an unfaithful one. About the faithful church, it

says, "I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD" (Hosea 2:20). It has this to say about an unfaithful church:

Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. ... Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce (Jeremiah 3:6, 8; see also Ezekiel 16:25).



Thus, the "harlot" riding the beast is an unfaithful church. This symbol is a repeat-and-expand depiction of the sea beast. We are also shown the two different parts that make up the religiopolitical entity of the papacy: The harlot is the church; the beast is the state. The church, as the rider, is in control of the state to enforce its will on the earth.

"THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION"

Here we learn what the harlot is doing.

Revelation 17:2 tells us that she will have "committed fornication" with "the kings of the earth." The word "fornication" is the English translation of *porneuó*, a kind of adultery. This means that religious dogma will partner with political clout and military might universally. The harlot will one day achieve a worldwide religiopolitical conglomerate, the nations "of the earth," which will affect the world: "The inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with

the wine of her fornication" (v. 3, emphasis added).

What is the "wine" that all people will be "made" to drink? Isaiah 28:7 says, "The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." In other words, religious leaders do not teach the Word of God when they become intoxicated. Similarly, the harlot holds "in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication" (Revelation 17:4). The harlot's cup of wine symbolizes her false doctrine, her counterfeit Christianity. By this "wine," she leads the world into war against God.

When you become intoxicated, your senses become disoriented; things don't seem as they are. In a spiritual sense, what you may think of as truth is actually deception; what you think of as righteousness is actually wickedness; who you think of as Christ might even be



Antichrist. Intoxication is confusion, the exact meaning of Babylon.

Notice also what else the Bible compares intoxicating wine to: "Do not look on the wine when it is red; ... at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper" (Proverbs 23:31, 32; see also Deuteronomy 32:33). This means that spiritually intoxicating wine is a tried-and-true weapon of "that serpent of old, called the Devil." It produces what Satan has produced in the past: persecution.

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Revelation 17:6).

Notice that the drunk harlot will also have "made" (v. 2) the people drunk—by force, the same method she used in the Dark Ages. And this, the Bible reveals, is the reason Babylon will ultimately fall: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, *because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*" (14:8, emphasis added).

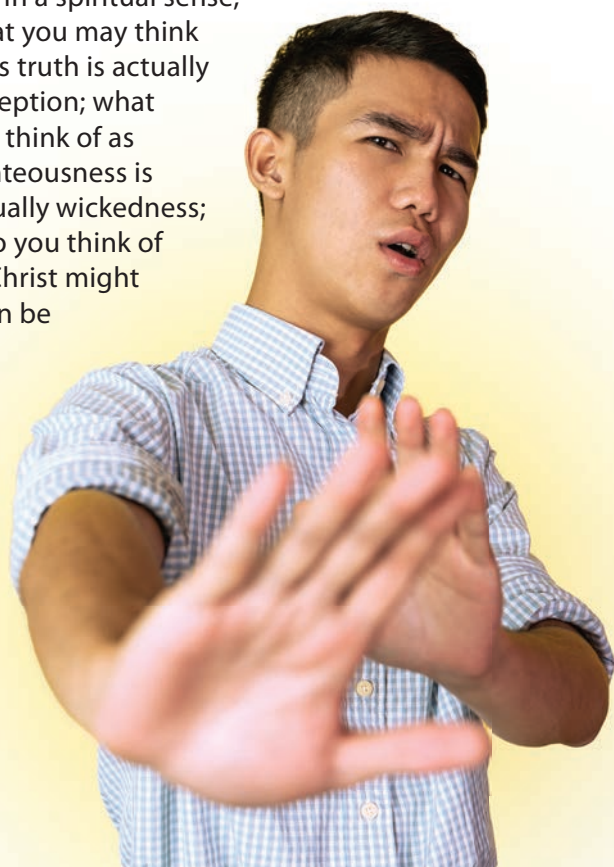
Stay Sober

There were faithful members of God's church in literal Babylon: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, *nor with the wine* which he drank (Daniel 1:8, emphasis added).

The same counsel is given to you today: Do not drink the wine of Babylon. Do not become intoxicated by the devil's doctrines. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

There will be perilous times ahead, but the Bible promises that there will also be those who do not drink the cup forced upon them. The Bible has shone a light into the dark recesses of the devil's designs so that you will not be deceived.

Remember, the three angels' messages are good news. Next, it will reveal how you can, like Daniel, be prepared to refuse the devil's drink.





THE THIRD ANGEL

PART 1

*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."
—Revelation 14:9*

We now turn to the third angel's message, which focuses on the consequences of worshipping the sea beast of Revelation 13—that is, papal Rome.

"IF ANYONE WORSHIPS THE BEAST"

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).

According to Bible prophecy, at some point after the beast's wound heals, the beast will receive universal worship. Where are we on this timeline?

Current events illustrate that the papacy has been taking steps to heal many past fissures:

- In September 2015, for the first time ever, the pope addressed a joint session of American lawmakers at the U.S. Capitol.⁷
- In February 2016, for the first time ever, the pope met with the Russian Orthodox Church leader to mend the millennium-old breach between Eastern and Western Catholicism.⁸



⁷ Meghan Keneally, "Read Pope Francis' Historic Speech to Congress," *ABC News*, September 24, 2015, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/read-pope-francis-historic-speech-congress/story?id=34004178>.

⁸ "Unity call as Pope Francis holds historic talks with Russian Orthodox Patriarch," *BBC*, February 13, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35565085>.

- In March 2021, the pope met with the leader of the Shia Muslims, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in a push “for unity.”⁹

Little by little, the papacy has been forging religious and political alliances around the world. This global networking will eventually pave the way toward a universal religion.

Recall also that worship is obedience. It means doing the will of the one you are worshipping (Romans 6:16). It is revealed here that in following the beast, the world will be following the dragon, Satan. The beast carries out Satan’s will; thus, it is Satan’s will that people will be following.

In 2017, media outlets reported Pope Francis’ renewed attention to the office of “papal nuncios,” or Vatican ambassadors, with one article noting, “The Holy See has a diplomatic network second only to the United States in terms of its global reach.”¹⁰

The Antichrist

“Who is like the beast?” the people ask. In contrast, the Scriptures ask: “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11). The answer: “I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6). There is *no one* like God—not the beast, not the dragon.

But people across the globe will one day treat the beast as their god. For millennia, Satan has sought to hijack the worship that belongs to the Creator. Of



The sea beast’s comeback from death is a counterfeit of the true death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

the many characteristics of the sea beast, the one given prominence is its blasphemy (Revelation 13:1, 5, 6). The sea beast blasphemes by claiming to be God; it has done so in the past and will do so again.

The Bible has a name for this: “It is the last hour; and ... the Antichrist is coming” (1 John 2:18). Antichrist, *antichristos* in Greek, means “one who opposes” or “puts himself in the place of” Christ. In other words, it is one who blasphemes. Throughout history, there have been “many antichrists,” but the Antichrist that gains global dominance in the last days is the beast, the papacy.

The Antichrist is the catalyst for the final events before the return of Christ:

That Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that

9 Harriet Sherwood and agencies in Iraq, “Pope Francis and Grand Ayatollah Sistani call for unity at Iraq meeting,” *The Guardian*, March 6, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/06/pope-francis-and-grand-ayatollah-sistani-call-for-unity-at-iraq-meeting>.

10 Christopher Lamb, “Pope sets up new department for Vatican diplomats,” *The Tablet*, November 21, 2017, <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/8126/pope-sets-up-new-department-for-vatican-diplomats>.

is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

Here, the Antichrist is also called “the man of sin” and “the son of perdition.” But his objective remains the same: He blasphemes—fooling others into believing that he is God.

Ultimately, the title of Antichrist belongs to the one who gave authority to the beast: Satan. It is Satan who “transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). He has always aspired to be like the Most High. It is Satan who counterfeits Christ.

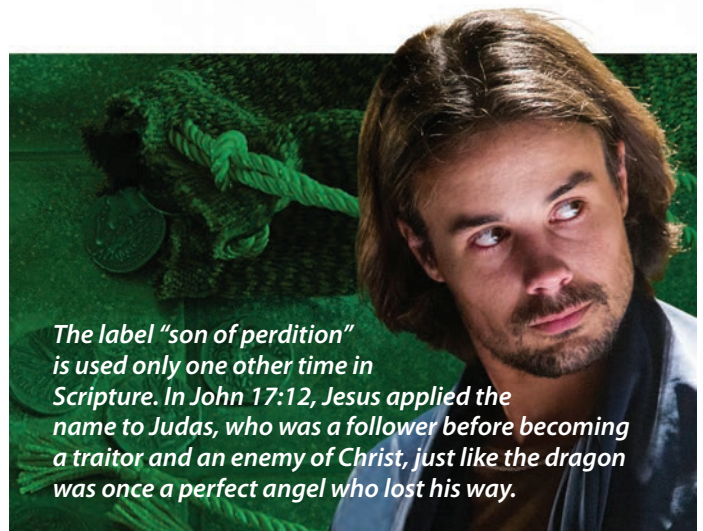
On One Condition

At the end of time, “all the world” (Revelation 13:3), by the command of the beast power, will worship the devil. But that’s not the end of the prophecy:

All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb (Revelation 13:8).

Not everyone will fall for the devil’s deceptions, especially those who study God’s Word and understand and embrace the messages of the three angels. There is hope; it is found in “the Lamb.” Who is the Lamb?

John the Baptist identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God who



The label “son of perdition” is used only one other time in Scripture. In John 17:12, Jesus applied the name to Judas, who was a follower before becoming a traitor and an enemy of Christ, just like the dragon was once a perfect angel who lost his way.

takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), who “was led as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7).

The third angel’s message speaks to this fact. It details only what befalls those who *do* worship the beast. It emphasizes a personal choice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image.” You will have the choice to worship the beast *or* to have your name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The Image: The Earth Beast

We know what the sea beast is, but what is his “image” that also receives worship? To find out, we must continue studying Revelation 13, which introduces a second beast.

As we’ve learned, a beast in prophecy represents a kingdom (Daniel 7:17, 23). Therefore, this second beast is a political power. Unlike the sea beast, however, this beast arises from “the earth” (Revelation 13:11). What does the earth represent? Revelation reveals, “The waters ... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (17:15). A beast rising from the earth, therefore, indicates the opposite: a power that rises in a sparsely inhabited area.

That’s not the only difference between the two beasts. The earth beast also “had two horns like a lamb”



(Revelation 13:11). While the sea beast is a hybrid of a leopard, bear, and lion—all fierce predators—the earth beast looks like a harmless lamb.

The sea beast also sports “ten crowns” atop his “ten horns” (v. 1), while the earth beast has horns but no crowns. Typically, crowns represent royalty. This earth beast, therefore, is not led by royalty; it is a different kind of government.

Who is this second beast? After finishing a description of the papal “captivity” (v. 10) in 1798, at which point the seemingly “deadly wound” (v. 3) was struck, John immediately saw the emergence of the earth beast. Only one nation rose to prominence during the turn of the eighteenth century while also possessing the other characteristics of the second beast: the United States of America.

The USA in Bible Prophecy

At the height of the papacy’s power, its “iron teeth” fell upon Protestant Reformers, who *protested* the Catholic Church’s unbiblical teachings. Many of those who were not martyred, however, found a means of escape to the New World.

Revelation prophesied this exodus in the symbol of a faithful woman, who represents God’s true church. This woman, “persecuted” (12:13) by the dragon through papal Rome, fled “into the wilderness” during “a time and times and half a time” (v. 14), the same 1,260 years of papal supremacy. Thus, the prey escaped the predator, and the most notable republic in the world was born.

In 1776, the United States declared its independence. It established its own rule of law, the Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1791). By 1798, simultaneous with the head wound to the Roman Church, the nations of Europe recognized the United States as an independent world power, one built on two unique principles represented by the



earth beast’s two lamb-like horns: *republicanism*, a government without a king, and *Protestantism*, a church without a pope.

The United States became the standard-bearer of freedom of conscience and the embodiment of the separation of church and state—all that the Roman Catholic Church was not.

The Image of the Beast

But the Bible makes a surprising prediction: America will fall away from its founding principles and advocate for the sea beast, the very power the Founding Fathers resisted. Revelation 13:12–15 has a few key takeaways:

- The United States forms “an image to the beast” (v. 14). This is not a statue; rather, “an image” is a “representation” or “resemblance.”

Hence, an “image of the beast” (v. 15) will be a religiopolitical power that looks, speaks, and acts like the papacy.

- The image of the beast will use a combination of deception (v. 14) and coercion (v. 15) to achieve universal worship of the papacy (vv. 12, 15).
- The ultimate power behind the transformation of the United States is the dragon, Satan, who extends his “authority” (v. 12) from the sea beast to the earth beast (v. 4).

According to the Bible, the United States will one day look, speak, and act like the papacy.

The Image Looks

The United States will *look* like the papacy by passing laws supporting the papal framework revealed in Revelation 17:3. Protestantism will apostatize, republicanism will be an empty shell, and America will become a religiopolitical power mandating people’s religious behavior.

Notice that it is apostate Protestantism that will hold the reins:

He [the earth beast] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast (Revelation 13:13, 14).

“Signs” are not the work of a secular power; they are religious in nature. This primary sign is a counterfeit to the miracle on Mount Carmel, when God sent down fire in answer to the prayer of Elijah, “a prophet of the LORD” (1 Kings 18:22). But this and

Apostasy is turning away from spiritual truth. The Greek *apostasia* means “falling away.” The Bible describes the Antichrist doing the same: “The *falling away* comes first, and the man of sin is revealed” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, emphasis added).



the beast's other miracles aren't from God; they are the work of the devil, who uses them to deceive the nations. Thus, Scripture also has another name for the earth beast: "the false prophet who worked signs in his [the sea beast's] presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image" (Revelation 19:20).

The Image Speaks and Acts

The primary way a nation speaks is by enacting laws. The United States, led by apostate Protestantism, will enact church doctrines as national laws, just like the papacy did in the Dark Ages. The United States will lead not only its citizens but the entire world, "*telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast*" (Revelation 13:14, emphasis added).

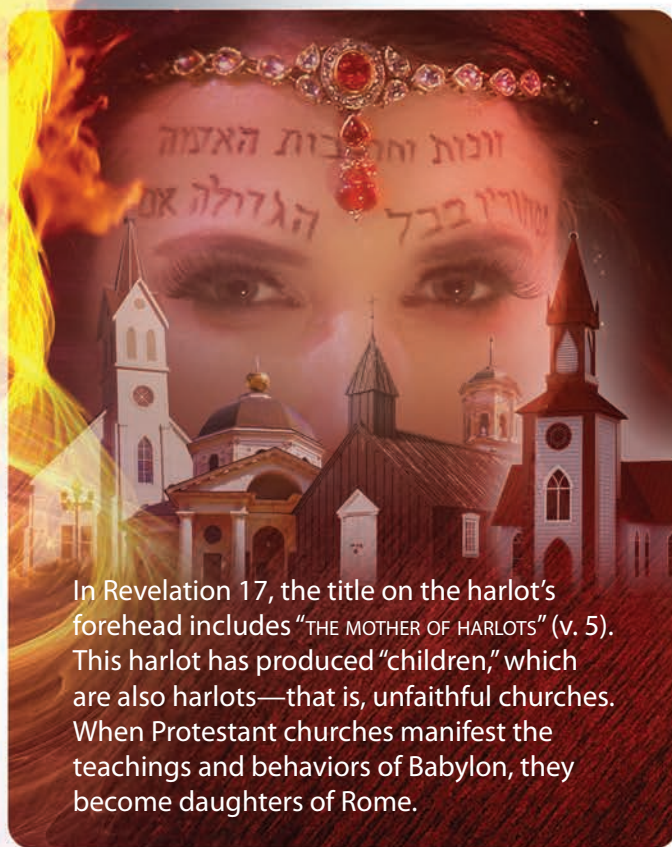
The earth beast is also described as "[speaking] like a dragon" (v. 11). The dragon speaks through two modes. The first is deception. "His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" (Revelation 12:4). In Scripture, a "tail" represents deception: "The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail" (Isaiah 9:15).

The second mode is coercion. When a nation speaks, action follows: "The image of the beast should both speak and *cause*" (13:15, emphasis added). The United States will *act* like the papacy when apostate Protestantism *acts* to coerce worship through political and military might.

Notice how many times the earth beast "*causes*"—that's coercion (vv. 12, 15, 16). The false prophet will use the might of the

state to persecute those who do not obey its religious dictates, just as Rome did to Christ during His time on Earth and to God's true church in the Dark Ages.

The will of the image of the beast is the same as the beast, papal Rome, and the dragon, Satan. The will of the dragon is to hijack the position of God. The devil wants you to obey and serve him instead of God. If you resist, the devil will try to take your allegiance by force.



In Revelation 17, the title on the harlot's forehead includes "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS" (v. 5). This harlot has produced "children," which are also harlots—that is, unfaithful churches. When Protestant churches manifest the teachings and behaviors of Babylon, they become daughters of Rome.

"AND RECEIVES HIS MARK"

The third angel declares that whoever does the will of the papacy, through the enforcement of the United States, will receive a "mark," known commonly as "the mark ... of the beast" (13:17).

Revelation provides significant information about this mark. It is compulsory: "He [the earth beast] *causes* all ... to receive a mark on their right

hand or on their foreheads" (v. 16, emphasis added). It will be the key to one's livelihood: "No one may buy or sell except one who has the mark" (v. 17). The mark of the beast is also not local to the United States—it's worldwide. It will affect "all."

Are we able to know what this mysterious mark is?

The Mark of God

Many theories about the mark of the beast have trended in culture for decades. Is it a 666 tattoo, a barcode, a chip implant? Some were even certain that it was the COVID-19 vaccine passport. But let's see what evidence the Bible provides.

The Greek word translated as "mark" is *charagma*, which means a "stamp," like "a badge of servitude."

Thus, a mark "tags" an individual in accordance with whom he or she serves (worships). As we've learned, every human serves only one of two masters: God or the devil. A mark in the Bible, therefore, is an outward sign of that allegiance.

The mark of the beast is not specifically mentioned in any other Bible book.

In Genesis 4:15, God alludes to a mark that He placed on Cain but does not describe the nature of the mark. However, Scripture describes a mark placed on the forehead: God's mark. In a vision given to the prophet Ezekiel, God instructed a man clothed like a priest, "Go ... through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a *mark* on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it" (Ezekiel 9:4, emphasis added). The people who received God's mark were noted by a single factor: They were distraught over the idolatrous sins within God's city. The

mark given them was an outward sign of their allegiance to God.

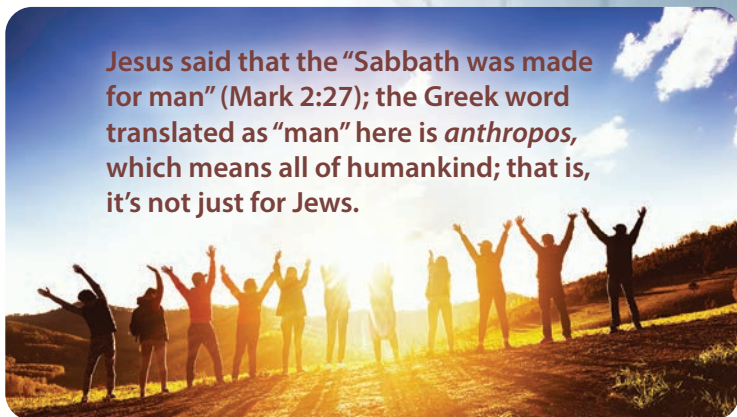
Ezekiel's vision does not specify the nature of God's mark, but several chapters later, the prophet describes this sign: "I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a *sign* between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them" (Ezekiel 20:12, emphasis added).

In Hebrew, the word used for "sign" is *oth*, which is also defined as a "mark." God also said, "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign [mark] between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Exodus 31:13; see also vv. 16, 17).

Thus, according to the Bible, God's mark (sign) is the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath, the fourth commandment.



Jesus said that the "Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27); the Greek word translated as "man" here is *anthropos*, which means all of humankind; that is, it's not just for Jews.





How do we know that the seventh day of the week is Saturday?

Saturday has long been known as the seventh day of the week—and Sunday the first. But more calendars now start on Monday, including the International Organization for Standardization, which made the change in 1988, meaning Sunday “looks” like the seventh day. Which is correct?

1. The Jewish people have continuously and meticulously kept the seventh-day Sabbath for thousands of years. Today, Jews around the world all observe Sabbath from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown.
2. The seven-day week is not governed by any astronomical cycle. Unlike the length of a month, determined by the lunar cycle, or the year, determined by the solar cycle, the seven-day week is not influenced by cosmic bodies. The origin of the seven-day week can be traced only to the book of Genesis.
3. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII made one of history’s most notable alterations to the calendar. But he modified the date, not the day of the week. Friday, October 5 became Friday, October 15. The seven-day weekly cycle remained untouched.
4. In more than 145 languages of the world, the word for Saturday is Sabbath. In Italian, Saturday is *sabato*, which means “Sabbath.” In Somalian, Saturday is *Sabtida*, or “Sabbath.”



Creator and Recreator

Have you noticed the two reasons that God gives for why He set the Sabbath as His mark? These reasons are also found in the Ten Commandments, recorded in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. In these two sets, God’s laws are consistently presented—except for the reason provided to keep the Sabbath holy.

1. **God is our Creator:** “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 20:11). As we saw in the first angel’s message, people in the last days are being called to worship the One “who made heaven and earth, the sea”—a reference to the Sabbath commandment.
2. **God is our Recreator:** “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:15). God’s deliverance of Israel from the slavery of Egypt is a model of His deliverance of all people from sin and death.

The Sabbath reminds us that God is both our Creator and Redeemer! Thus, the keeping of

HOW DO YOU KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY?

Let's see what God intended:

Exodus 16:23–26; 20:8–11; Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Nehemiah 13:15–18	We are not to work—all that is done to make a livelihood for ourselves is set aside for the day so that we may rest and meditate upon who God is.
Isaiah 58:13, 14	We are not to be self-focused. Our attention is to be heavenward, to God.
Leviticus 23:3; Psalm 89:7	We are to gather for communal worship, a time of deep respect and devotion for God.
Matthew 12:9–13; Mark 1:21–26, 29–31; Luke 14:1–5; John 5:2–9	We are to help the sick and comfort the lonely.
Acts 16:13	We are to pray, witness, and fellowship.
Psalm 92	We are to sing praises and thanksgiving to God.

the Sabbath is a demonstration of your belief in and allegiance to God as the Life-giver.

The Mark of the Beast

Have you noticed a pattern in the devil's deceptions? Papal Rome is a counterfeit Christianity. The deadly wound healed is a counterfeit resurrection. The United States is a counterfeit prophet. The devil works through such counterfeits to pretend that he is God. What counterfeit mark has the devil created for God's mark?

Note this statement from a Catholic catechism:

Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

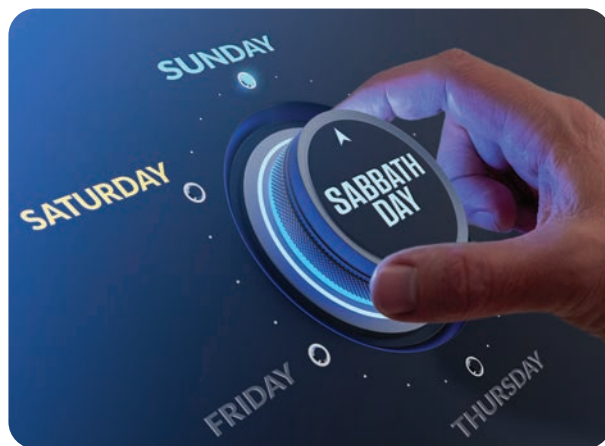
Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.¹¹

Renowned American Catholic Archbishop James Cardinal Gibbons had this to say:

Is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and

you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.¹²



The mark of the beast signifies the embracing of corrupted worship, including the counterfeit Sabbath, a manmade holy day, the first day of the week—Sunday. As the papacy itself has stated, Sunday is the sign of its authority, and keeping Sunday holy is the mark of one's allegiance to it. When the image of the beast is erected, world powers, influenced by apostate Protestant and Catholic leaders, will mandate worship on this false

¹¹ Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), 50.

¹² James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of Our Fathers: Being a Plain Exposition and Vindication of the Church Founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ*, 93rd ed. (Baltimore: John Murphy Company Publishers, 1917), 89.

Sabbath. By observing Sunday, a person will be effectively worshiping the beast—and, therefore, the devil, who gave authority to the beast.

“ON HIS FOREHEAD OR ON HIS HAND”

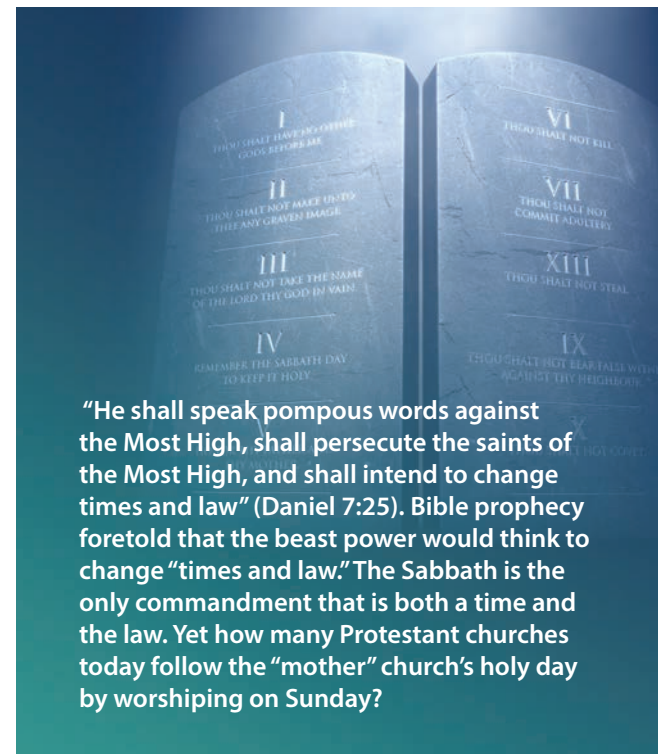
The third angel here reiterates Revelation 13:16: An individual will receive the mark of the beast “on his forehead or on his hand” (Revelation 14:9). We’ve already seen that the mark is not a literal imprint upon a person’s body. Where the mark is located is equally symbolic:

- “These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. . . . You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 6:6, 8).
- “It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth” (Exodus 13:9).

In Hebrew, “between your eyes” refers to the mind. The frontal lobe, which sits right behind the forehead, is where we make our higher-reasoning decisions and exercise self-control. Note that the mind and heart are synonymous in the Bible: God “will put [His] laws into their *hearts*, and in their *minds* [He] will write them” (Hebrews 10:16, emphasis added).

The mark “on your hand” represents your actions: “I will show you my faith *by my works*” (James 2:18, emphasis added). When God’s law is written upon your heart, it will be demonstrated in your behavior: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

Notice that obedience to God’s law is a combination of “mind” and “hand.” However, the



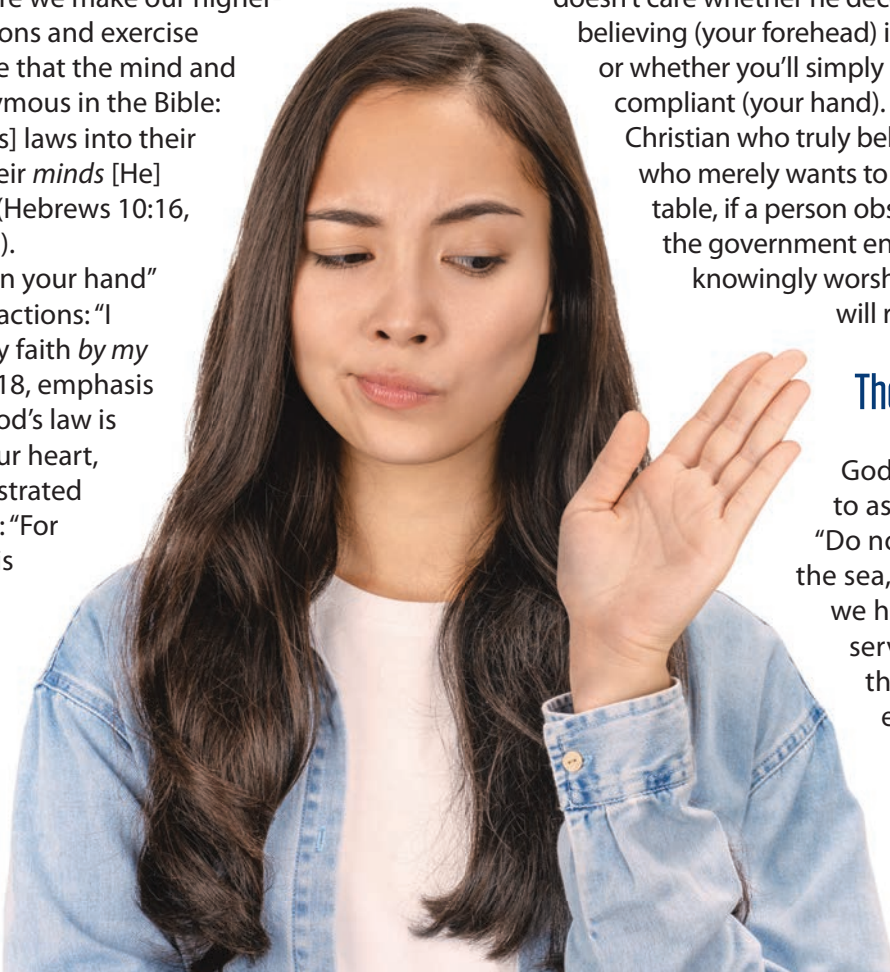
“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25). Bible prophecy foretold that the beast power would think to change “times and law.” The Sabbath is the only commandment that is both a time and the law. Yet how many Protestant churches today follow the “mother” church’s holy day by worshiping on Sunday?

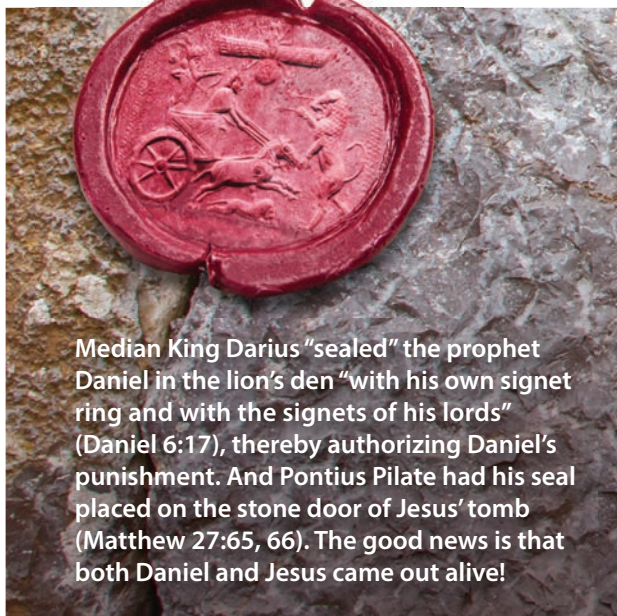
devil’s mark will be “on his forehead or on his hand” (Revelation 14:9, emphasis added). Why? The devil doesn’t care whether he deceives you into believing (your forehead) in his false Sabbath or whether you’ll simply be physically compliant (your hand). Whether a deceived Christian who truly believes or an atheist who merely wants to get food on the table, if a person observes Sunday once the government enforces it, they will be knowingly worshiping the beast and will receive his mark.

The Seal of God

In Revelation, God’s mark is referred to as the seal of God: “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have *sealed* the servants of our God on their foreheads” (7:3, emphasis added).

The Bible also uses “seal” and “sign” interchangeably (Genesis 17:11;





Median King Darius “sealed” the prophet Daniel in the lion’s den “with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords” (Daniel 6:17), thereby authorizing Daniel’s punishment. And Pontius Pilate had his seal placed on the stone door of Jesus’ tomb (Matthew 27:65, 66). The good news is that both Daniel and Jesus came out alive!

Romans 4:11). All three words—mark, sign, and seal—have the same definition in Scripture.

Notice that God’s seal will be found only upon the forehead. This doesn’t mean that one’s actions are of no consequence. Remember, with God’s mark, one’s belief will match one’s behavior. Those who have the seal of God “are the ones who follow [obey] the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4).

From ancient rulers to today’s notaries, seals have been used throughout history to authenticate documents. God’s seal serves as a stamp of approval upon the authenticity of your character. Such seals have typically had three main components: the owner’s 1) name, 2) title, and 3) jurisdiction.

For example, Elizabeth I, the famed Virgin Queen, used this seal during the latter part of her reign: “Elizabeth, by grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith.” This seal

included 1) her name: “Elizabeth I,” 2) her titles: “Queen” and “Defender of the Faith,” and 3) her jurisdiction: “England, France and Ireland.”

Where in the Bible would we find the seal of God? Isaiah 8:16 says, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” Do we find somewhere in God’s law all the essential components of a seal? We do—in the fourth 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, emphasis added).



1. The Sabbath seal has God’s name: “the LORD,” which is translated from Jehovah, a rendition of Yahweh.
2. The Sabbath seal has God’s title: “your God,” the Creator, translated from the Hebrew *Elohim*, or “the supreme God.”
3. The Sabbath seal has God’s jurisdiction: “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.” His jurisdiction is the entire universe.

The Sabbath is not just an arbitrary day. It is a sign that God is the supreme Ruler of the cosmos and that He alone has the authority to enact laws for it. Any authority that the devil ascribes

to the beast and his image is a counterfeit—and a rebellion against God.

The Bible has revealed that there are two groups, those with God’s seal and those with the beast’s mark. What happens to these two groups? Discover the third angel’s answer next.

THE THIRD ANGEL

PART 2

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 14:10, 11

means that they will also end up drinking “the wine of the wrath of God.” The Bible refers often to God’s judgment on the wicked in such terms:

Many people read this passage and often perceive God to be a cruel sadist, a tyrant. Who wants to serve a God who professes to be loving but then plans to burn people alive in hellfire for all eternity? They’re even sometimes led to abandon their faith in God. Perhaps you are on the brink of doing the same. Before you do, we urge you to make sure that your understanding has not been meddled with by the devil’s deceptions.

“THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD”

This phrase brings to mind another kind of wine: the wine of the harlot’s fornication (Revelation 17:2). (In contrast, “new wine” is the pure gospel of Christ.) Recall that this Babylonian wine (14:8) is alcoholic, meaning it corrupts minds with deceptive doctrines, “the wine of confusion” (Psalm 60:3), leading people to become lawless.

Drinking spiritual Babylon’s wine will result in people receiving the mark of the beast, which

Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it (Jeremiah 25:15).

How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? ... Let his eyes see his destruction, and let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty (Job 21:17, 20).

Behold, those whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. ... You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink of it (Jeremiah 49:12).



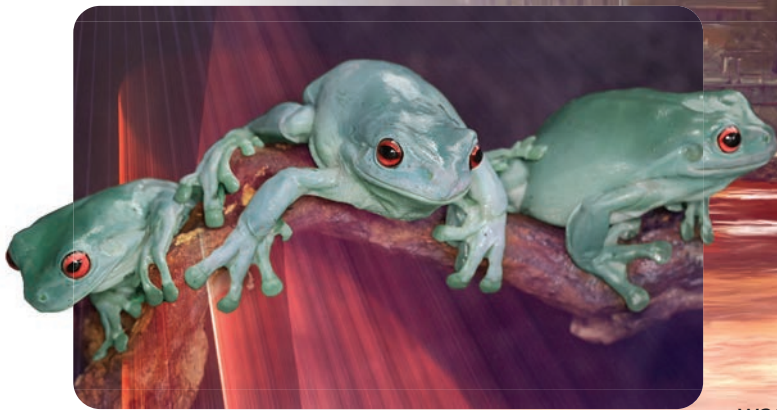
“The wine of the wrath of God” is His sentence of judgment upon unrepentant sinners. Note that the third angel specifies God’s wrath as being at “full strength.” This is not a localized judgment nor discipline mingled with mercy; the

third angel's message is referring to the final judgment at the end of the world.

The Unclean Spirits

God's wrath on the wicked falls in the form of chilling plagues, commonly called the seven last plagues. "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth" (Revelation 16:1). Each bowl represents a plague. But even during the sixth plague, the devil and his agents are *still* promoting their deceptions:

I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (vv. 13, 14).



According to this passage, another climactic war consumes the world: Armageddon, the last event before the Second Coming (v. 16). The catalyst for this battle is eye-opening. Every global power will be incited to take up arms against God—not by temporal coercion, but by the supernatural workings of demonic spirits.

Who are these "spirits of demons"? "The dragon and *his angels* fought, ... [and] the great dragon

was cast ... to the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him" (12:7, 9, emphasis added). These supernatural forces are the devil's own messengers sent to communicate with the people of the world in order to deceive and confuse them.

It might shock you to know that this deception has already taken root in modern society. Spiritualism is a multibillion-dollar industry based on supposed interactions with those who have died. Its adherents believe in the ability to communicate with "the dead," which they commonly call "spirits."

Are the Dead Still Alive?

According to the Bible, when a person dies, he becomes totally unaware; he does not become a ghost or a spirit. He simply remains dead:

The dead know nothing. ... Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep (Job 14:12).

But most religions teach otherwise: Hinduism, Buddhism, New Ageism, Islam, Catholicism, and almost all Protestantism. Nearly every religion is bound together by this single common belief: the immortality of the human soul.

The devil has been deceiving humans with this lie since the beginning. When tempting Eve to sin, he claimed, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Yet in the same chapter, God acts to prevent sinful humanity from becoming immortal: "'Lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden" (vv. 22, 23).

These verses reveal that humans are not inherently immortal; indeed, God "alone has immortality" (1 Timothy 6:16). Without access to the tree of life, man surely dies. "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

If the Bible says that there are no such things as spirits of the dead, what are the spirits with whom people are making contact? "False christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs



Dust, Soul, and Spirit

"The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7 KJV). This was how humanity was brought to life. This is how humans die: "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

"Spirit" in Hebrew is *ruwach*, which simply means "breath."

When a person dies, the two components that make the person, "dust" and God's "breath," go back to where they came from: the ground and God. The Bible does not define "spirit" as a ghost; neither does it define a "soul" as an ethereal entity that contains the essence of a person. A "soul" is simply a synonym for something living. For instance, during the second plague, "every living soul [will die] in the sea" (Revelation 16:3 KJV); the New King James translates this phrase as "every living creature."



"There shall not be found among you ... one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD" (Deuteronomy 18:10–12).

and wonders to deceive" (Matthew 24:24). The Antichrist utilizes this tactic "according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:9). We also know that "Satan ... transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15). These so-called spirits of the dead are actually "spirits of demons."

"THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT ASCENDS FOREVER AND EVER"

If humans are not immortal, why would God keep the wicked burning alive for all eternity? Indeed, immortalizing sin was the exact catastrophe that God sought to prevent in Eden (Genesis 3:24). Let's look at what it means to "be tormented with fire and brimstone, ...

[when] the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever" (Revelation 14:10, 11).

And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ... This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (20:9, 10, 14, 15).

"The lake of fire," which is "the second death," is what we commonly refer to as hell. "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (21:8). This "second death" is the ultimate consequence that falls on the lost, those who receive the mark of the beast. It is the execution of the final judgment at the end of the world.

According to the Bible, death is the state of not being alive—of not being conscious. So it follows that "the lake of fire," which is "the second death," would result in death, not never-ending torture.

What does the Bible mean by "forever and ever"? It does not always literally mean without end.

- The prophet Jonah said about being in the belly of a big fish: "I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me *forever*" (Jonah 2:6). How long was "forever" to Jonah? He was in the fish for only three days.
- Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to God, "that he may appear before the LORD and remain there *forever*" (1 Samuel 1:22). How long was "forever" to Hannah? She "lent him to the LORD [for] ... as long as he [lived]" (v. 28). In this case, "forever" means "until completion."

The third angel does make it clear that, albeit finite, there will be a period of torment in hellfire. While we cannot know the length of time for each person, we can know that the Lord is just and will give to "each one ... the things done in the body, according to what he has done" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Hell is not under the earth, as many traditionally believe, but is ignited upon the surface of the earth. It is termed "hellfire" and is more accurately described not as a place but as something that will happen.

We can also know that hellfire will be “unquenchable” (Matthew 3:12). This means that hellfire will not go out until it has completed its purpose of destruction. While it is doing its work, those in it will “have no rest day or night” (Revelation 14:11).

In Ezekiel’s vision, God commanded to “utterly slay” all those who did not have God’s mark (Ezekiel 9:6). This will come to pass in the final judgment.

away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God” (68:2). The smoke here refers to complete destruction. God said, “You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Malachi 4:3, emphasis added).

Sodom and Gomorrah

Let’s look now at Jesus’ correlation of hellfire to the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah: “On the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:29, 30; see also 2 Peter 2:4, 6, 9 KJV).

Considering the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, which was total destruction by fire, let’s turn to Revelation 14:11, which says, “And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever.” Just as the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah burned like a furnace and could be seen from miles away, the smoke from this judgment day will ascend out of sight (Genesis 19:28).

But does that mean the smoke ascends throughout eternity, never to end? No. “The wicked shall perish. ... Into smoke they shall *vanish* away” (Psalm 37:20, emphasis added); “as smoke is driven

Even more telling, these notoriously immoral cities were never rebuilt again. They were destroyed for all time. Are Sodom and Gomorrah still burning today? Of course not. The same applies to the fire of the final judgment. Unrepentant sinners will be dead forever—not forever dying.

Jesus also told this parable about the final judgment: “As the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:40–42). Notice, Jesus prophesied that the execution of the judgment would not happen *until* the end of the world and

that the judgment would be death by fire—meaning that no one is living in hellfire today.

What the Devil Wants

If the devil can deceive you into believing in your own immortality, then it is that much easier to deceive you about the final judgment. If you think that God wants to inflict horrific torture on you and that He would do it without ceasing for all time, then you wouldn't trust God. You wouldn't love God, worship God, and obey God's Word. You would refuse God's seal.

And if you don't follow God, then you are, by default, trusting in the devil and his lie: "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Whether it's purgatory, reincarnation, or universalism, all doctrines that teach that every human has guaranteed immortality come from one source: the father of lies (John 8:44). The irony is that those who believe the devil will be the ones who will lose eternity.

That's how Satan works, through "smooth" deceptions. Since the beginning of his war against God, he has been lying (Revelation 12:4).

His lies caused a "war ... in heaven" (v. 7): His

lies convinced "a third of the" angels to join his cause, leading to their eviction from heaven (v. 9).

The devil now plants doubt about God in humanity. He asked Eve, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1). The devil peddled these same kinds of insinuations to the angels in heaven: *Is God really generous? What is He not telling us? Wouldn't my way of doing things be better?*

It wasn't until the cross, when, by Satan's influence, Jesus was crucified, that the devil's true scheme was laid bare. The devil wasn't advocating for anyone's rights; he killed God in the flesh, the source of life, because that was his innermost desire (John 8:44). Now the citizens of heaven realized that he truly is a monster:

Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down (Revelation 12:10).

The murder of Jesus was when the devil lost the war in the hearts of heaven's angels. And since he could not touch God again (v. 5), he shifted strategies. The entire purpose of Christ's death and resurrection



was to save humanity. Satan could not defeat Christ, but he could make Christ's sacrifice of no effect in people's hearts. And that's what he's been doing with his lies. That's why he's "come down to [us], having great wrath" (v. 12). That's why he's constructing a massive charade of spiritualism, immortal souls, and everlasting torment. Duping you is the devil's retaliation meant to grieve the Creator.

What God Wants

Scripture reveals that humanity is made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). What more degrading mockery could the devil accomplish than to defile what was created to represent God? The devil is targeting you because you are what is most precious to God. The Lord has suffered, bled, and pursued you. He "[has] loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). "As I live," says the Lord God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezekiel 33:11; see also 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4). God is doing all He can to prevent your death.

When a person is destroyed in hellfire, there is no resurrection from it—no second chance. It will be painful for those who lose loved ones, but what do you think the loss will do to the heart of God? Jesus cried, "How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34).

Perhaps you are thinking, "If God is the Life-giver, then He can bring anyone back to life, can't He?" Understand the purpose of the final judgment:

Hellfire is God's total victory over sin.

He promises that

"He will make an utter end of [sin].

Affliction will not rise up a second time" (Nahum 1:9).

Sin, "death," "sorrow,"

"pain" will never exist again

(Revelation 21:4). Hellfire will destroy all those with the mark of the beast, those who would destroy the righteous and the

Universalism is the false doctrine that all people will ultimately be saved.

good. Thus, to those with the seal of God, hellfire represents total deliverance from sin and death—and a future secured.

True Love

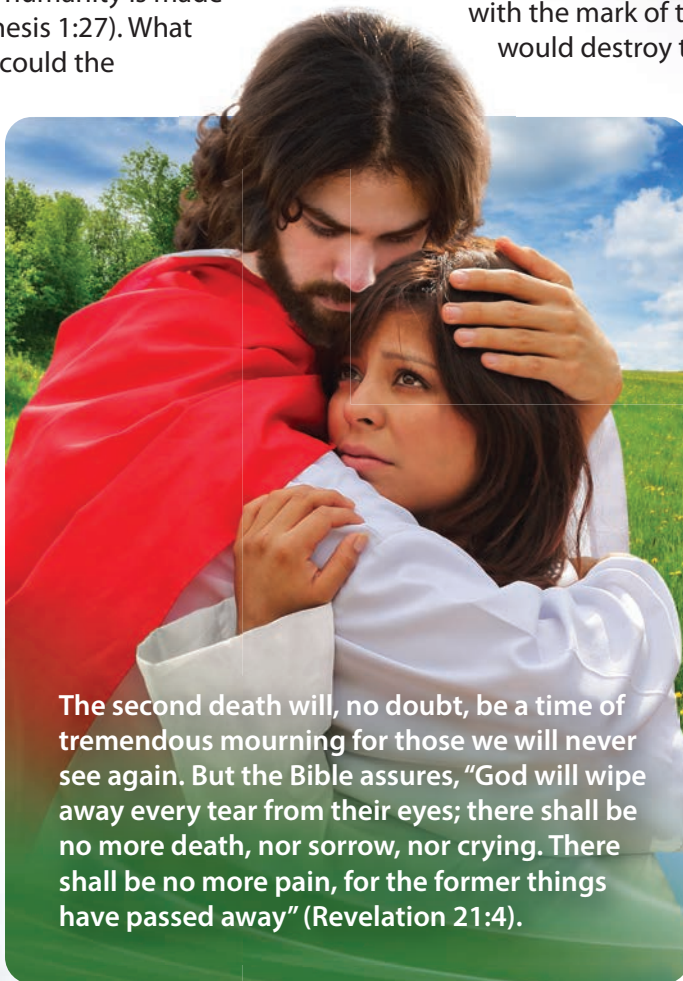
The basis of genuine love is freedom, and it is put on full display during the final judgment. Let's return to the seven last plagues, the commencement of God's wrath.

In the first plague, "a foul and loathsome sore [comes] upon the men who [have] the mark of the beast" (Revelation 16:2). By the fourth and fifth plagues, they are "[blaspheming] the

name of God who has power over these plagues" (v. 9) and, even then, "[do] not repent" (vv. 9, 11). They simply hate God.

Then, in the sixth plague, they still feel no remorse; instead, they are preparing to wage war:

I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against



The second death will, no doubt, be a time of tremendous mourning for those we will never see again. But the Bible assures, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Him who sat on the horse and against His army (19:19).

The devil's demonic spirits provoke the world to war against "Him who sat on the horse," "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (v. 16), Jesus Christ. It is those with the mark of the beast against those with the seal of God. But before the forces of darkness can harm His people, Jesus delivers them—at the Second Coming: "The rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse" (v. 21); that is, those with the beast's mark will be slain: The Word that spoke life into mankind at Creation takes life away from those who hate it. (See Hebrews 4:12.)

For the next 1,000 years, known commonly as the millennium, the abysmal, dark earth lies as a massive graveyard, with only the devil and his demons as occupants (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:1–3). But the Bible reveals that this time does not change anything. At the close of the 1,000 years, the devil does the same thing all over again: He makes war against God. Just "as a dog returns to his own vomit"



(Proverbs 26:11), the devil "[goes] out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, ... to gather them together to battle" (Revelation 20:8).

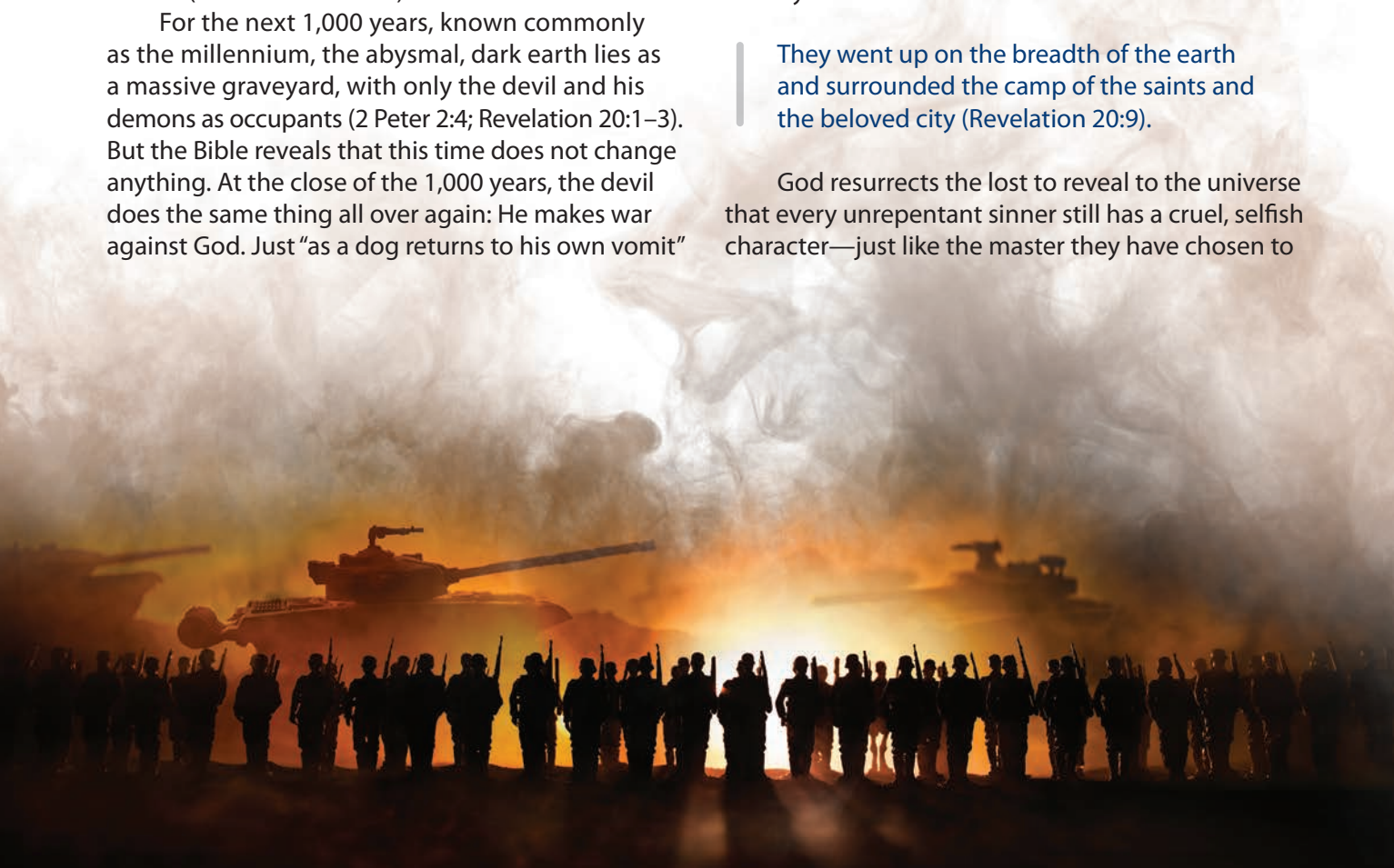
But wait—weren't all the lost slain at the Second Coming? Yes, however, God resurrects them: "The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished" (v. 5). Jesus calls

this "the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29).

Why? Remember, at this point, all the people who have ever lived have already been judged. Each verdict has already been decided. So why does God resurrect the lost?

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Revelation 20:9).

God resurrects the lost to reveal to the universe that every unrepentant sinner still has a cruel, selfish character—just like the master they have chosen to





Why does the devil wait 1,000 years before deceiving people again? Because there's no one left to deceive; every human on the earth is dead. The devil cannot bring people back to life—only God can. The devil cannot create life—only God can. The devil is not capable of being the Creator. It brings a whole new perspective to worshipping God on the Sabbath.

victory. Their promises are lies; their strength is as quicksand. They *will* lead you down the path to destruction.

But they are not the only option available to you.

Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served. ... Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, ... or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24:14, 15).

Will you choose Him now? There is a Savior who wants to give you the gift of immortal life. His promises are sure; His strength is inexhaustible.

We have now traced the path of those with the beast's mark; what about those with God's seal?

What awaits them in the judgment?

worship; they "are of [their] father the devil" (John 8:44). Neither the pain of death, the hope of life, nor the proof before them changes them. In the end, they show that they will always choose to war against all that is righteous. And that is also the reason why God will not resurrect the lost again. God loves His people too much to allow the saved to live with the torments of sin. Just as at the Second Coming, God will deliver His people from the devil and his army: "And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9).

Pathway to Destruction

The third angel's message tells us who will experience the second death. It is those "who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (14:11). The third angel does not want you to mistake his meaning. The dragon, the beast, the false prophet—they won't give you



THE THIRD ANGEL

PART 3



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

In a sea of kneeling bodies, three young Hebrews kept standing. On that flat expanse of Dura, in the heart of Babylon, they chose to shine like lights in the darkness. In front of them loomed that vast golden statue Nebuchadnezzar had erected in defiance of God.

The king confronted the three rebels:

Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if ... you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:14, 15).

The three did not waver:

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up (vv. 17, 18).

Thus far, we've spent our study of the third angel's message examining the characters, decisions, and fate of the lost, those who receive the mark of the beast. It can be overwhelming to imagine that in the last days, the king of Babylon, Satan, will provoke "those who dwell on the earth" to persecute those bearing the seal of God (Revelation 13:14). The Lord's faithful few, called "the saints," will face every weapon the devil can muster: demonic signs and wonders, a brutality that strikes fear into hearts, and ruthless oppression that snuffs out every liberty and material comfort.



But the third angel's message promises that, as the three brave Hebrews did in Babylon, the saints will withstand the onslaught of spiritual Babylon—and they do so with “patience,” which can also be translated as “hopeful endurance” and “constancy.” How is it possible to stand with the Lamb when everyone else is kneeling and everything around you is crumbling?

The Problem of Sin

At the heart of the war between God and the devil is the problem of sin. We've learned that sin originated with Lucifer, was adopted by our first parents in Eden, and causes death. “Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12; see also Ezekiel 18:20 and Romans 6:23).

But what is sin? It is “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4 KJV). What law? Throughout Scripture, the Ten Commandments are repeatedly called the law. “I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them” (Exodus 24:12, emphasis added). It is our disobedience to this law that causes our death.

Justification: Born Again

But Jesus changed humanity's tragic fate: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7; see also Matthew 26:28). Through Jesus, God extended to every human the offer of forgiveness. When a person takes advantage of this gift, they experience **justification**. Accepting Christ's sacrifice wipes away your record of sin.

However, justification is not the end of the Christian journey. While confession is one condition for receiving eternal life, it is not the only one according to Scripture: “Whoever confesses and forsakes [sin] will have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13, emphasis added). For salvation, the grace of God

leads a soul to go further—to repentance; that is, a turning away from sin.

Something happens to the heart when Christ's sacrifice fully hits it. When we grasp the magnitude of the cost of our sins and the love that saved us from death, we don't want to sin anymore: “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Romans 6:1, 2; see also Jude 1:4). In gratitude and humility, we also repent of the sins that have held us captive.



This is not a work we can accomplish on our own. Only the Holy Spirit can bring about this heart change in a person. How can we receive the Spirit? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13; see also Romans 8:13).

Sanctification: Cleansed from Sin

While we cannot be saved unless we are forgiven and repent, our justification is only the start. The next step, **sanctification**, is God's plan to make us holy, preparing us to be citizens of His eternal kingdom—to root out every sin that keeps us out of harmony with His law.

This is not easy; it can be painful to let go of destructive habits. That's why sanctification only happens as we abide in Jesus, who said, “I am the



true vine. ... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:1, 4). How do we abide in Jesus? "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (John 15:10).

After we have been made "partakers of the divine nature," the next step is to remain consecrated to God by staying faithful to Him—that is, to follow Him in obedience (2 Peter 1:4). When Saul was anointed king of Israel, the prophet Samuel told him, "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will ... be turned into another man" (1 Samuel 10:6). Yet while Saul was born again by the Spirit, he did not remain so.

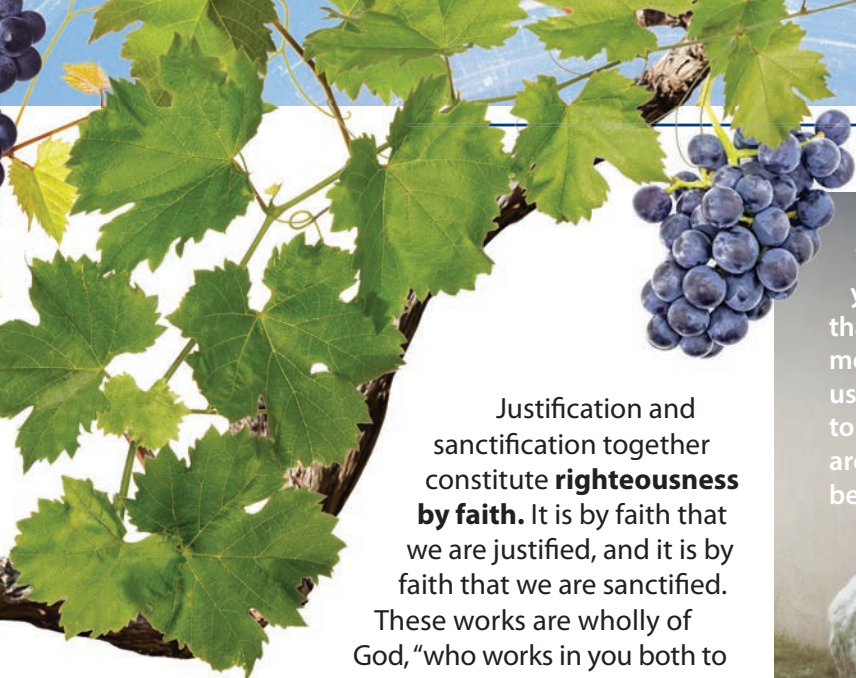
When Saul sinned at an altar of God, Samuel declared, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. ... Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you" (1 Samuel 15:22, 23). Saul's deliberate sin of rebellion cut Him off from the vine; "the Spirit of the LORD departed from" him (1 Samuel 16:14). The apostle Paul warns Christians today of a similar danger:

For if God did not spare the natural branches [the Jewish nation], He may not spare you either. Therefore, consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off (Romans 11:21, 22; see also Hebrews 10:26).

This does not mean that we will never stumble after being born again. Rebuilding one's character is a process we must take in faith, believing that "if

anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

The Bible also says, "A righteous man may fall seven times," but he will "rise again" (Proverbs 24:16). Don't give up! The Christian life is one of constant growth. Even after a plant is grown, it continues to draw life from the soil. So it is with us. We must constantly receive the Spirit of God by daily communion with Jesus in prayer and in Bible study. Through these facets of faith, we are sanctified. "We all ... 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). In other words, by beholding God's righteousness in Scripture, we become changed.



Justification and sanctification together constitute **righteousness by faith**. It is by faith that we are justified, and it is by faith that we are sanctified.

These works are wholly of God, "who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13; see also Romans 8:37). Our part is to submit to His will in obedience by dying daily to our own selfish will (1 Corinthians 15:31; see also 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

"THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE FAITH OF JESUS"

Now consider the following Scriptures:

He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

Every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (Luke 3:9).

In the last days, the entire world will come under the influence of the Antichrist, a power that claims to be Christian. Amongst the deceptions and powerful miracles, how can anyone determine whether its claim is genuine or a pretense?

Jesus tells us that it is by one's actions that we can know them (Matthew 7:18). As we have seen, the outward sign, or mark, of a genuine Christian is the keeping of God's

The second beast is said to be "lamb-like" yet also "speaks like a dragon." Jesus said that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). This reminds us to "beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The two beast powers outwardly profess faith in God but defile His law.



commandments (John 14:21). Thus, those who profess faith but don't obey are not truly representing God.

The whole world will be tested when the Antichrist passes religious laws that contradict the law of God. Everyone alive at that time will have to decide either for or against God and His law. Only then will it be made clear who truly loves and worships the true God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were willing to lay down their lives rather than transgress the law of God. Their lives testified to the genuineness of their faith.



"THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS"

Such enduring faith, "the faith of Jesus," is what the saints of the third angel's message have. Though every demonic force is against them, though they are condemned by the whole world, though their very lives hang in the balance, the end-time saints will not waver in service to the Lord.

They have allowed the Holy Spirit to transform them completely into the image of Christ; they have His law written upon their hearts (Psalm 40:8). Though it may be hard to believe, overcoming sin is what the Bible ultimately promises to those who

continue in faith and, decision by decision, surrender their will to God:

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24).

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God (1 John 3:9).

So “run with endurance the race that is set before [you], looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:1, 2). “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (10:36). This is how to stand with the Lamb at the end of time. This is what it means to worship God. This is “the patience of the saints.”

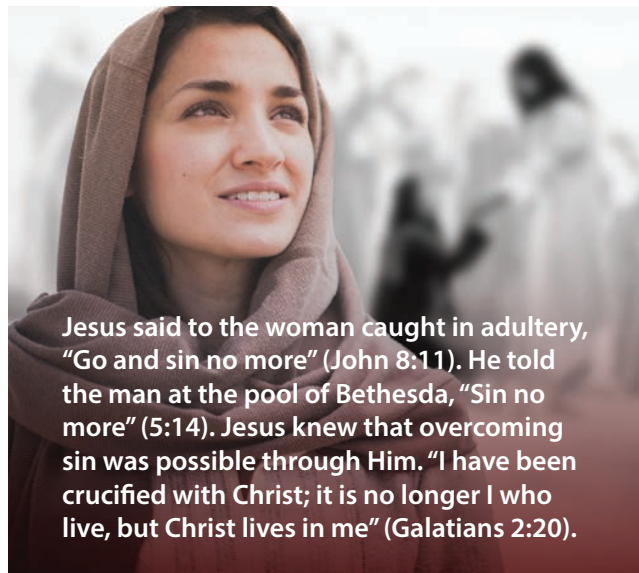
The Second Coming

When Nebuchadnezzar saw that nothing, not even the threat of death, could deter the three Hebrews from worshiping God, he “was full of fury ... and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated” (Daniel 3:19). The men were then thrown to their doom, but they did not perish.

Dumbfounded, the king cried out, “Look! ... I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (v. 25). Yes, Jesus, the Savior of the world, saved His servants from Babylon’s fiery



furnace! So also will Christ “[deliver] His servants who trusted in Him” from the fiery judgment coming at the end of the world (v. 28).

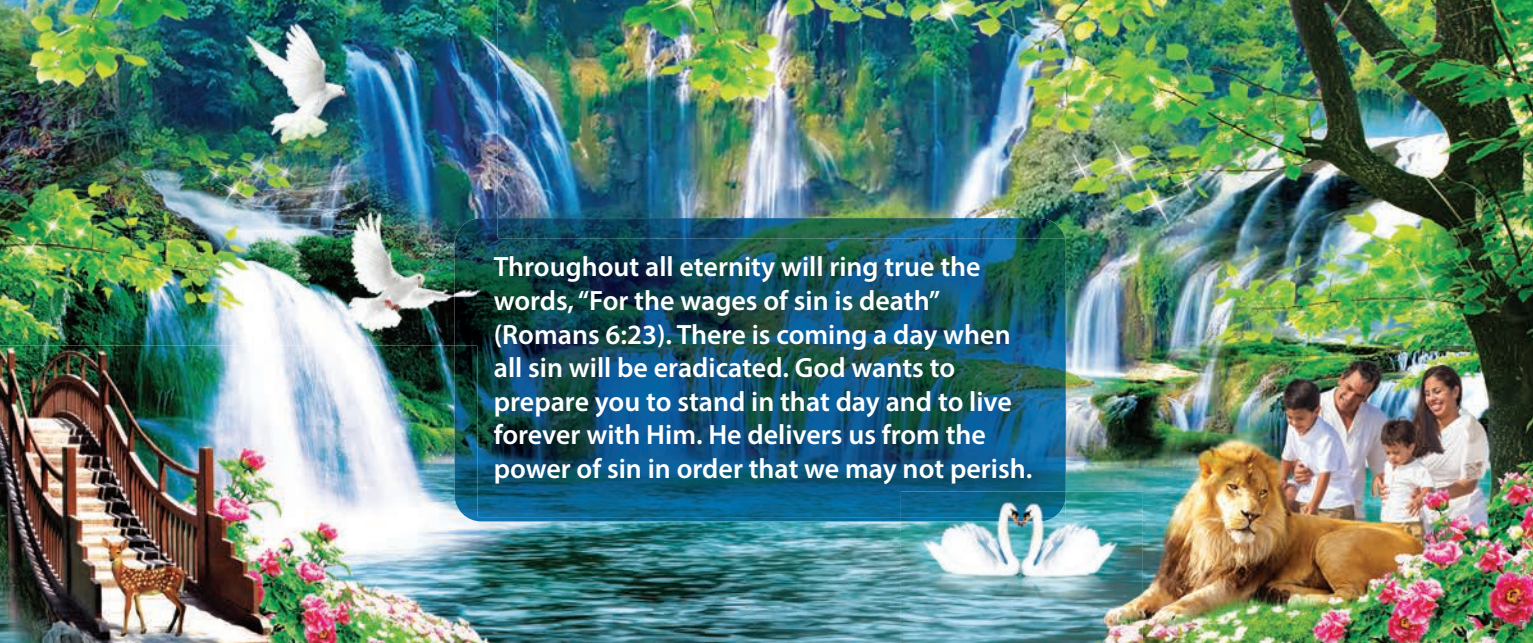


Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11). He told the man at the pool of Bethesda, “Sin no more” (5:14). Jesus knew that overcoming sin was possible through Him. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

Two types of people are caught up with Christ at the Second Coming: those faithful who have died in Christ and the faithful who are still living. All these saints will receive immortal bodies:

We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For



Throughout all eternity will ring true the words, “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). There is coming a day when all sin will be eradicated. God wants to prepare you to stand in that day and to live forever with Him. He delivers us from the power of sin in order that we may not perish.

the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52).

As Jesus said, “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life” (John 6:40). This is not life as we have known it, stricken with the ravages of sin. The ultimate will of God is your immortality—without sin.

The New Earth

The Bible records that the oldest man on earth, Methuselah, lived to 969 years old (Genesis 5:27). In other words, no man on earth has ever lived past 1,000. Interestingly, that is exactly what all the saved will experience after the Second Coming: They will live for a millennium in heaven.

After the Millennium, the saved return with Jesus back to the earth—along with their new home, the city of “New Jerusalem” (Revelation 21:2). The devil and his army of lost angels and people

will then “[surround] the camp of the saints and the beloved city” (20:9).

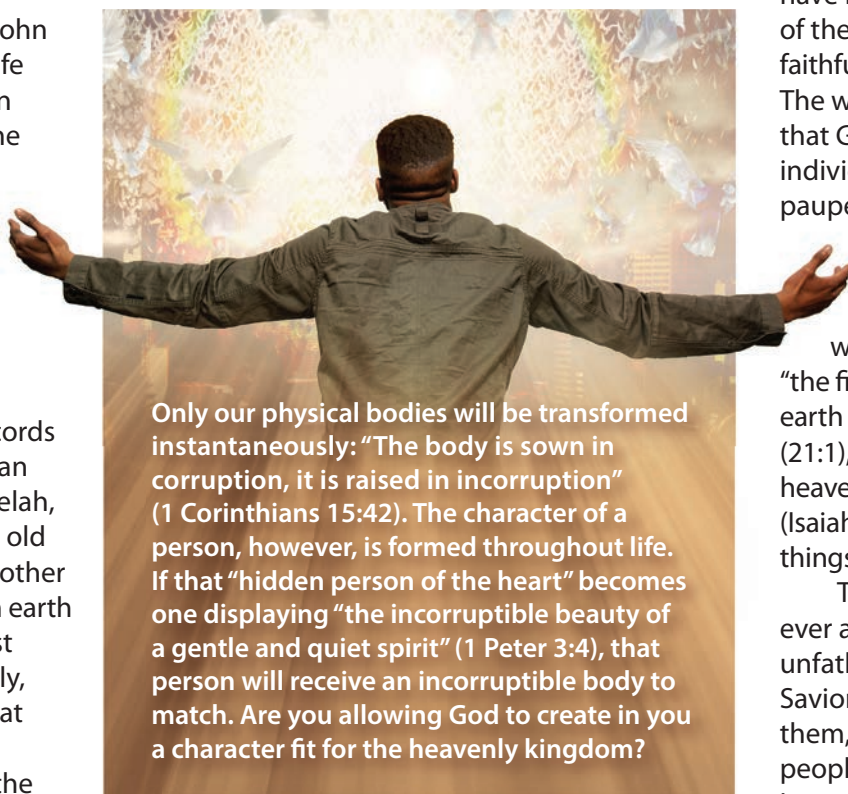
The saved and the lost of all ages are now alive on the earth. Once again, there are only two sides: the devil and his forces poised to attack Christ and His people. And, just as with the lost, the 1,000 years

have not turned the hearts of the saved. They are ever faithful and obedient to God. The whole universe will see that God has judged every individual, from the lowly pauper to the mighty ruler, rightly.

And after hellfire has completed its work of destruction and “the first heaven and the first earth [have] passed away” (21:1), God will “create new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17); “I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

The saved will live ever after in peace, in unfathomable joy, with their Savior: “He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (v. 3). Sin and “death

[are] swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54). Humanity will again “have the right to the tree of life” (Revelation 22:14).



Only our physical bodies will be transformed instantaneously: “The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:42). The character of a person, however, is formed throughout life. If that “hidden person of the heart” becomes one displaying “the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Peter 3:4), that person will receive an incorruptible body to match. Are you allowing God to create in you a character fit for the heavenly kingdom?

HEAVEN'S FINAL APPEAL

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." —Revelation 18:4

In the last days of the most powerful nation in the world, Babylon was ruled by the reckless, arrogant Belshazzar—who drunkenly rebelled against the Creator when he demanded the sacred vessels of God be filled with the literal, intoxicating wine of Babylon.

When the prophet Daniel was summoned to interpret the Lord's supernatural sign (Daniel 5:11–13), he gave Belshazzar this admonition:

You have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. ... And you have praised the gods of silver and gold; ... the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified (v. 23).

Then, Daniel pronounced God's judgment:

God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. ... You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; ... Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians (vv. 26–28).



As Daniel spoke these words, the Persians were pouring in through the walls of Babylon. Thus it was that literal Babylon fell, just as God's Word promised: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground" (Isaiah 21:9).

Now spiritual Babylon is following the same path. She has filled God's sacred vessels, the human beings made in His own image, with her spiritual wine. She is "drunk with the blood of the saints" (Revelation 17:6), and the same message of judgment is reserved for her.

The Fourth Angel

In Revelation 18, we see a fourth messenger descending from heaven. Notice that his message echoes the second angel, but it is more emphatic, more definitive, more urgent than before:

He cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury” (vv. 2, 3).

This cry presents in full the state of spiritual Babylon just before the close of the pre-advent judgment. In this last-day iteration of the devil’s kingdom, Babylon has become “Babylon the great.” We’ve seen this title before: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5).

The devil is the influence behind every counterfeit religion, which are “the abominations of the earth.” At the end of time, Babylon the great is made up of three types of false religions: paganism, Roman Catholicism (includes Greek and Russian Orthodox), and apostate Protestantism. The tie that binds them together is spiritualism (Revelation 16:13, 14).

Babylon the great will also become the universal church joined to the state, wielding control over “nations,” “kings,” and “merchants” (Revelation 18:3), and all follow after her. All those who follow Satan’s deceptions will be under the shadow of Babylon’s twisted branches; she is the epitome of apostasy, having “exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25).

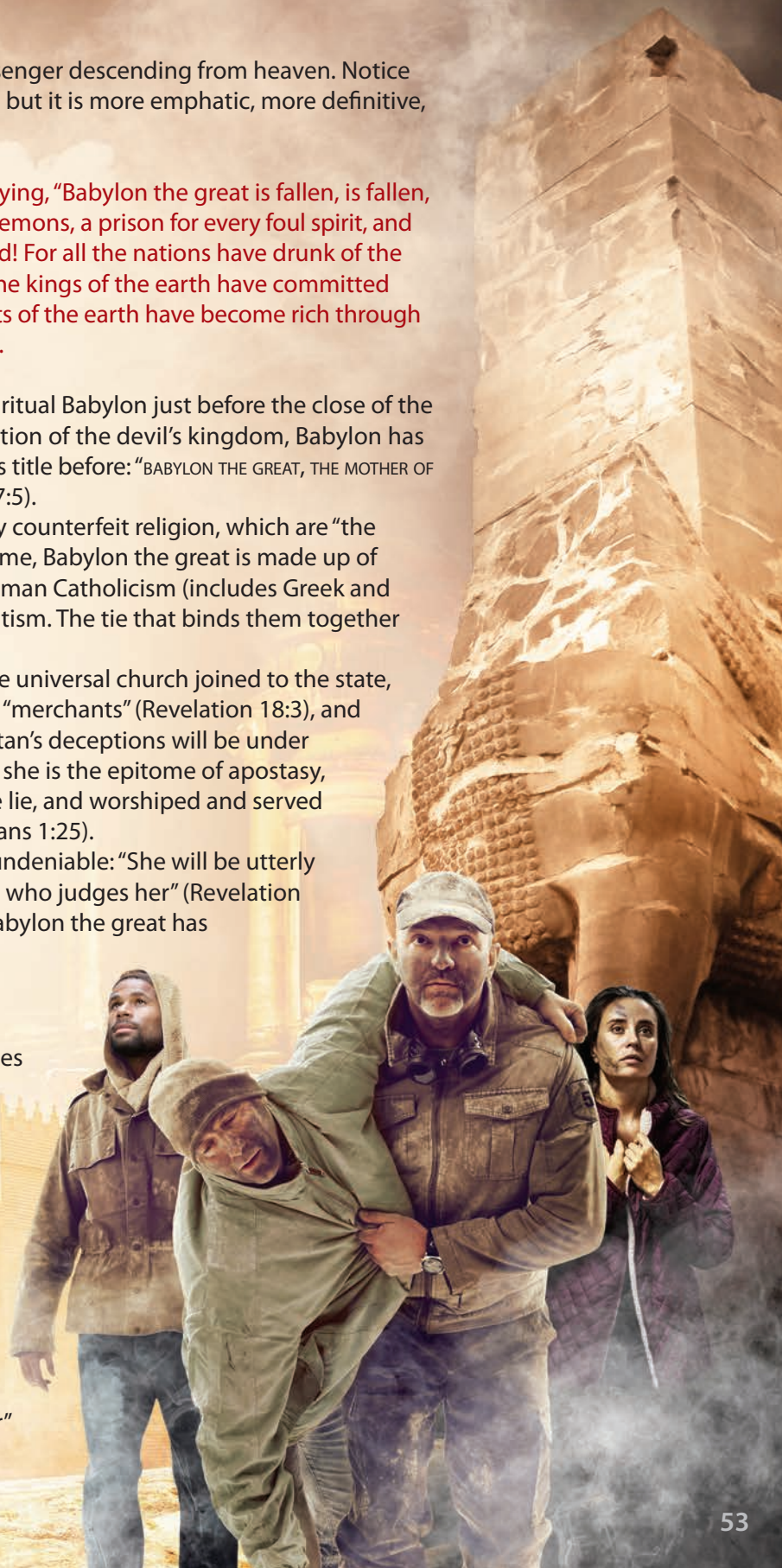
The sad fate of this city of lies will be undeniable: “She will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her” (Revelation 18:8). As with old Babylon, the verdict of Babylon the great has been decided—but yours has not yet!

Come Out of Babylon

Just before Babylon’s destruction comes heaven’s final appeal:

Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues (18:4).

If you are in Babylon, no matter your age, race, gender, or status, God is talking to you: “Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the LORD’s vengeance; He shall recompense her” (Jeremiah 51:6). “Come out from among



them and be separate, says the Lord, ... and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

The three angels' messages reveal two separate paths: the one to eternal death and the one to eternal life. Three times the book of Revelation records the lament for spiritual Babylon:

Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come (18:10).

Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing (vv. 16, 17).

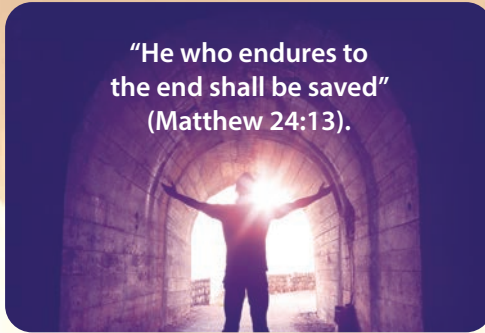
Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate (v. 19).

And three times, Revelation gives the escape route:

- "Worship God" (19:10), said an angel before John saw the vision of Christ's second coming.
- "Worship God" (22:9), said an angel after John saw the vision of Christ's final victory.
- "Worship God," says the first angel's message: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth" (14:7).

Through the three angels' messages, God is pleading with you to choose life: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). God wants you to choose life because He is your Creator, because He loves you: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will

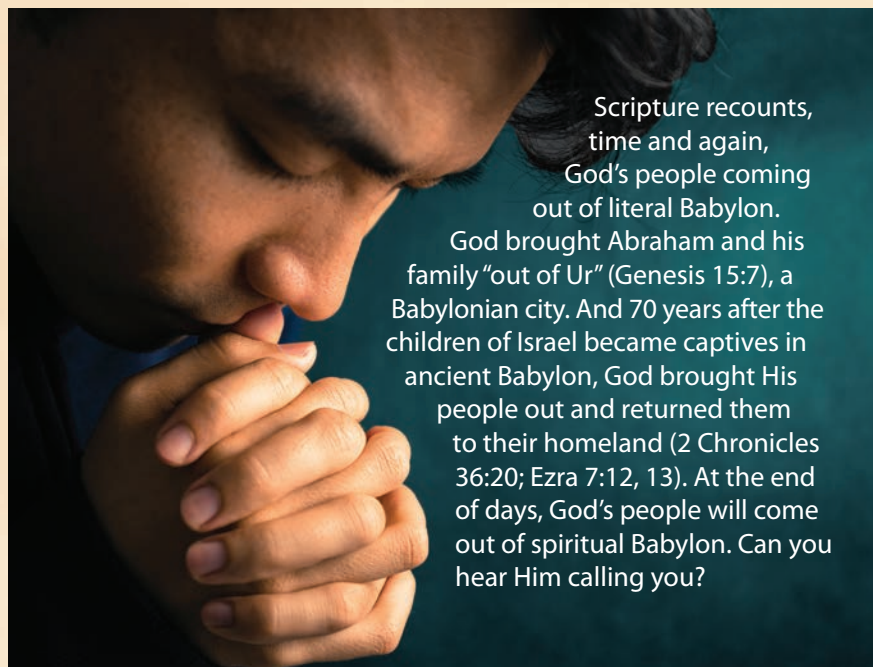
"He who endures to the end shall be saved"
(Matthew 24:13).



they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:11; see also 18:4; Isaiah 43:1; Leviticus 20:24, 26).

Are you trapped within the teachings of Babylon's walls? Do you want to escape? *You can*. The three angels' messages are the way out.

"I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord God (Ezekiel 11:19–21).



Scripture recounts, time and again, God's people coming out of literal Babylon.

God brought Abraham and his family "out of Ur" (Genesis 15:7), a Babylonian city. And 70 years after the children of Israel became captives in ancient Babylon, God brought His people out and returned them to their homeland (2 Chronicles 36:20; Ezra 7:12, 13). At the end of days, God's people will come out of spiritual Babylon. Can you hear Him calling you?

Perhaps you're thinking that the three angels' messages don't apply to you, that these events are in the future. Maybe you're thinking that you'll figure out how to get God's seal when the time comes, when the image of the beast enforces the worship of the beast.

Just because it hasn't happened yet, it doesn't mean that your decisions today don't matter. In the ancient world, seals were formed by stamping an



GO!

Have you decided to shun the charms of spiritual Babylon and be loyal to the Lord of heaven and earth? Have you come out of Babylon? Then your duty and privilege are not over.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9, 11).

God is sending you to deliver the three angels' messages to the unrighteous, that they may also choose to live in Christ. You are His hands and feet, for "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" (Isaiah 52:7).

Go! Go to a world perishing in darkness. Go as a living representation of "the everlasting gospel" (Revelation 14:6). Go until "[your] sound has gone out to all the earth, and [your] words to the ends of the world" (Romans 10:18). "Proclaim the good news of His salvation" (Psalm 96:2) that "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Numbers 14:21)!

impression into wax. When the wax was still warm, the seal was moldable. But once the wax hardened, the seal would be affixed, no longer able to be changed. Your heart works much the same way. You are, at this moment, being molded into a certain image. The decisions you make each day deepen the impression upon your heart.

Your eternal verdict will be settled before Christ returns, whether when you die or when you receive God's seal or the mark of the beast. Someday soon, the time will come when "he who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11). When the impression upon your heart has hardened, whose image will you reflect: God's or the devil's?

"Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2, emphasis added). "Choose for yourselves *this day* whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15, emphasis added). Don't delay. Take your stand for God now. "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). ■



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