

Who or What is the
BEAST
of Revelation?

by David C. Pack

The world is nearing the “end of all things.” The book of Revelation speaks of a terrifying, great “beast” to appear at the end of the age.

The Bible identifies this beast and warns of his “mark”—while prophesying civilization-shattering events leading to Armageddon.

Here is what will happen to governments and nations from now on!

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong’s ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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The world is in confusion. War, famine, disease, poverty, ignorance, civil unrest and misery are widespread and growing worse. Where are conditions leading and why?

The world is drifting along—sleepy, drunken and oblivious to what lies ahead. The average person has no idea what the future holds—and many do not care. Few are concerned beyond “tomorrow”—and fewer still remotely suspect what is coming in our time.

When God’s Plan—His great over-arching PURPOSE—is understood, confusion, mystery and misunderstanding disappear. Events become clear!

Historians can only record what has already happened. They cannot see into the future. Yet, one full third of the Bible is PROPHECY—history written *in advance*! God foretells major events *before* they happen. He wants you to *know* what the future holds—what lies ahead for the world. Over 80 percent of Bible prophecy remains unfulfilled. Many major events must yet come to pass.

Conditions in Europe and around the world will soon dictate that a single great authority must be given power for a short time. Much is written of the beast, and events surrounding its appearance, but little is understood of what the Bible actually reveals about this powerful, dominant governing system, eventually united under two men.

Behind the scenes, enormous events are *now* taking shape. Prophesied world trouble will culminate in events terrifying beyond description. They will soon stun—and SHAKE—every nation on earth!

World history is the study of the rise and fall of empires. But few know *why* great “civilizations” ebb and flow—*why* governments rise and fall—*why*

events move as they do. Most see these things as products of the normal cycle of economics, war, disease and natural calamities.

This thinking is about to change—in a BIG WAY! This booklet explains how—and *why*.

Christ's Grave Warning

Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 are parallel accounts of Christ's greatest prophecy. In these chapters (including Matthew 25), Christ gives a detailed description of events that will precede His Second Coming. Each of these chapters adds additional details, completing the picture of what will happen from here on.

Luke's account contains a *strong warning* to all who live at the end of the age. Christ explains that those who serve God must be careful not to be swept away by conditions that give a false impression of what is happening—or coming. Here is how He began: "And *take heed* [be careful!] to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with *surfeiting* [indulgence], and *drunkenness*, and *cares of this life*, and so THAT DAY [terrible, world-shaking events] come upon you *unawares*" (vs. 34).

This passage pictures the values and lifestyle of most people. Almost no one is "taking heed," and "that day" *will* come on them "unawares." Here is how Christ describes the sudden arrival of worldwide cataclysms: "For as a SNARE shall it come on ALL them that dwell on the face of *the whole earth*" (vs. 35).

Christ carefully chose this analogy. *Snares* catch unsuspecting victims, who carelessly step into them—and find themselves suddenly trapped, often hanging upside-down, completely disoriented. This is a graphic picture of what will soon strike "the whole earth"! And these are the words of Christ, not of some "doomsday prophet" speaking without facts or authority.

But this snare need not catch you—or anyone who heeds Christ's words. Calamity will not come without notice to those who are vigilant. Here is what Christ said to do: "*Watch* you therefore, and *pray always*, that you may be accounted worthy to *ESCAPE* all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (vs. 36).

The snare that Christ spoke of will entrap the *entire world*. Despite His warning, almost no one is preparing for what lies ahead. But by following His instructions, *you* can escape horrific events prophesied to soon slam into civilization like a speeding freight train!

Stark Reality

To "watch," you must know *WHAT* to watch for. Otherwise, such watching is useless—it has no value. Many will be deceived, fooled—because they will be watching in the wrong places for the wrong things, or expecting events to occur in a wrong timeframe.

The Bible is: (1) A *history* book, (2) a *prophecy* book and (3) a book about essential, *revealed* knowledge that man could not otherwise discover for himself. If *world history* is the study of the rise and fall of *past* empires, then *prophecy* is primarily the study of the rise and fall of world empires *before* they appear. Men cannot discover what the future holds without God REVEALING it!

Early world history records little about nations, kingdoms and empires that may have existed prior to the great Flood of Noah's time. However, the Bible *does* discuss the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and various other nations as they came into contact with His people, the nation of Israel, after the Flood.

The first great empire that God focuses on, both through history and Bible prophecy, is Babylon. It was founded by Nebuchadnezzar in the 600s B.C., and consisted of multiple nations and regions unified under his leadership. King Nebuchadnezzar was perhaps the first great *gentile* leader—and Scripture focuses on this man and his system all the way to the Return of Christ.

Paralleling this foretelling of the rise and fall of great gentile empires are prophecies describing the nation of Israel—both ancient Israel and the modern-day nations populated by its descendants.

The role of the symbolic beast of Revelation has everything to do with WORLD EMPIRES. Many know that it represents "BABYLON THE GREAT" (Rev. 17:5) in some way, but are unsure how. And the nature and identity of this "wild beast" remains shrouded in mystery, even for those who profess to and think that they understand who or what it is. Yet, the REAL TRUTH of how the beast will eventually affect and change the earth will shock you beyond belief!

Terrible plagues will strike the disbelieving and unprepared. Notice this blunt, stark WARNING to all: "If any man *worship* the *beast* and his *image*, and receive his *mark* in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the WRATH OF GOD, which is poured out *without mixture* [Greek: undiluted]" (Rev. 14:9-10).

This is serious! God is not a "respector of persons," playing favorites. He says, "If ANY man worship..." Woe to ALL who remain ignorant of the facts surrounding this awesome prophecy. They will suffer horribly in ways God describes most graphically. There is no room for misunderstanding on this most sober of Bible warnings.

So then, the following questions must be answered:

- Who or what is the beast of Revelation 13 and 17? Is it a man?—a church?—a government?—an empire?
- Who is the "WOMAN" of Revelation 17 who rides it?
- What is the "MARK of the beast"?
- What is the "IMAGE of the beast"?
- Who is the "FALSE PROPHET" often spoken of in conjunction with the beast?
- When will these things occur—*how long* must we wait to see these figures appear?

- How will world trends, conditions and events spawn the beast's arrival?
- Why is it so important to correctly identify it, with all related prophecies?
- How will it affect YOU?

The world does not know God. It is unaware of the plan and purpose that He is working out "here below." Worldwide disobedience to His laws, and rejection of His truths, will cause horrible—stupefying!—plagues to be poured out on a God-hating humanity. But the God of the Bible is a loving God. Before punishment takes place, He always makes certain His "watchman" (Ezek. 33:7) sounds the alarm to those in harm's way. He wants no one to have an excuse, saying, "I didn't know" or "Why didn't you tell me?"

It is my responsibility to caution—to WARN—all who will yet take heed of the seriousness and *meaning* behind world-shaking events and calamities, lying just over the horizon.

The Bible speaks of several *different* beasts. To understand them all, each must be explained separately. Revelation 13 speaks of a beast in its first 7 verses. Another beast, ridden by a woman, is described in Revelation 17. Daniel 7 speaks of four separate beasts, with a reference to a "little horn" that appears during the time of the fourth beast. Revelation 13 describes a second "two-horned beast," beginning in verse 11. Daniel 2 describes a giant image of a man composed of four separate metals. Relative to most of these descriptions, a specific number of heads, horns and toes are mentioned.

No wonder this subject is so confusing. It *does* require thorough explanation, and God must supply the CLUES—the critical knowledge to *unlocking* all of the above terms.

God says, "My people are destroyed for lack of *knowledge*" (Hos. 4:6). This booklet will strip away the confusion, misunderstanding, wrong knowledge and outright deceit that is now deluding so many who do not *know* the PLAIN TRUTH of this prophecy. Every day, end-time conditions grow more ominous—and YOU MUST UNDERSTAND!

What Are the Plagues?

The Bible foretells a series of catastrophic events, which involve seven trumpets, to occur immediately prior to Christ's Return. The seventh trumpet "fills up" what the Bible calls "the wrath of God." This last trumpet is comprised of the seven last *plagues* (also called *bowls*, or *vials*), which punish a rebellious, sinning mankind.

Seven angels "pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth" (Rev. 16:1). The seven trumpet plagues are not to be confused with the "seven last plagues." These two sets of plagues are separate.

The Bible depiction of how this occurs is most graphic. This last generation is so vile, so corrupt and contemptuous, that God will subject them to the worst punishment of all time. Christ compared these days to that of Noah's time: "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of

Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark" (Matt. 24:37-38).

How did God view Noah's time? "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

We are very close to that time again!

When the first vial is poured out upon the earth, the Bible states, "there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the MARK of the BEAST, and upon them which *worshipped* his IMAGE" (Rev. 16:2). All those who receive this plague belong to a universal, false church-state system.

The second plague is equally terrible: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (vs. 3).

In the next three plagues, the rivers and fountains will turn to blood, the sun will become so hot that men are scorched with fire, and darkness and pain will become unbearable. Yet, even after these plagues, men will continue to "blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repented not* of their deeds."

I have heard endless theories about what the beast's mark may be. It is a subject of almost unending opinion, and has become a veritable "cottage industry" of speculation, debate and disagreement. For almost every person who reads of the mark, another idea is born. But all attempts to explain the mark, the image of the beast and who will receive the plagues are fruitless unless one first establishes who or what the beast *is*!

We must start with the Bible description of the beast.

Revelation 13 and Two Beasts

Comparing Revelation 13, 17 and Daniel 7, with Daniel 2, brings full understanding of the scope and magnitude of the beasts, and the SYSTEM they represent. Numerous Old Testament scriptures also refer to them, but these chapters are the most critical to understand. Combined, they explain a staggering—and profoundly sobering!—prophecy about latter-day events that will affect *all humanity in your lifetime*!

Revelation 17:8 describes a "beast" that ascends out of a "bottomless pit" and is ridden by a "woman." Verse 12 shows that this beast involves ten kings who shall receive power and unite to bequeath it to a leader who will take the role of the final beast.

This will be the seventh, and last, short-lived resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire—arising RIGHT NOW in the heart of Europe. A United States of Europe is coming—and now lies just ahead. When it appears, the entire world will stand in shocked amazement. Let's establish, and then PROVE, these stunning prophecies. It is *vital* that you grasp what they mean!

Revelation 13 contains a symbolic description of the “beast”—*and* a description of a second beast with “two horns” (vs. 11). The first beast represents the Roman Empire—a *political* kingdom. The two-horned beast represents the *headquarters* of an influential, false prophetic “woman” that controls the first beast. This chapter also describes both the image and the mark of the beast.

The apostle John recorded the book of Revelation during his exile on the Island of Patmos. But it is actually the Revelation of Jesus Christ, not of John. He wrote what he saw in vision, offering significant detail in his description of the beast: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a BEAST rise up out of the sea, having SEVEN HEADS and TEN HORNS, and upon his horns TEN CROWNS, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was *like unto a leopard*, and his feet were as the *feet of a bear*, and his mouth as the *mouth of a lion*” (13:1-2).

These first one and a half verses of chapter 13 contain a physical description of what the beast looks like. This will be important to remember. But the next three and a half verses tell more about the *nature*—the source of power, size, scope and conduct or behavior—of the beast. The following verses give important clues for later examination. These clues go far in telling us exactly who or what the beast is.

Now read: “And the DRAGON gave him his *power*, and his *seat*, and *great authority*. And I saw one of his heads as it were *wounded* to death; and his deadly *wound was healed*: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the DRAGON which gave power unto the beast: and they *worshiped* the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to *make war with him*? And there was given unto him a *mouth speaking great things and blasphemies*; and power was given unto him to continue *forty and two months*” (vs. 2-5).

Many mistakenly equate this last description of the beast with the papacy. They fail to recognize that history is filled with accounts of its citizenry worshipping the *Roman Empire* and its *emperors*. Here is what one source states: “The worship of the emperor: In a word, the Roman government was not only wonderfully organized...everyone was required to join in the worship of the emperor because he stood for the majesty and glory of the dominion. All were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the state, as a god” (*Medieval and Modern Times*, Robinson, p. 7).

Notice that the question was asked, “Who is able to make war with him?” It would not be difficult to make war with the papacy, because they only have a tiny group of guards around the Vatican. But making war with the Roman Empire was always most difficult. Also, the papacy, as an institution, has lasted far longer than 42 months, or the prophetic fulfillment of this period—1,260 years (Ezek. 4:4-6; Num. 14:34). So this is *not* a picture of the papacy, or Vatican. We shall soon see more proof of this.

John’s description of the beast’s appearance leaves many questions. Perhaps the three biggest are: (1) Is John’s description that of a *literal creature*?

(2) Does it represent a *single individual*—a kind of anti-Christ, superman, world dictator? (3) Or does it picture *something else*?

These all require answers.

First, there is no living creature on earth that this could be describing literally. If there is, who has ever seen it? Where does it live? How did it come to be alive? How could three known creatures (a leopard, a bear and a lion) come together in the worship of a *dragon*, when there are no real dragons? This passage does not remotely describe any known animal on earth. Obviously, it must represent something other than a literal creature.

Second, regarding whether it is some kind of human being—superman or otherwise—similar questions arise. What kind of person looks like this? What man looks like a leopard, has feet like a bear and the mouth of a lion?—and has seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns on the horns?—*and* comes out of the ocean? Again, the obvious answer is no one. This depiction cannot possibly refer to either a literal man or creature.

This leaves the third possibility.

How Bible Symbols Are Understood

There is only one other possible explanation for the beast. It must be *symbolic*. Many recognize this, so it has produced an endless stream of *human* interpretations for what the beast, and other descriptions in Revelation, represent. But it is useless to try to assign an arbitrary meaning to such graphic symbolism.

If the Bible does not explain who or what the beast is, then its identity is subject to every possible human interpretation. No one would have a right to claim to be more correct than anyone else. Many others attempt to understand the beast, but then give up in hopeless frustration, thinking that no proper explanation and meaning of this, or of the other two beasts, is even possible!

In other words, if God does not reveal the meaning and identity of the beast(s)—then either *anything goes*, or one can rightly conclude that there is *no* correct explanation and this prophecy *cannot be understood*!

So then, unless one is to give up or choose to rely on human interpretation, we must accept a basic principle:

What John records in Revelation is written in SYMBOL. While he speaks in plain language, it is impossible to understand his symbols by merely re-reading various passages again and again until their *meaning* suddenly “comes clear.” Since John uses *many* symbols, we need to be able to understand the many *actual events* that these symbols *represent*. Otherwise, we will not know what is being described. Therefore, John’s description must contain sufficient clues that can be deciphered by examining other verses in the Bible.

Only *God* can interpret what He inspired John to record. One of the basic rules of Bible study is to always let the Bible interpret the Bible. This is most true of the book of Revelation. Since it is God who inspired Scripture, *He* must always interpret its meaning.

Now let's understand another related principle. Two New Testament passages, Mark 4:10-12 and Matthew 13:10-15, hold the all-important KEY to understanding *how* Christ (the One who is the real Revelator behind the Apocalypse) teaches and interprets. In both passages, He explained that He spoke in parables so that His true servants *would* understand Him—but *others would not!*

Carefully read: “And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and *not perceive*; and hearing they may hear, and *not understand*; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them” (Mark 4:10-12).

Note exactly what Christ said! *Only* His followers can understand His real meaning. Others might *think* they do—but they cannot! Christ never leaves His servants in the dark about matters He wants them to understand. But He does record them in ways that keep them hidden from the view of all others. God wants *you* to understand—but you must be willing to accept *His* interpretation.

So let's understand!

Beginning to Understand

Through a series of dreams and visions, God used the prophet Daniel to reveal enormous prophetic understanding about how and when His kingdom would come to earth (Dan. 1:17). Understanding Revelation is inseparable from, and impossible without, understanding Daniel—and vice-versa.

Daniel reported big—*tremendous*—news that will affect you in your lifetime! But all that He was shown was to be “closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (12:9). His entire message is for us today! We are NOW in the time of the end, and this prophecy was written to be understood IN OUR TIME.

One of the most important visions Daniel recorded is in chapter 7, where, inspired by God, he clearly explains and *interprets* the symbolism of the beast. This is actually where proper understanding of Revelation 13 begins.

Verse 3 speaks of “*four* great beasts that came up *from the sea*.”

Verse 4 describes the first beast as “like a *lion*.” The verse contains other important descriptive phrases.

Verse 5 describes the second beast as “like to a *bear*.” The rest of this verse also contains additional descriptive information.

Verse 6 describes the third beast as “like a *leopard*.” While this verse gives more description, make note that this beast had “four heads.”

Verse 7 describes the fourth beast as unlike any creature or animal on earth. It states that this beast is “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had *great iron teeth*.” It is important to note that the fourth beast had “ten horns.”

Remember, God interprets His own word. He needs no help from men. What has He told us?

Daniel's beasts, like the beast of Revelation 13, come “from the sea.” This is our first clue that what we are reading in Daniel 7 is a parallel to the beast.

Other obvious parallels exist between the description of the Revelation 13 beast and those that Daniel pictures. Daniel's four beasts have a total of *seven heads* (the leopard had four), as does the Revelation 13 beast. The Revelation 13 beast had ten horns, and so does Daniel's fourth beast.

The most important parallel is that John and Daniel both describe beasts that involve a leopard, a bear and a lion. This cannot possibly be a coincidence. Both obviously describe related beasts! We will later see that the unmistakable parallels continue.

But what exactly are the four beasts? In verse 16, we see that the “interpretation of the things” can be known. God's immediate answer to Daniel's question (vs. 17) is, “These great beasts, which are four, are four *kings*, which shall arise out of the earth.” The term “kings” is often synonymous with *kingdoms*, which, of course, kings represent (vs. 18, 22, 24, 27).

From verse 19 forward, Daniel focuses particularly on the fourth beast. Carefully read his description, noticing verse 23: “The fourth beast shall be the FOURTH KINGDOM UPON EARTH, which shall be *diverse from all kingdoms*, and shall *devour the whole earth*, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.”

And what are the “ten horns”? Verse 24 interprets them: “And the *ten horns* out of this kingdom are *ten kings* [or kingdoms] that shall arise.” The ten kings represent ten separate kingdoms, nations or governments.

It is now clear that this beast cannot be a human being or a church. Remember, the kings all come out of a *kingdom*. The obvious meaning of the ten horns is that they are also ten separate and sequential *kingdoms* because they all come from the fourth kingdom, which is described as ruling “the earth.”

This is a basic scriptural explanation of terms, requiring no human interpretation to understand.

Christ and Saints Replace Fourth Beast

The four beasts of Daniel 7 span 2,500 years, from Nebuchadnezzar's reign to the Return of Christ. Here is how we know this. Recall that the fourth beast is described from verses 19 through 26. Prior to verse 19, in the introduction of more detail about the fourth beast, it states in verse 18, “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”

Many other prophecies in the Bible explain that the saints rule with Christ. I have covered this in many other books and booklets. But there are two other verses here in Daniel 7, which prove most emphatically that this is true. Notice verse 22: “Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

Verse 26 concludes by summarizing what happens to the fourth beast after it “shall wear out the saints of the most High” (vs. 25) when it says that the saints then “shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” Now verse 27, again speaking of the saints: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (vs. 27).

We have established that the four beasts continue until Christ’s Return brings the last beast to an end. But who are the four beasts—the four *kingdoms*?

What Are the Four Kingdoms?

Now we must turn our attention to Daniel 2.

The book of Daniel addresses many of the other great prophecies of the Bible. The second chapter contains a prophecy spanning over 2,500 years concluding, as we will see, with Christ’s Second Coming. This prophecy pictures a giant man consisting of four metals (gold, silver, brass, and iron mixed with clay), which represent four great, world-ruling kingdoms, with the first starting in Daniel’s time.

For several verses, Daniel discussed with the Chaldean (Babylonian) King Nebuchadnezzar certain matters that had come to the king in a dream. Nebuchadnezzar was king of an empire that he had established approximately 600 years prior to Christ’s time.

The king’s court magicians were not able to interpret what only God could explain. God’s purpose was to reveal, through Daniel, that there is an Almighty living God who *rules the entire universe*—and controls all *kings, governments* and *nations* on earth. The humanly-wise King Nebuchadnezzar had no knowledge beyond the existence of other human kings and their many false gods. But it was God’s purpose to reveal to this human king the existence of His government and that it rules the universe. He also intended to make plain His great *purpose* in bringing that government to the earth “in the latter days” (vs. 28).

Several verses introduce and describe the image (statue) of a giant man. Let’s read: “This image’s head was of fine *gold*, his breast and his arms of *silver*, his belly and his thighs of *brass*, his legs of iron, his feet *part of iron and part of clay*” (vs. 32-33). This is clearly an image of a man, but one that is constructed of four distinct parts.

Then, verses 34-35 describe a great supernatural “*stone* that smote the image [and] became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Note that verse 34 states that the stone “was cut out *without hands*.” This is because God, not men, had formed it. We will discuss this momentarily.

Since the “stone” shatters the image and replaces it, eventually encompassing the entire earth, this can only be the *government of God* coming to

earth. Notice: “*Jesus Christ* of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...*This* is the *stone* which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the corner” (Acts 4:10-11).

This verse identifies *Christ* as the stone of Daniel 2. When God’s Kingdom is established, we have already seen that the saints “possess the kingdom” (of God). Again, many verses show that they rule with the returning Christ. This is proven and clarified in verses 44 and 45, which describe “the God of heaven set[ting] up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed...it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” The end of verse 45 adds, “and the dream is *certain*, and the *interpretation* thereof *sure*.”

God leaves no doubt as to whether these prophecies will be fulfilled. He has spoken them—and they will happen! This is why it is so important for you to comprehend—*grasp*—the identity and the meaning of the beast and the events preceding Christ’s Coming. He will destroy the final kingdom and set up God’s great world-ruling government—supplanting all humanly-devised governments! Daniel 2:34 and 44 *prove* that these ten toes (ten *final* kings—and kingdoms—united under one leader) exist at the time of Christ’s Coming, because the stone replaces them!

The Four Metals Explained

Now, what do the four metals of the image represent? We will see that they are four gentile kingdoms. But, you do not need anyone, including me, to interpret them for you. Allow God to interpret the great image—and the meaning of the four elements of which it is composed.

Verse 37 states, “*You*, O king [Nebuchadnezzar], are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.” Verse 38 adds, “*You* are this head of gold.” The Bible has just interpreted itself. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon represent the first kingdom.

Verses 39-40 go on to describe *three successive kingdoms* that would follow the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. Here is how they are described: “And *after* you [Nebuchadnezzar] shall arise *another kingdom* [of silver] inferior to you, and another *third kingdom* of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the *fourth kingdom* shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”

These verses show a succession of WORLD EMPIRES depicted by different metals composing the giant image. These were literal kingdoms. What you have just learned is vital knowledge that very few understand today. God expressly reveals to us *now* that He is the One who establishes and removes—and establishes and removes again—earthly kingdoms. This has much to do with the identity of the beast.

The first kingdom, which was the head made of gold, represented Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian or Chaldean Empire (625-539 B.C.). In 539, the

Medes and Persians defeated the Babylonians. The silver breast and arms represent this second empire. The duration of the Medo-Persian kingdom was 558-330 B.C. The belly and thighs of brass represented the third kingdom, the Grecian (333-31 B.C.) or Greco-Macedonian Empire.

The Greco-Macedonian empire was led by Alexander the Great. After just a one-year reign, Alexander died and his generals (Lysimachus, Cassander, Ptolemy and Seleucus) divided his enormous empire into *four* regions: (1) Egypt, (2) Macedonia and Greece, (3) Thrace and Western Asia, and (4) Syria and all territory east to the Indus River. These are the four heads of Alexander's "leopard" kingdom.

Finally, the fourth kingdom is depicted by lower legs of iron, with feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. This represents the greatest of the four kingdoms—the Roman Empire, which defeated and succeeded the Greco-Macedonian Empire.

These are well known facts of world history. Few dispute the basic historical accuracy of the timing, scope and greatness of these four kingdoms.

However, we must understand *why* God focuses on *these* gentile kingdoms.

In the greatest sense, the Bible is almost entirely a book about how God worked with the nation of ancient Israel. He chose, revealed Himself to, and gave His Law to govern this nation. God had warned Israel that if they disobeyed him, they would be punished (Lev. 26; Deut. 28). After a long series of ups and downs, they rejected God, His leaders and His Law for the last time. After sending most of the tribes of Israel into captivity in Assyria about 125 years earlier, God sent the last tribe, Judah, into captivity in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel himself was a young Jewish slave.)

From the time of Judah's captivity forward, starting with Babylon, God raised up successive gentile world empires that He foretold would continue for the remaining 25 centuries before He established His Kingdom.

The Fourth Beast Explained

The Roman Empire, which began in 31 B.C., has existed and waned through a succession of historic resurrections. Starting from Rome, the empire slowly expanded until it had absorbed the four pieces of Alexander's kingdom. In time, it became the largest and most powerful empire the world had ever seen. Eventually, it encompassed all of the regions of the three empires that preceded it, and more. (Thus, the characteristics of Babylon, Medo-Persia and the four Greco-Macedonian divisions of Alexander's empire are reflected in our artist's rendering *within* the composite beast of Revelation 13—the Roman Empire. The nondescript other six heads of this beast carry no special meaning, individually.)

Rome slowly took on the qualities of the kingdoms it replaced. It had the lightning-speed, cruelty and striking-power of Alexander's small leopard-like army, which typically attacked like a World War II German blitzkrieg. But it also possessed the massive power of the Medo-Persian armies, which boasted

a standing army of over one million men. This is why God depicted the Medo-Persian empire as having the tremendous power of a bear, and as the chest and arms of a man.

The city of Rome in particular, and the entire empire in general, also reflected and held much of the splendor that Babylon reflected, as the head of gold.

Rome embodied all the qualities of the bear, the lion and the leopard, yet was different in that it was unlike any other animal because it had "great iron teeth." All of this is why John saw one, not four, beasts in Revelation 13. The four beasts of Daniel 7 had a total of seven heads. This is why John's one beast also had seven heads.

The duration of the Roman Empire nearly covered the period of world dominance of the three kingdoms it succeeded put together!

The first period of the Roman Empire lasted from 31 B.C. to A.D. 476, when it collapsed after having been overrun by barbarians from the north.

If we are to be honest, and reject the nearly endless stream of human opinions and theories about the fourth beast being a church, a country, the Pope or some mysterious final superman, then we are left to simply believe the Bible and the facts of history.

The fourth beast represents the Roman Empire from 31 B.C. to the present. All other theories collapse under the weight of Bible clues and facts, presented by God as proof to all minds that are truly open.

What is the "Deadly Wound"?

Recall that John, in Revelation 13, said that the beast would receive a "deadly wound," which would eventually be "healed." After this healing, the beast was prophesied "to continue forty and two months." What did he mean? What was he speaking of? The answer lies in understanding what happened to the Roman Empire in A.D. 476.

John wrote that "one of his heads" was "wounded to death" (vs. 3). This has to be referring to the *last* of the seven heads of John's beast, which is the Roman Empire, because John was living in the time of the seventh head, when the Roman Empire ruled. Since the other three beasts had passed into history, there would have been no point in addressing them in a book intended to reveal the *future*. Recall that Daniel explained that the "ten horns" were ten successive governments, which arose out of the Roman Empire and continue until the Second Coming of Christ. Daniel 7:24 stated, "And the *ten horns* out of this kingdom *are ten kings* [governments] that shall arise."

Who are these ten kings (governments)? And how do they fit with the wound that was healed? Start by recognizing that the kings must be *successive*, not contemporaneous, for how can they rule at the same time if they span a period from A.D. 476 until the time of Christ's Return? Obviously, no single human being can live this long and neither has any *single* government, empowered by Rome, done this.

Let's examine the first three heads of the Roman Empire, for they represent the period that encompasses the wound. The deadly wound was brought on the Roman Empire by barbaric tribes from the north. Three Germanic kingdoms from Northern Europe, called the *Vandals*, the *Heruli* and the *Ostrogoths*, conquered Rome in succession.

Some brief explanation of these tribes and their timing is helpful. In 455, the Vandals swept through Northern Africa, and eventually attacked and defeated the city of Rome itself. (This tribe was so barbaric and destructive that the modern term "vandalize" is derived from their name.) Twenty-one years later, in 476, the Heruli, under Odoacer, established an occupying government at Rome. Historians universally accept 476 as the official date of the fall of the Roman Empire.

The kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which lasted from 493 to 554, in turn, replaced the Heruli. Like the Vandals and Heruli, the Ostrogoths were eventually driven from Rome, and together they represented what has often been called the "transition age" of the Roman Empire. But it is important to understand that these three brief successions of Northern Tribes were not actually Roman governments, but were governments *in* Rome. Yet they were still part of the "ten horns."

Recall that Daniel 7:8 said that these "three horns" were "plucked up by the roots." In fact, these three tribes did completely disappear from history. However, seven more horns were prophesied to rule this empire after them, until Christ returned.

Beginning in A.D. 554, the Roman Empire became known as the *Holy Roman Empire*. Historians almost universally acknowledge that the Pope's crowning of *Justinian*, after he had defeated the Ostrogoths, signaled this change. Events in Europe, surrounding the Holy Roman Empire, rose and fell for many centuries. Periodically, new rulers appeared—*Charlamagne* (the Frankish head in A.D. 800)—*Otto the Great* (the German head crowned in A.D. 962)—followed by the Hapsburg Dynasty of *Charles V* (the Austrian head crowned in A.D. 1520)—which, in turn, was followed by *Napoleon's* reign (the French head crowned in A.D. 1805)—with the sixth head being that of Garibaldi's united Italian head from A.D. 1870-1945! This sixth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire culminated in the defeat of Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Mussolini, after signing a secret agreement (Concordat) with the Vatican in 1929, united Ethiopia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland back to Italy in 1935. He declared this union to be the Roman Empire re-established!

A regathering of power under one man is foretold to happen one more time!

Understand! The Roman Empire had two capitals—in Rome and Constantinople. The *ten toes* on the *two feet* of Daniel 2 represent ten different nations or kingdoms in Eastern and Western Europe. This religious, political combine of nations (also the 10 horns of Rev. 17) will unite under one final powerful leader. This united system is now quietly forming behind the world stage.

Only the tenth horn of Daniel 7:7 (the same as all ten toes of Daniel 2) is yet to appear. *This* will be the final great *beast* of Revelation 17 that will explode upon an unsuspecting world with stunning speed and force (Rev. 17:12). With the 1989 collapse of the Iron Curtain and the reuniting of Germany, the final resurrection, consisting of countries and kingdoms throughout Central Europe, will soon appear, as a superpower United States of Europe. But we have already read how Christ will smash this union of kingdoms at His Coming!

The Wound Healed

Recall that John said, "the dragon gave him [the beast] his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 20:2 shows who the dragon is: "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan." Revelation 12:9, 12-13 adds, "The great dragon...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...was cast out into the earth...having great wrath...and when the dragon saw that he was cast onto the earth..."

These verses leave no doubt as to the identity of the dragon and that the devil empowers the system of government that culminates in the final beast power that Christ smashes.

The wound was prophesied to be healed, and, speaking of the beast, "power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." This requires explanation. The healing occurred in A.D. 554, when the Emperor of the East at Constantinople, Justinian, re-established the Roman Empire at Ravenna, Italy. History records this as the "Imperial Restoration" of the Roman Empire.

The history of the Roman Empire changes entirely from A.D. 554. The seven successive revivals all had something in common never seen in the previous period of governments ruling from Rome.

We may now read Daniel 7:8: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another *little horn*, before whom there were three of the first horns *plucked up by the roots*: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Verse 20 adds of this "little horn" that it "came up, and before whom *three* fell" and it had a look "more stout than his fellows." Clearly, this is a distinct and *different* horn from the remaining seven of the ten horns that appear *after* the first three Germanic heads (horns) of the empire.

Let's understand! It is the appearance of this little horn in 554—this time-frame is established by Daniel's two verses—that redefines the kingdom and allows it to continue for another "forty-two months."

Here is what happened: The *Pope* crowned Justinian in this year!

What is the meaning of the forty-two months? Ezekiel 4:4-6 and Numbers 14:34 show that, in prophetic fulfillment, each *day* counts for a *year*. This is critical to understand in regard to many other prophecies. Without recognizing this principle, all of these Bible prophecies have remained closed—sealed—to those who sought to understand them. How does "a day for a year" apply here?

Forty-two months is three and a half years. God's sacred years contain 360 days. 360 days times 3 1/2 equals 1,260 days—or 1,260 *years* in prophecy. This defines the *duration* of the healing of the “deadly wound.”

Counting 1,260 years from 554 takes us to 1814. Why is 1814 significant? This is when Napoleon abdicated, before his 1815 Waterloo defeat. As one historian put it, “So closed a government that dated from Augustus Caesar”—from 31 B.C. (*Modern History*, West, p. 337). The 1,260 years of the “healed beast” had ended. The beast disappeared into the abyss of history—the “bottomless pit” of Revelation 17:8—from this moment forward, until it suddenly reappears.

With eight horns of the fourth beast (five heads of Revelation 17 beast) gone, it was not until 1870 that Garibaldi began to unite the many fractured little kingdoms of Italy under one authority—thus beginning the revival of the ninth horn (sixth head of Revelation 17 beast) that climaxed in Mussolini's Fascist government.

The end of Revelation 17:8 also describes this beast as “the beast that was, and is not, *and yet is*.” This sixth resurrection (1870-1945) was so weak in power, when compared to previous resurrections such as Charlemagne and Napoleon, as a revival of the generally much more powerful Roman Empire, that it is described as “was, and *is not*, and *yet is*” (at least in *name*).

The Little Horn and the Saints

We have discussed the little horn as it relates to the coronation of Justinian. Each of the additional five revivals of the Holy Roman Empire (Frankish, Germanic, Austrian Hapsburg, Napoleonic and Italian Garibaldi to Mussolini kingdoms) were recognized, endorsed and, to varying degrees, directly guided and steered by the Vatican.

There is another important aspect of the little horn to be explained here. Daniel 7:20-21 states, “even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them*.”

Finally, verse 25 also states, “And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall *wear out the saints* of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

From 554, when the “deadly wound” of Revelation 13 “was healed,” the civil emperors in Rome began to honor (with power, gold and silver) a god that had been unknown to their ancestors or “fathers.” This “strange god” held a *high religious office* and received great deference from Roman emperors (Dan. 11:37-39). From the time of Justinian, this church/state system functioned *together* for 1,260 years, with the “little horn” using and guiding the civil authorities to do its bidding.

This system “made war with the saints [of God's true Church],” “prevailed against them,” “spoke great words against the most High,” and did “wear out

the saints of the most High.” This “little horn” is precisely the same great universal counterfeit movement whose rise to power has been documented from Church history. As we proceed, it will become evident how deadly this “little horn speaking great things” would become in regard to the true Church—and to all civilization. (Read our free book *The History of God's TRUE CHURCH* and our free booklet *Many Shall Come IN MY NAME* for greater understanding of both the history of God's Church and the work of the counterfeit church that has relentlessly sought to destroy it.)

The Revelation 13 “Two-horned Beast”

The 13th chapter describes a second beast, this one having “two horns” (vs. 11). We have seen that the first beast is a description of the Roman Empire—a *political* kingdom. What is this “two-horned beast”?

Recall that Revelation 12:9 said, “Satan...deceives *the whole world*.” Revelation 20:3 states that he “deceive[s] the nations.” Also recall that Satan (“the dragon”) gives power to the first beast of chapter 13. The devil has a civil government headquarters on earth to which he gives “his power, and his seat [a city], and great authority.”

Satan does not usually speak directly to human beings. He works through his servants—his ministers. The Bible teaches that Satan has “*his* ministers.” These ministers pretend to be ministers of Christ, but Paul calls them “false apostles” and “deceitful workers,” who appear to be “angels of light” and “ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. 11:13-15). The vast majority of those who claim to be true ministers of God are not. Christ said that His Church would be little, and its faithful ministers *few*.

The Bible Explains It

There are many theories about the “two-horned beast.” Some have thought it is a grouping of Protestant churches, and others think that it is the papacy linked to the United States. Most, however, claim not to know what it is, and speak little of it. Therefore, we must let the Bible explain its true meaning.

Now let's examine the passage that describes this other Revelation 13 beast: “And I beheld *another beast* coming up out of the earth; and he had *two horns* like a LAMB, and he spoke as a DRAGON. And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he *does great wonders*, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and *deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles* which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an *image* to the beast...and *cause* that as many as would not worship the *image* of the beast should be *killed*” (vs. 11-15).

Some important points emerge.

This two-horned beast gives “power” to the first beast of verses 1-5. Daniel 7:17, 23 revealed that “beast” is a term for a civil government or kingdom, or the leader of the kingdom. Therefore, our first important conclusion is that this beast must be a government or kingdom. Second, is that it gives power to the Roman Empire system.

It also appears like a “lamb,” but speaks like a “dragon.” This is critical to understand. Here is why. Christ is depicted in the Bible, in several places, as a lamb (John 1:29; Rev. 17:14). We have seen that the dragon is Satan. So this beast, then, *appears* to be religious, but is really of the devil. In other words, this is a *satanic* kingdom that appears on the surface to be the kingdom of God, and of Christ. Many scriptures reveal that Christ did not establish His kingdom at His first Coming. He carefully explained this to His disciples in Acts 1:6, John 14:1-3 and Luke 19:11-27. We have already seen verses in Daniel 7 describing when Christ and the saints smash the fourth beast as they are given rulership over earth.

When Revelation 13:12 states that “he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed,” it was the Roman Empire to whom he was giving power. This occurred from the time of its healing in 554.

For the full 1,260 years that the wound was healed, Roman emperors acknowledged the supreme authority of religion throughout the empire. This is one way it portrays itself as the kingdom of God on earth. Many encyclopedias state that the Holy Roman Empire was the “kingdom of God on earth.” Actually, in 554, many felt that the Kingdom of God had officially arrived.

The second beast, however, has *two* horns. This is because it represents a two-fold combination of church and government. But since it is an actual kingdom, it does, in fact, have to be its own independent, sovereign state. Remember also, this two-horned beast possesses such awesome power that it inspires the world to worship the beast, whose deadly wound was healed. The power to bring fire down from heaven and to perform miracles will win vast numbers of people as worshippers of the beast.

Verse 14 explains this: “And deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast,” with verse 13 stating, “he does great wonders.”

Recognize these facts: The second beast is able to perform miracles. He does this “in the sight of” the first beast—the Holy Roman Empire. These miracles are so extraordinary—so mesmerizing—that they allow him to *deceive the whole earth!* Finally, the beast is worshipped as a result.

This future religious leader will lead the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire alongside a great civil leader. In II Thessalonians 2:3, this same religious leader is called the “man of sin.” Revelation 19:20 refers to him as a “false prophet.” This false prophet embodies all that counterfeit Christianity has represented through the centuries. In the near future, when the modern-day

descendants of Israel are taken into captivity, many will see the bitter reality of its killing machine firsthand.

This has been typical of this Babylonish church throughout the course of history. Millions have been put to death for not worshipping according to its false beliefs and practices. (Take time to read our free book *AMERICA and BRITAIN in Bible Prophecy*. It reveals the remarkable story of who ancient Israel is and where they are found today—and prophecies explaining what will soon happen to them.)

Plainly, the “two-horned beast” is the *headquarters* of the great false church that controls the first beast. The description we have just read is an unmistakable parallel with the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8, 20-21, 24-25.

We must know what is coming and be able to recognize it when it emerges in full power. God warns of this system and we will continue to publish and broadcast this warning as His watchmen (Ezek. 33:1-9).

The Revelation 17 Beast and Woman Riding It

Revelation 12 describes a “woman,” which is to marry Christ (Rev. 19:7; Matt. 25:1-10; Eph. 5:23) at His Return. These verses, and others, show that the word “woman” is a symbol for a church. The entire chapter 12 is devoted to God’s Church and how she has been persecuted by a false “Christian” church system throughout most of her 2,000 years. Many earmarks of *this* woman of chapter 12 demonstrate and prove that she is God’s true Church.

Revelation 17 introduces another seven-headed beast, different from any mentioned previously, describing a very *different* woman riding it. Let’s examine this woman and the beast she rides. It is vital to understand her critical connection to seven revivals (resurrections) of the Roman system. She never rode the first three heads of the Roman system. Rather, she only rode it after the beast was “healed.” The now healed beast is the beast of Revelation 17.

Chapters 17 and 18 are an inset to the book of Revelation, and describe the great Roman system that is destroyed at the end of chapter 16. These chapters give a somewhat more detailed picture of the great, false *universal* church. The picture includes the woman’s “*harlot*” daughters (17:5), which have helped her to deceive all nations (17:1-2; 18:3).

We have discussed the seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. Six have come and gone—and the last ten-horn revival, consisting of ten kings (of 10 governments), is now forming! The 17th chapter describes the final revival of this religious-political system. This revival will last at least three and a half years, coinciding with first the tribulation (Matt. 24:21-22) and then the time of God’s Wrath. It is prophesied to come “out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition” (Rev. 17:8). The Holy Roman Empire has been in the abyss of history, or bottomless pit, since Napoleon’s 1814 abdication prior to Waterloo.

Chapter 17, verse 10, speaking of the heads, states, “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.” The five “fallen” heads are those the woman rode during the 1,260 years from 554 to 1814. The “one *is*” head was the sixth head, now past, which began with Garibaldi and culminated in Mussolini. The “is” has become “was.”

Now understand. This verse is written from the time perspective of *when* God revealed this prophecy, and many others, to the leader of His Church, in the late 1930s. This is the only time that this *present tense* representation of the revivals of the heads could be accurate. It also reveals when God wanted Daniel’s closed and sealed prophecy opened and taken to the world as a warning!

Understand another important connection to these resurrections of the Roman system. Revelation 17 describes each as having “a *woman* sit[ting] upon a scarlet colored *beast*, full of names of blasphemy, having *seven heads* and *ten horns*” (vs. 3). The seven heads are seven separate revivals, with a *ten-horn* (composed of ten kings) *final revival*. It is *this* woman who spreads the “mystery of iniquity” spoken of by Paul in II Thessalonians 2:7.

Of this woman, verses 5-6 state, “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman *drunken with the blood of the saints*, and with the blood of the *martyrs* of Jesus.”

Verse 1 calls her a “great whore that sits upon *many waters*.”

Let’s pause and ask: What are the “many waters”?

This is a classic example of allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible. Fourteen verses later, the term is explained: “And he said unto me, The *waters* which you saw, where the whore sits, are *peoples*, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*” (vs. 15). This shows that the influence of the whore and her harlot daughters encompasses the earth. This reflects truly enormous power!

In this case, the term “many waters” was not *immediately* explained, but simply continuing to read revealed what it means. The Bible interpreted itself!

Verses 5-6 are a graphic description of an immense *gentile church* that is a modern-day descendant of Babylon. She is a “mother” of many “harlot” daughters, who came out of her in protest because they disagreed with a *few* of her abominations. This is not a small church, but rather a “great” church ruling *many* peoples. Verse 2 speaks of her “fornication” with the “kings of the earth.” And verse 18 speaks of the woman as “that *great city*, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” This is a very large church that has sought to influence kings, nations and world events. Only one city and church fit this description.

Once again, this is a very *different* woman than that of Revelation 12.

This great gentile *false* church has long persecuted God’s true Church (17:6). God will destroy this great whore and her harlot daughters by turning the beast she rides against her (vs. 16). But first she must “ride” the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire—with her Babylonian system!

Little time remains before this last revival appears, with the wonderful Kingdom of God to appear soon after (Rev. 19:11-16).

Daniel 7:19-20 sheds light on what happens when the saints return with Christ. Their first job is to replace the “fourth beast” (the final world-ruling empire), which rules with the assistance of the “little horn” whose “look was more stout than his fellows.” This *little horn* is a *religious* kingdom, and is the same as the woman who rides the beast of Revelation 17. Again, this religious “woman” kingdom has ruled over all of the previous resurrections, or revivals, of the *Holy Roman Empire*.

The saints will have endured tremendous persecution at the hands of this “little horn”—“woman” church. But eventually the faithful saints will be rewarded in an incredible way. Notice: “I beheld, and *the same horn* [the Babylonish system of Revelation 17:5-6] *made war with the saints*, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of Days came, and *judgment was given to the saints* of the most High; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom*” (vs. 21-22).

A final explanation should be made. The beginning of Revelation 17:8 described this different beast as “the beast that was, and is not,” with verse 11 similarly beginning with, “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the *eighth* and is of the seven, and goes into perdition.” This healed beast, now the *Holy Roman Empire* (the resurrections ridden by the “woman” since A.D. 554), is both different—like an “eighth” system—and yet is “of the seven” heads of the Revelation 13 beast and the Daniel 7 fourth beast, last seven of ten horns of each.

Important Clarification

It is necessary and helpful to summarize what we have learned so far. Some believe the Revelation 13 beast is the woman who rode the Revelation 17 beast. This cannot be because the woman is a church and the beast is the government. Others believe Napoleon’s abuse of the Pope in 1798 was the “deadly wound.” While this is on the surface ridiculous, it is also impossible that the Roman church will last another 1,260 years until A.D. 3058.

Now review and understand these points. The chart at the bottom of page 28 complements and expands them:

- The beast of Revelation 13 equals the 4th beast of Daniel 7 and is the Roman Empire.
- The (healed) beast of Revelation 17 is the *Holy Roman Empire*, from 554 to 1814, and continues to Christ’s Return.
- The *woman* of Revelation 17, which rides the *Holy Roman Empire*, equals the *little horn* of Daniel 7 and the *two-horned beast* of Revelation 13—the great false *religion* and her little *kingdom*.
- The last 7 horns of the Daniel 7 fourth beast equal the last 7 horns of the Revelation 13 beast’s 7th head, ridden by the woman.
- These 7 *horns* equal the 7 *heads* of the Revelation 17 beast ridden by the woman. (This “horns equals heads” is where many go astray.)
- The 10 *horns* of the 7th head of the Revelation 17 beast equal the 10 *kings*

or *governments* united in the final future revival under the woman of the Holy Roman Empire, which Christ destroys at His Coming.

- The 10 *toes* of the Daniel 2 giant image equal the same 10 *kings* or *governments* (10 horns) of the 7th head of Revelation 17, and are on the “feet” that Christ (as the Daniel 2:34, 44-45 “stone”) “breaks to pieces” at His Return.

Identifying the Beast’s Number—666

There are endless opinions and theories about the number 666 and how it relates to the beast. Seemingly, new ones arrive every day. But, like other aspects of the beasts, we must let God reveal the answer to this mystery.

First read the only five references to the “number” and then we shall discuss them.

Revelation 13:17-18: “And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the *mark*, or the name of the beast, or the NUMBER of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding *count* the NUMBER of the beast: for it is the NUMBER of a man; and his NUMBER is six hundred threescore and six.” Now Revelation 15:2: “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his *mark*, and over the NUMBER of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

These clear points emerge: (1) All who will are told to “count [add up] the number,” (2) the number is 666, (3) the beast has this number and this is what identifies it, if we exercise “wisdom” in properly counting it, (4) 666 is the number of a kingdom, government or empire, or of the king who establishes or leads it (Dan. 7:18, 22-24, 27), and (5) the terms—“the name of the *beast*”—“or the number of his *name*”—“it is the number of a *man*”—directly identify the number as both the name of the kingdom, government or empire *and* the king or ruler that leads it. If God says to count the number, He obviously intends that we know how to do this.

Counting Names

There are a number of important and famous names that are linked to the Roman Empire, and Rome itself.

The name *Rome*, and thus the Roman Empire, is derived from its first king and founder—Romulus. Quite literally, this name is stamped on every man, woman and child within the kingdom, as well as on all of its kings and the kingdom itself.

Many have recognized this much but have failed to recognize that they should not count the number in Latin, but rather in Greek—the language in which God inspired the New Testament to be written. Remember, John wrote Revelation in Greek.

In Revelation 13, the apostle John describes a beast with seven heads, ten horns and ten crowns.



In Revelation 17, a woman “arrayed in purple and scarlet” rides a seven-headed, ten-horned beast.



THE REIGN OF GENTILE KINGDOMS

PROPHECY UNFOLDS:

THE IMAGE Daniel 2	THE FOUR BEASTS Daniel 7 (State) (Church)	THE RAM AND THE GOAT Daniel 8	THE BEAST AND THE IMAGE Revelation 13 (State) (Church)	BABYLON AND THE BEAST Revelation 17	MEANING OF THE SYMBOLS	FULFILLMENT IN HISTORY
Head of Gold vs. 32, 38	1st beast (like Lion) vs. 4				1st Head of prophetic Babylon	Chaldean Empire (Babylon) 625-539 B.C.
Chest and arms of Silver vs. 32, 39	2nd beast (Bear) vs. 5	Ram with 2 horns vs. 3-4, 20			2nd Head of prophetic Babylon	Persian Empire (Medo-Persia) 558-330 B.C.
Belly and thighs of Bronze vs. 32, 39	3rd beast (Leopard) 4 heads vs. 6	He-goat with great Horn and 4 notable horns vs. 5-8, 21-22			3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th heads of prophetic Babylon	Greece , led by Alexander the Great and 4 divisions 333-31 B.C.
Legs as Iron vs. 33, 40-43	4th beast (strong like Iron) with 10 horns vs. 7, 23-24		The beast with 7 heads and 10 horns vs. 1-2		7th Head of prophetic Babylon, with 10 horns	Roman Empire 31 B.C.-A.D. 476 In 2 divisions, “Christianity” becomes official religion, A.D. 324
			Deadly Wound vs. 3			Rome falls A.D. 476
	1st Horn (plucked by roots)		1st Horn		3 horns destroyed on the authority of the Pope; this period is later called the “Transition Age”	The Vandalls A.D. 429-533
	2nd Horn (rooted up)		2nd Horn			The Heruli , Odoacer's govt. A.D. 476-493
	3rd Horn (rooted up)		3rd Horn			The Ostrogoths A.D. 493-554
	Little Horn among 10 horns vs. 8, 20-22, 24-27		2-horned “ Lamb Dragon ” and “Image” vs. 11-18	Scarlet Woman riding the beast vs. 1-2	False Christianity rules the beast —“ Babylon the Great ”	False Christianity and church government, or “image” of Roman Empire government
	4th Horn		<div>↑ A.D. 554 to 1814 = 1,260 years beast continued ↓</div>	1st of last 7 horns—Deadly Wound Healed (to continue 1,260 years) vs. 5	1st Head of beast (healed) ridden by scarlet- clothed woman	“ Imperial Restoration ” of empire by Justinian, A.D. 554; he recognized suprema- cy of this world's Christianity
	5th Horn			2nd of last 7 horns	2nd Head ridden by woman	Frankish Kingdom ; began A.D. 774; Charlemagne crowned A.D. 800
	6th Horn			3rd of last 7 horns	3rd Head ridden by woman	Holy Roman Empire (German head); Otto the Great crowned A.D. 962
	7th Horn			4th of last 7 horns	4th Head ridden by woman	Hapsburg Dynasty (Austrian head); Charles V crowned A.D. 1530
	8th Horn			5th of last 7 horns	5th Head ridden by woman	Napoleon's Kingdom (French head), crowned A.D. 1804
	In A.D. 1814—1,260 years after the “deadly wound” was healed in A.D. 554—the “ Holy Roman Empire ” ended with Napoleon's defeat.			6th of last 7 horns		
	9th Horn			6th Head ridden by woman	“One IS” Rev. 17:10 (revealed in the 1930s	Italy , united by Garibaldi, A.D. 1870, culminating with Mussolini, 1945
	10th and final Horn		Beast ascends out of the pit	7th Head and 10 horns	One “NOT YET COME” Rev. 17:10	Revived Roman Empire , led by 10 rulers under one leader
	10 toes on 2 feet of iron mixed with clay					

In Daniel 2, the “great image” symbolizes four world-ruling governments.



Head of fine gold: The Chaldean (Babylonian) Empire

Breast and arms of silver: The Medo-Persian Empire

Belly and thighs of brass: The Greco-Macedonian Empire

Legs of iron; feet partly iron, partly clay: The Roman Empire

Ignoring this point has caused many to apply 666 to the Pope, by claiming that the phrase “Vicarius Filii Dei” is written on the Pope’s triple crown. While the Pope has such a crown, these words are not on it. Besides, these are Latin words, which do not apply to a kingdom or empire, but would only apply to a man—the Pope. Also, these words are a title, not a name!

In the second century A.D., it was recognized that Romulus’ name was originally spelled Lateinos, meaning “the name of Latium” or “Latin man.” The Romans took their language and origin from this region.

Like the value of Roman numerals, the Greeks assigned values to letters. In the Greek, L counts for 30, A is 1, T is 300, E is 5, I is 10, N is 50, O is 70, S is 200—totaling precisely 666! It is not then strange, or incorrect, to conclude that every citizen, king and the kingdom itself, adds up to or “counts” to 666.

Now consider Benito Mussolini. He called himself “Il Duce,” which means the leader or the chief. Everywhere he went, people proclaimed, “Viva Il Duce,” meaning *long live the chief*. The Italians abbreviated this on signs throughout Italy as “vv il duce.”

This time, let’s count the name in Latin, recognizing that the letter U was commonly replaced with a V: V is 5 (twice), I is 1, L is 50, D is 500, V is 5, C is 100, E has no number. The total—precisely 666!

The beast and Roman Empire have been identified!

Mass Worldwide Deception

Recall that the Revelation 17 woman is a false church that rides the beast with seven heads and ten horns. We have established that the beast she is riding is a great world empire that exists until Christ returns. Like one who rides a horse, camel or elephant, the woman directs, controls and guides the animal to go where she wants it to go and to do what she wants it to do.

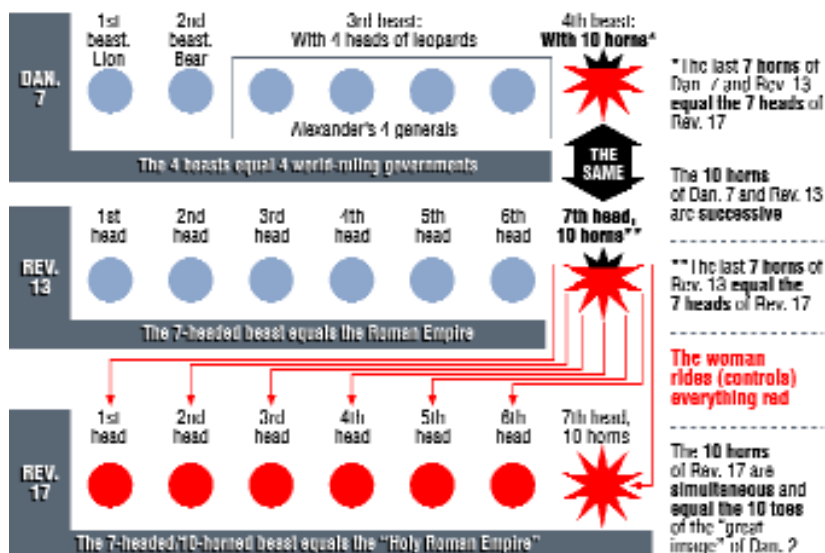
Two individuals, known as “the beast and the false prophet,” will lead this religious-governmental system. Revelation 16:13-14 describes demons as having the power to “work miracles” through their system.

The embodiment of the final beast will be a charismatic figure who arrives on the world scene shortly before Christ’s Return.

Also, the final, great false prophet will lead the world to worship the beast as God (Rev. 16:2; 19:20)! This deception will be so great (18:3)—so widespread—that they will actually deceive all mankind into fighting Christ at His Second Coming (16:9, 13-16; 17:13-14).

Now notice II Thessalonians 2:3-4 and 8. Verse 3 refers to one called “*the man of sin*” and “*the son of perdition*”; who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he *as God* sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he *is God*.” Recognize that the false prophet also professes that he is God.

Compare this with Ezekiel 28:2 and the reference to the “prince of Tyrus”—a man. Ezekiel wrote that this “prince” says, “I am a God, I sit in the



seat of God.” II Thessalonians 2:8 describes this “man of sin” as the “wicked [one]” who would “be revealed” for what he is when Christ returns and destroys him with the beast in a lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). Isaiah 14:4 refers to the false prophet as the “king of Babylon.” This is the same man as the “prince of Tyrus.”

Continuing in II Thessalonians 2, verse 9 makes a startling statement about the false prophet. It says that his “coming is after the working of *Satan* with all *power* and *signs* and *lying wonders*.” Verse 10 shows that he is able to deceive everyone who does not “*love the truth*.” Verse 11 reveals that God shall send “strong delusion” to all who willingly believe his lies.

The leaders of this dominating false system will be directly possessed by the devil! This will give the false prophet tremendous power to deceive and perform miracles. Satan, having always wanted to replace God with himself, will speak through this human religious leader and declare to the whole world that he is, in fact, *GOD*!

This Bible warning is unmistakable. The miracles he performs *will* deceive the vast majority!

The work of the false prophet will continue all the way to Armageddon. Now read Revelation 16:13: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan], and out of the mouth of the beast [civil end-time ruler], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [religious leader guiding the beast].”

Verse 14 states, “For they are the spirits of devils [demons], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to *gather* them to the *battle of that great day of God Almighty*.” These “spirits of devils” are the fallen angels who followed Lucifer (now Satan) in his insurrection against the Creator (Rev. 12:4).

Here is how the Bible describes the beast (the civil Roman ruler) and false prophet working together: “And I saw the *beast*, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [Christ] that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the *beast* was taken, and with him the *false prophet* that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the MARK of the beast, and them that worshiped his IMAGE. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:19-20).

Now let’s read the full description of how the false prophet works. Let’s see the reach of his power, influence and ability, through miracles and lying wonders, to bring the whole world to worship the beast—the final civil Roman ruler.

This following passage removes all doubt that the two-horned beast is the woman of Revelation 17, and the final false prophet represents it, working in concert with the beast:

“And I beheld another beast [second beast] coming up out of the earth; and he had *two horns like a lamb*, and he spoke *as a dragon*. And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And

he does great wonders, so that he *makes fire come down from heaven* on the earth in the sight of men, And *deceives them that dwell on the earth* by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an IMAGE to the beast [first beast], which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the IMAGE of the beast [first beast], that the IMAGE of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the IMAGE of the beast should be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the MARK, or the name of the beast, or the NUMBER of his name” (Rev. 13:11-17).

These verses speak four times of the *image of the beast*, which requires explanation, and of the all-important *mark of the beast*, which does as well. We shall examine them now.

The Beast’s Image Revealed

Before continuing, this crucial summary concluded the first portion of Herbert W. Armstrong’s booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic BEAST?*:

“So, notice: This two-horned beast not only caused people to receive the mark of the beast (compare Rev. 19:20), but also perpetrated the forming of an image that caused the martyrdom of saints. As many as would not worship this image were caused to be killed. This false church did not kill them—she caused them to be killed. History shows that the civil government martyred millions who were declared ‘anathema from Christ’ or ‘heretics.’

“Compare with the woman who rode the Beast in Revelation 17: ‘And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus’ (verse 6).

“Certainly these are one and the same.

“Now this ecclesiastical organization, which is a twofold government, deceived the people by saying they should make an image of the beast. Note it (Rev. 13:14)—that is how it deceived people. What is an image? Dictionaries define it as a ‘likeness,’ or a ‘copy, representation, model, semblance, counterpart.’ So here is a church saying, ‘Let us make a model, or counterpart, of the civil Roman government’—for that is what the beast is.

“Jesus Christ proclaimed the Kingdom, or government of God—divine government by will of God and by God’s law—not paganized human government by will of man and man-made laws. His Church includes all Spirit-begotten saints who have and are led by the Holy Spirit. Christ is its only Head, and His Kingdom is not of this world!

“Where, then, did human church government derive its present form? ‘The first pope, in the real sense of the word, was Leo I (440-461 A.D.),’ says the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, volume 7, page 629. To him the form of government of the Roman Empire was the most

marvelous thing on earth. He applied its principles to the church, organized the church into a government, forming the papacy.

“This church government or organization is the image of the beast.

“Says Myers’ *Ancient History*: ‘During the reign of Leo I, the Church set up, within the Roman Empire, an ecclesiastical state [government] which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the imperial model.’ This church government, then, according to this historical authority, is in fact a model, a counterpart, an image of the beast which is the Roman Empire government.

“The *Britannica* calls it an ecclesiastical world empire!

“This image—man-designed and man-ruled church government—compelled people to worship the church! And since the church was organized into a worldly government, this was worship of the image—false worship—idolatry!

“But this church became a mother, and daughter churches came out of her in ‘protest,’ calling themselves ‘Protestant.’ And all have worldly, political church government ‘Upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS’ (Rev. 17:5). Her daughters are called ‘harlots.’ Together, they are called ‘BABYLON.’ They are pagan, teaching pagan doctrines and customs, cloaked in the name of Christianity! And all nations are deceived!

“Yes, human-organized churchianity, not Bible-designed spiritual-organism government, is the image of the beast. It is the pagan political counterfeit of God’s government.

“‘Come out of her,’ God says (Rev. 18:4). God help us to heed!”

The Mark of the Beast

Few prophecies in the Bible are as fascinating to its readers as is the subject of the *mark of the beast*. As with other aspects of prophecies described in this booklet, theories attempting to explain this mark abound.

This intriguing, mysterious mark is much talked about, but almost universally misunderstood. Some believe it is a computer chip implanted in people’s foreheads or right hands. Others have thought it was Hitler’s swastika and still others have thought it has been this or that government program. Despite endless sermons preached and articles written about its possible meaning, millions remain baffled by it.

Revelation 14 pictures *three angels bearing three messages* (vs. 6-11). These messages announce the fall of Babylon through the seven last plagues and warn against receiving the “*mark of the beast*.” Many prophecies show that most—all who belong to the great false church-state system—will *ignore* the warning, and will be deceived into receiving it!

The prophecies that describe the mark are stark—and horrible! Sadly, most all preachers focus on just one passage to the exclusion of the many others on

the subject. Let’s read it: “And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their *right hand*, or in their *foreheads*: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the MARK, or the name of the beast, or the NUMBER of his name” (Rev. 13:16-17).

This is a critical statement, for it speaks of some kind of a universal mark backed by authority in a way that controls people’s ability to conduct normal matters of commerce (“buying and selling”). Those who do *not* have the mark are isolated from the most routine matters of purchasing food, goods and services.

Being able to buy and sell goods is certainly essential—something that everyone needs to be able to do. But understand. This is not speaking of whether stores and retail establishments will be *willing* to sell goods to people without the mark, but rather whether people can earn a living—meaning a wage and a salary—in order to have income, if they do not have it. The implication of the Greek is that one will not be *able* to buy or sell—will not have money in hand to do so—because he is unemployed!

So then, the “mark of the beast” involves ability to obtain and hold a job in order to make a living.

Obviously then, millions will have it—and it will have to be considered *desirable* and *attractive*, or else the masses would not seek or accept it.

But the mark will be a trap to those who are charmed by the surface of its attraction. For here is what will happen to all those who receive it: “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the *seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the WRATH OF GOD...And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven *plagues* [vials], clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles...And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the *vials* [plagues] of the WRATH OF GOD upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the MARK *of the beast*, and upon them who *worshipped his IMAGE*” (Rev. 15:1, 6; 16:1-2).

This is serious! Terrible punishment will fall on all who have taken this mark. However unwittingly they did this, the result will be the same—horrible plagues on all, including you or me, if we have this mark!

God Must Explain the Mark

To get a complete picture of the mark of the beast, we must study all of the verses that pertain to it. There are many, and studying just a few will not reveal the full truth. Using imagination and human reasoning to invent various silly—and some are truly ludicrous—conclusions about what the mark of the beast may be, only serves to further deceive and confuse those with interest in the subject.

Ask: Would God foretell plagues on all those who receive the mark and then leave mankind in the dark about what it is? Would He say, in effect, “I am

going to pour out terrifying, horrible PLAGUES—causing the death of millions—on those who receive the mark of the beast, but I will not tell you what it is or how to avoid it—so that you can *escape*”?

Comprehend this vital point. Men cannot reveal the meaning of or explain the mark—only God can. Plain reality is that He *must* do this—and He does tell us *most plainly* exactly what it is!

The Beast's Mark

Now understand this most basic point. The mark is plainly identified as one pertaining to the beast. It is the “mark of the beast.” We have identified the beast as the Roman Empire. But the Revelation 17 beast exists at and just before Christ’s Return. We have seen that this is the Holy Roman Empire. Therefore, the mark of the beast is the mark of the seventh and last head of the (Holy) Roman Empire.

The mark of the beast is not the mark of the Roman Catholic Church. This is because the woman is the great church that *rides* the (Holy) Roman Empire. The Bible does not speak of the “mark of the woman,” but rather of the “mark of the beast” that the woman rides. Is this clear?

Certainly the woman is also a small organized civil kingdom, or government, as well as being a church—and she does guide, direct and lead the far greater kingdom that she rides. But, while the beast has much greater *power* than she has, like any horse, camel or elephant has greater power than its rider, the rider—in this case, the “woman”—steers the animal to do its bidding.

Remember what we read: “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he CAUSES all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Rev. 13:15-16).

We can summarize in this way: This great false church steers, guides and directs—“causes”—others to receive the mark. She does not directly administer it herself, but rather *causes* all in the empire to accept—“receive”—the mark. She is the same woman that caused the martyrdom of saints throughout the ages. The mark is received in the right hand and the forehead—and it is a kind of brand of the (Holy) Roman Empire, not of the church. This mark will be brought—caused—upon the entire civilized western world!

Martyrdoms—Past and Future!

In Matthew 24, Christ, in answer to a question by His disciples about when He would return, spoke of and clarified events that would precede what the Bible calls “the great tribulation” (vs. 21-22). This, followed by the wrath of God, comprises the three and a half years preceding His Second Coming.

A few verses before explaining the tribulation, Christ explained that a terrible martyrdom lay ahead for true Christians at the end of the age: “*Then* shall they deliver you up to be *afflicted*, and shall *kill* you: and you shall be *hated* of *all nations* for My name’s sake” (Matt. 24:9). It is obvious that Christians will be doing something that identifies them as different from all those around them. They will be hated with such intensity that they will be tortured (“afflicted”) and martyred in great numbers (“killed”).

Revelation 6 is a precise parallel of Matthew 24. (Read our free booklet *REVELATION Explained at last!* for detailed understanding, and for how Matthew 24 interprets Revelation 6.)

In Revelation, John, in vision, was shown a preview of future events (“hereafter,” 4:1). Since John was “in the spirit” as the seals were opened (vs. 2), the events he witnessed were not actually occurring when he saw them. They were *heavenly previews* of things that would happen *later on earth*.

Revelation 6:9-11 contains a description of the *fifth seal*, which is the great tribulation and future martyrdom of saints. Upon the opening of the fifth seal (vs. 9), John “saw under [at the base of] the altar the souls of them that were slain.”

Here is John’s description of the fifth seal: “And when he had opened the FIFTH SEAL, I saw under the altar *the souls of them that were slain for the word of God*, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and AVENGE our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should *rest* yet for a little season, *until their fellow servants* also and their *brethren*, that should be *killed* as they were, should be fulfilled” (vs. 9-11).

Some cite these verses to validate both the pagan immortal soul doctrine and the belief that the saved go to heaven (which is not true)—and thereby miss the whole point of what Christ is revealing.

This description is not literal, but rather is *symbolic*, as is much of Revelation. No one believes that the four horses that precede it in context are literal horses. They are obviously symbolic and part of a *vision*. So are the souls under the altar.

The fifth seal portrays the martyrdom of true saints (along with vast numbers from national Israel and Judah). This occurs during the tribulation. The context develops with the already-martyred souls asking God a question: “How long, O Lord...” Verse 11 is a symbolic instruction to these martyrs of the Middle Ages to await this *latter* martyrdom of the end time.

Remember, in the vision, John was shown the *future*. A long period of martyrdom, at the hands of the “woman,” who was “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (17:6), will have already taken place. Recall that Revelation 12 describes God’s true Church. There, this period is described as “a thousand two hundred and three score (1,260) days”—or 1,260 *years*, from 325 to 1585. (This does not parallel the 1,260 years of the healed beast.)

Revelation 12:6 describes how the Church had to flee “into the wilderness” to escape. Accounts from history indicate that more than 50 million human beings were killed during this time because of their unwillingness to compromise beliefs that were contrary to the Roman church. (Most of these were not true Christians striving to hold to all of God’s doctrines, but were “protestors” holding to some few areas where they disagreed with Rome.)

Again, a later martyrdom (the great tribulation) is yet to happen in our time. The “souls” who were *already* “slain” were *previously* martyred Christians from past ages. These earlier martyrs were told to “rest yet for a little season, until their *fellow servants* also and their *brethren*, that should be *killed* as they were, *should be fulfilled*” (vs. 11).

The great tribulation is not God’s wrath. God’s wrath is the seven last plagues. The great tribulation is *Satan’s* wrath on God’s true servants—and on the modern descendants of ancient Israel and Judah. This wrath will be perpetrated by a final empire of ten kings in Europe, united under one powerful leader—and done at the behest of Satan’s universal false church. Matthew 24:22 shows that God will have to cut “short” this persecution “for the elects’ sake.”

The “souls under the altar” are now awaiting God’s punishment of—His “vengeance” on—the great governmental power that persecuted them. God said that He would “AVENGE [their] blood” through the seven last plagues on those who carry the mark of the beast. God will pour His vengeance on this false Babylonish murderous woman and her daughter churches. But this cannot take place until the second great and final martyrdom is past.

Elect Must Remain Fervent, Vigilant

Many of God’s true people in the end time have partially drifted away from God. They have not remained as close to Him as they should be. They have not zealously sought and obeyed God on a daily basis. This has allowed many to be deceived, and to fall into false doctrines and practices. This has been the pattern of history when false ministers capture the leadership of the flock. Only the tribulation will awaken these brethren—and even then only about half (Matt. 25:1-12)!

These “lukewarm” Christians will have to suffer this final martyrdom (Rev. 3:14-22). The faithful Christians who were previously killed must continue to “rest” (remain “asleep” in their graves—Eph. 5:14; I Cor. 11:30) until others join them through this final martyrdom.

During the tribulation, there will be extraordinary deception, unlike any time in world history. Christ was very specific about this in Matthew 24: “And then shall many be *offended*, and shall *betray* one another, and shall *hate* one another. And many *false prophets* shall rise, and shall *deceive* many. And because iniquity [worldwide lawlessness] shall abound, the love [obedience to human laws and God’s Law—Rom. 13:10; I John 5:3] of many shall *wax cold*. But he that *shall endure unto the end*, the same shall be *saved*...For then shall

be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be...For there shall arise *false Christs*, and *false prophets*, and shall *show great signs and wonders* [we have seen that the false prophet—the woman and two-horned beast—will lead in this]; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall *deceive* the very elect” (vs. 10-13, 21, 24).

This is a very direct prophecy about tremendous deception that seduces “many” at the end of the age, before Christ’s Coming (Matt. 24:3). The elect must remain on guard—and remember to practice Luke 21:36, among many other scriptures—daily!

At His Return, Christ will bring with Him the individual rewards of all His servants. They will have qualified for great glory: “For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall *reward* every man according to his *works*” (Matt. 16:27).

Your works in this life, your obedience to God’s plain commands, have a direct bearing on your reward in the next life!

Satan’s Wrath on Modern Israelite Descendants

Let’s now take a moment to compare two critically important scriptures that shed much light on the tribulation. Doing this will give us a precise picture of who else receives the brunt of Satan’s wrath during this time. We have seen that lukewarm Christians will be martyred—but far more than these will endure this terrible time of trial.

First notice Matthew 24:21: “For then shall be great tribulation, such as *was not* since the beginning of the world to this time, no, *nor ever shall be*.” This verse plainly establishes the tribulation as the single worst time in all world history. Take this verse for exactly what it says.

Now let’s examine a second scripture that relates to this one. It is longer and more extensive, and is found in Jeremiah 30. The last phrase of this chapter is “in the latter days you shall *consider* it.” Now what does this chapter contain that we must “consider” in these final days?

Verse 3 establishes to whom God is speaking—Israel and Judah. Verse 2 was instruction to Jeremiah to record in a book all that God had told him. Now notice: “And these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus says the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask you now, and see whether a man does travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that *none is like it*: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (vs. 4-7).

This is a shocking description of punishment prophesied to come on Israel and Judah. Terrible fear and horror accompany this punishment.

But focus for a moment on two phrases in verse 7 describing this time. The first is “that day is great, so that *none* is like it.” This is almost identical to

Matthew 24:21. They cannot be speaking of two separate times, because it is impossible to have two periods in history that are *both* described as the *worst of all time*. These two scriptures have to be speaking of the same time. And remember, these verses both depict events in the “end of the age” and the “latter days.”

Now notice the second phrase: “it is even the time of *Jacob’s trouble*.” This phrase unlocks vital meaning and explains who else suffers Satan’s wrath in this time of great anguish and misery.

Understand that the Old Testament patriarch Israel was originally named Jacob (Gen. 32:28). Prophecies referencing either name describe the same peoples.

Many Old Testament prophecies describe the scope and severity of national punishment that God plans for these peoples. Their modern lands will be destroyed by the beast, and many millions will be taken into captivity at his hands.

The great tribulation will be a time of terrible suffering for both *physical* Israel and the less vigilant, lukewarm “remnant” of *spiritual* Israel, the Church. But numerous verses in Revelation show that it will be a time of general *prosperity* for many non-Israelitish nations—when the beast’s merchants bring much “buying and selling.” *These* nations will be punished during the time of God’s wrath.

The Mark—Past and Future!

Let’s return to the subject of the true Christian’s initial reward. It involves rulership, lasting 1,000 years. But the test has been the same for those of previous ages. Those who hold fast their convictions, in the face of impending martyrdom, when this test comes again, will be victorious even in death—but they will truly be “gold tried in the fire” (Rev. 3:18).

Here is what God says awaits those who have been faithful unto death. Read each word carefully: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the *souls* of them that were *beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God*, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, *neither had received his MARK* upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

This is an astonishing verse. Did you notice that *all* those killed for holding to the truth of God also refused to receive the MARK? In other words, those of all *previous* eras were required to withstand the enforcement of the mark as well. But, because they would not yield to pagan beliefs, festivals, customs, rank idolatry and worship of the Holy Roman Empire—and the “woman” church—they were killed. The mark of the beast was *first* enforced well over 1,000 years ago. And, though it is not *yet* being enforced, for the plagues to fall on those who have it, and for those who refuse it to be forced into martyrdom—IT MUST BE ENFORCED ONCE AGAIN!

Christians of previous times were killed because they refused the mark of the beast and the worship of its image. They “obeyed God rather than man” (Acts 5:29)—they obeyed the government of God rather than the Roman government guided by the woman riding it. They did not resist punishment, but willingly yielded to their punishment—torture and death! These future rulers proved themselves faithful to God and have qualified to reign with Jesus Christ when He comes, bringing “His reward with Him.”

Also in Matthew 24, Christ foretold that the “gospel of the kingdom” would be preached to all nations “and then shall the *end come*” (vs. 14). In John 9:4, He warned His disciples that “the night comes, when no man can work.”

Soon, deep spiritual darkness will descend on the whole world. The time for announcing the coming of the kingdom of God will come to an end. Final opportunity to seek God and *escape* what lies ahead will be gone. It is our responsibility to preach—and WARN—before it is too late.

Notice: “When I say unto the wicked, You shall surely die; and you give him not warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand” (Ezek. 3:18).

We are doing our part in warning all who will listen now. Soon, you will have to choose who and what you will obey. Will you obey God or will you obey the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire, governed by the great false “woman” church leading recognized, traditional “Christianity”?

But the Bible reveals that there will be three final warnings to the rebellious nations under the woman and beast’s deception. This will occur through three separate angelic messengers, referenced earlier. Again, these are found in Revelation 14.

The third message states, “If any man WORSHIP THE BEAST [this final end-time revival] and his IMAGE, and receive his MARK...the same shall drink of the wine of the WRATH OF GOD...He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...in the presence of the Lamb” (vs. 9-10).

True Christians “Marked” by Obedience

We have not yet identified the exact *nature* of the mark. But we will see it that has something to do with obedience—whether we will obey “God or man” (Acts 5:29).

As we have seen, two churches are described in the New Testament. The true Church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18) is the bride of Christ, forsaking involvements with this world and its customs in order to be pure when He comes to marry her.

Throughout the New Testament are warnings that false teachers would creep in (Jude 3-4; II Thes. 2:3-11; II Cor. 11:13-14) and gain control of the church organization, forcing faithful Christians to flee from their original congregations to continue to obey God. God’s true people were foretold to

remain a “little flock” (Luke 12:32), often scattered, never having political power in this world.

Despite continual persecution—even during periods of great martyrdom—by the large popular churches that have continually sought to destroy it, a determined remnant has always remained throughout the last nearly 2,000 years.

The world has kept little track of this small, scattered Church, but Christ promised that He would never leave or forsake it, and that “the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Though it has periodically been forced to flee for its life (Acts 8:1; Dan. 12:7), Christ has faithfully kept His promise to remain with it, empowering and strengthening it through His Spirit. His true Church is loyal and obedient to *His* government structure, and no other!

Immediately after the third angel’s warning in Revelation 14:9-10, verse 12 contains a description of God’s servants who will *not* take the mark. Remember, there are only two categories of people—those who take the mark and those who do not.

God declares, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the *commandments of God*, and the *faith of Jesus*” (vs. 12).

In a disobedient world that has followed a system in rebellion against God, there are relatively few commandment-keepers. God’s little Church has always been willing—and determined—to obey Him.

This verse explains that only the “faith of Jesus” (not merely faith *in* Jesus) gives them the strength to resist receiving the mark. Shallow human faith will be of no value in avoiding the mark!

When Jesus was approached by a young man seeking salvation, He was asked, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16). Christ answered, “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments” (vs. 17).

It has always been this plain for all who would serve God! The commandments of God must be kept.

Regarding obedience to His Law, God has always had but one standard: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law” (Jms. 2:10-11).

Christians keep *all* the laws of God. They make *no* exceptions!

Disobedience is the Mark

The above scriptures reveal that God’s people refuse the mark, keep His commandments and obey His government. Those of the world receive the mark, obey *something else*, and thereby disobey God and reject His rule over them.

Now here is a description of those who have triumphed over Satan’s mark: “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had got-

ten the victory *over the BEAST, and over his IMAGE, and over his MARK*, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, You King of saints” (Rev. 15:2-3).

God likens those who have achieved victory to those who escaped Egypt and Pharaoh’s rule. Under Moses’ leadership, Israel escaped the plagues that fell on Egypt, which was a forerunner and type of the plagues to fall on those who have received the mark. Paul spoke of how Old Testament examples “are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends* of the world are come” (I Cor. 10:11).

God’s saints are shown to “sing the song of Moses” standing on a sea of glass (before God), just as Israel stood on the shore of the Red Sea having been delivered from oppression in Egypt. They sing Moses’ song because Moses reflects God’s commandments. They sing the song of the Lamb (Christ) because, through faith (“of Christ”), they have conquered sin, and received salvation.

Now back to Revelation 12 and key events happening to the Church at the very end.

Satan is angry, and directs his wrath against God’s people. But this is contrasted to great joy in heaven because of God’s final victory through His servants. Notice: “Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having GREAT WRATH, *because he knows that he has but a short time*” (vs. 12). The last phrase reveals *why* the devil is angry.

Verses 13-16 explain that a very select few of God’s completely faithful servants will be protected in the church’s “place” for three and a half years (also see Rev. 3:10-11). But those who are less vigilant, less convicted and lukewarm, and who have accepted certain doctrines of the Revelation 17 “woman,” while remaining generally faithful in keeping the commandments, will *not* be protected.

Here is what Satan does to this lukewarm group next. Read it carefully, for it is further proof that God’s people keep the commandments, and is proof that they suffer Satan’s wrath as a result.

Continue with the final verse of the chapter: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman [God’s true Church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the *commandments of God*, and have the *testimony of Jesus Christ*” (vs. 17).

Christians are commandment-keepers, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is God’s Word—the Bible. The “testimony of Jesus Christ” is also referred to as the “spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). God’s servants understand the basic framework of His overall prophetic timetable and plan. They are not confused about “what happens next,” once certain prophecies begin to take place.

However, just as God knows His servants, and they are marked by obedience to Him, so Satan knows his servants, and marks them as his own, so that they may be protected from his wrath—the tribulation!

Understand this in the following way: Satan marks his servants and protects them from his wrath, while persecuting and martyring those who will not take *his* mark. On the other hand, God protects His most faithful servants (Rev. 3:10-11; 12:13-16), because they will *not* take the mark, or in any manner compromise His way, but pours His wrath on those who *do* take Satan's mark. (But even those who are lukewarm can, through death, triumph over the mark in the tribulation and receive salvation.)

Get this picture absolutely clear in your mind!

Those Who Receive Plagues Made Plain!

There are other plain New Testament scriptures that tell us exactly *why* God pours out His wrath on certain people. We will examine them shortly.

We must first examine what God says sin is, for His plagues will be poured out on a sinning humanity. Once we understand how God defines sin, we can better understand how Satan marks all those who are his servants.

Here is sin, defined by God: “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4).

In plain words, just as the faithful are commandment-keepers, those who sin are commandment-breakers.

Now let's examine for specific understanding about *exactly* what brings the wrath of God. Here is what Paul wrote: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the WRATH OF GOD comes on the *children of disobedience*” (Col. 3:5-6).

There it is! God pours out His wrath on those who DISOBEY Him! There is no misunderstanding the plain meaning of this verse.

But let's consider another: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness...filthiness...For this you know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom...Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the WRATH OF GOD upon the *children of disobedience*” (Eph. 5:3-6).

Once again, this is most PLAIN regarding why, and upon whom, God pours out His wrath! And the next verse shows what Christians are instructed *not* to do with those who practice what Paul describes: “Be not you therefore partakers with them” (vs. 7).

Those who “partake” of this conduct, or who fraternize “with them” (the world and its ways), will *partake* of God's plagues on a rebellious mankind.

The prophet Zephaniah speaks most bluntly of this terrible day when God's wrath is poured out. Notice: “The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hastens greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty

man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have *sinned against the LORD*: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung” (1:14-17).

Let's now summarize what we have read.

The mark of the beast is commandment-breaking, and he that breaks one breaks them all. The mark is that of the Roman Empire—the beast—not the woman who rides it. The false woman church “caused” the masses to receive the mark through deception. The human government through which Satan deceives the world, the Roman Empire, receives its power, its seat and authority from him. Holding a job and engaging in commerce—buying or selling—is impossible for those without the mark. Martyrdoms, past and future, occur because some refuse the mark, and keep the commandments of God instead. So, the mark is something the apostate church enforces, which is directly contrary to God's Law, and has a direct relationship to earning a living—holding a job.

What Would Satan Choose?

Since Satan has “deceived the whole world” (Rev. 12:9; 20:3), how has he accomplished this? On what point has he seized, which he can most naturally replace with a counterfeit. What command would Satan most easily change, and then expect carnal human reasoning to conclude is merely an innocent *adjustment*?

Now understand. The carnal mind is “enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). Human beings are most agreeable to sin in *all* of its forms. People are perfectly willing to break *every one* of God's commandments. Whether idolatry, stealing, adultery, murder, dishonoring of parents, coveting or lying, people willingly—and eagerly—do these things. And, of course, Satan has certainly led people into all of these practices.

But none of these represent, in any particular way, a *test* that directly connects to how one might earn a living or hold a job—to whether or how one could or could not “buy and sell.” And Satan must select a commandment, which affects *this* ability of those who will not compromise God's Law.

There is only one commandment that Satan would see as a candidate for such a test. It is a commandment that God has always said is a *sign* between Him and His people. We will soon learn it.

But first we should ask, “What is a mark, brand or sign?” What do these terms signify—what do they *mean*?

In practical application, ranchers brand their cattle to signify ownership. In many cases, retailers hang up a sign above their establishment to show

whose hardware store, restaurant or shop it is. In Genesis 4:15, after he killed Abel, Cain received a “mark,” signifying that he had sinned. This was also a kind of brand or sign telling those who met Cain who and what he was. The famous novel *The Scarlet Letter* is the story of a woman who committed adultery and had to wear a large “A” on the front of her clothing to signify what she had done.

It is no different with a church. God does not force anyone to obey Him. But Satan, through his church, *does* force his brand on his people in the same way that ranchers force their brand on cattle.

Now what is the sign that God says identifies His people? What point of obedience tells God that we are His people?

What is God's Sign?

In Genesis 2, immediately after God had made man, He finished the week with one final creation: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the SEVENTH DAY God ended His work which He had made; and He *rested* on the SEVENTH DAY from all His work which He had made. And God *blessed* the SEVENTH DAY, and *sanctified* IT: because that in IT He had *rested* from all His work which God created and made” (vs. 1-3).

From creation, God established, “blessed” and “sanctified” (set apart) the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. He never established any other day—and confirmed that this was His Law “forever.” He told ancient Israel to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy...the SEVENTH DAY is the sabbath of the Lord your God” (Ex. 20:8-9).

After a few generations in Egypt, God's people, the ancient Israelites, lost all knowledge of His Law. God had to teach it to them again. After freeing them from slavery, the first great law that He gave them was the command to keep the Sabbath.

The Sabbath originated before the Old Covenant was established. The Ten Commandments were not given as part of the Old Covenant. They had been in force since creation. (Read our free book *Should You Obey THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?*)

In Exodus 31:12-17, God made a special covenant with Israel regarding His Sabbath: “And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying...Verily My sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a SIGN between Me and you *throughout your generations*; that you may know that I am the LORD that does *sanctify* [set apart] you. You shall keep the sabbath...the seventh [day] is the sabbath of rest, *holy* to the LORD...Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath...for a *perpetual covenant*. It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel FOREVER: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested...”

This last phrase proves that the Sabbath was established from the creation week, over 2,000 years prior to Exodus 31.

The Sabbath “sanctifies” those who keep it. They are set apart as belonging to—as being *owned* by—God. Christians are told that “you are *bought* with a price; be not you the servants of men” (I Cor. 7:23) and “you are *bought* with a price: therefore glorify God...” (I Cor. 6:20).

Those who observe the Sabbath are signified as *God's* people—and that He owns them. They are also publicly identified as people who keep the commandments. Civil laws require people to keep several of the *other* commandments (against stealing, murder, lying [perjury], etc.), so obedience to most or all of the *other* commandments, which the world at least generally acknowledges in one form or another, does not identify one as a commandment-keeper!

The Sabbath does! It is a sign that people are of God, since no one would ever think or choose to keep this law without it having been revealed by God.

Notice that God established the Sabbath as a “perpetual covenant” to be kept “throughout your generations”—and “forever.” This is ironclad. God's command is for all time. The Sabbath was to be kept forever! Doing this kept people in touch with the true God. It was the way God intended that people never lose sight of who He was (their God)—and who they were (His people)! If all peoples and nations kept the Sabbath, as Israel was commanded to do, no one would have ever fallen into idolatry and the worship of other gods—which has happened to all nations who have not kept it.

Now we must ask: Which commandment would Satan choose to overthrow? Which commandment would he most hate—and why? Which commandment signifies that those who obey it do not belong to him?

The only commandment *signifying* (is a *sign*) that one belongs to God—and the only commandment that directly points to the true God of creation, thus displacing Satan, is the SABBATH!

Satan most hates the *Fourth* Commandment! There is no way to get around whether one does or does not literally observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. You either do or you don't! God and Satan are not confused on this point. They know what is at stake. And the world can readily see whether one keeps the Sabbath or not.

Israel and Judah Failed the Test

Israel would not keep God's Sabbath for any length of time. From time to time, they would temporarily observe it, but they always fell back into the practices of the nations around them. The following summarizes how God says Sabbath-breaking brought His WRATH on disobedient Israel:

“In the day when I chose Israel...saying, I am the LORD your God...I gave them *My sabbaths*, to be a SIGN *between Me and them*, that they might know that I am the LORD that *sanctify* them. But...Israel REBELLED against Me...*My sabbaths* they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out My fury [God's wrath] upon them in the wilderness, to consume them...Nevertheless Mine eye

spared them from destroying...But I said unto their children...hallow *My sabbaths*; and they shall be a SIGN between Me and you...Notwithstanding the children rebelled against Me...they *polluted My sabbaths*: then I said, I would pour out My fury [His wrath] upon them, to accomplish My anger [His wrath]" (Ezek. 20:5, 12-13, 17-21).

Because of their repeated disobedience and rebellion against God's government, God eventually did send Israel into captivity (by Assyria) and the Jews into captivity (by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon).

And lest any say, "Well, the Sabbath was only made for the Jews and Israel," Christ answers, "The Sabbath was made for MAN...therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

Yes, Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, *not* the Lord of Sunday! The Sabbath was *not* made for the Jews or Israel *only*, it was made for MAN. It was made for *all* humanity—but humanity has rejected it!

Where Did "Sunday Keeping" Come From?

Since God commanded that the Sabbath be kept forever, how did Sunday keeping originate? It certainly did not come from God or His Church.

Sunday is commonly referred to as "the Lord's Day." While the true Lord's Day of the Bible is actually the *Day of the Lord*—the *Day of His Wrath* (Joel 2:1-11; Rev. 1:10; 15:1, 7), the term, "the Lord's Day," has come to be synonymous with Sunday.

But why?

The reason is simple. Many have assumed the unscriptural tradition that Christ was resurrected from the tomb on Sunday. If Sunday can be established as the day that Christ was resurrected, it can be a means of artificially validating and "authorizing" the keeping of Sunday by the churches of the world—in place of God's true Sabbath. Then, the pagan Easter festival and celebration, with its Sunday sunrise services, become much easier to establish.

Many pagan festivals, including Christmas (Saturnalia), Easter (the festival of Ishtar) and worship on the day of the Sun, were observed throughout the Roman Empire long before Christ. The apostate church (the "woman") simply adopted them into practice, and enforced them on all citizens in the empire through the civil government. Actually, the first one to enforce Sunday worship was not a Pope or a church, but was Constantine, the emperor.

Here is what happened next. At the Council of Laodicea, in A.D. 363, the following decree was passed: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, resting rather on Sunday. But, if any be found to be Judaizing, let them be declared anathema from Christ."

Understand what this decree meant. When one was branded "anathema" (accursed or heretic) by the church, he was arrested by the state, tortured and, unless he recanted, this continued until death. This was enforced so strictly that people were *required* to rest on Sunday, and work on Saturday, in order to engage

in business or hold a job. This enforcement governed their "buying and selling."

Now briefly back to the beast and "little horn" of Daniel 7. Verse 25 sheds important light on what happened in the Roman Empire. Daniel wrote, "And he [the little horn] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High"—now get this next point and do not misunderstand—"and think to change TIMES and LAWS."

This is a remarkable statement about how the great false "woman" church sought to alter God's LAW as it had to do with TIME. The single most obvious way has been to change the *time* of God's Sabbath to the pagan SUN'S DAY (the day long set apart by men for worship of the sun), thus altering the fourth great law of God! (More and more people today speak of Sunday as their "sabbath.")

HOW PLAIN has been the work of this church in its efforts to "wear out the saints"!—and to speak against "the most High"!

Is it any wonder that God will pour out His wrath without mercy on any who would dare to do these things to His Word and to His people?

God has never authorized His Church or mankind to keep the pagan Sun's day. Nor did He ever command or allow His people to keep numerous other pagan festivals and days of worship—and has always explicitly commanded *against* them!

When people celebrate Sunday as the "Lord's Day," they unwittingly celebrate the very wrath that God will pour out on them for keeping this pagan custom in place of His Sabbath! Astonishing, but true.

Exodus 20:8-11 showed that Sabbath-keeping is the Fourth *Commandment*! The Sabbath has always been the seventh day of the week, and God never authorized Sunday, the first day of the week. God hallowed the Sabbath at creation. Christ kept it (Luke 4:16). So did Paul (Acts 13:42, 44; 17:2; 18:4). And so did the New Testament Church.

God has always said, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep *it* holy" (Ex. 20:8). He has *never* said, "Remember *Sunday* to keep it holy—and just call it the Lord's day!"

Keeping the Sabbath as God's command for true Christians is a big subject requiring its own large booklet of explanation. (Carefully read our free book *The SABBATH or Sunday – which?* for extensive and absolute proof of which day is the Christian Sabbath. You may also read our booklet *God's HOLY DAYS or Pagan HOLIDAYS?* to learn more about God's seven *annual* Sabbaths and how the false church has substituted these days with abominable, pagan, counterfeit "Christianized" festivals.)

What You Obey

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explained that people are the servants of whatever and whoever they obey: "Know you not, that to *whom* you yield yourselves servants to obey, his *servants* you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (6:16).

People either serve and obey God, and are given eternal *life*—or they serve and obey sin and the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), Satan, and earn eternal *death* (Rom. 6:23)!

In the Old Testament, Sabbath-breaking was punishable by death (Ex. 31:14 and 15). II Corinthians 3:7-8 describes the Old Testament administration of a civil death penalty, which is no longer applicable, because God is now building the nation of *spiritual* Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 8:9; 11:24-26; Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:11-13, 19; I Pet. 2:5, 9).

The Sabbath was to be kept perpetually, throughout the generations of Israel. There are still generations of Israel today—and there is spiritual Israel, which keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Take heed whether and how you will obey God. For “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28-29).

This is most serious!

In plain terms, the mark of the beast is SUNDAY-KEEPING AND THE KEEPING OF PAGAN FESTIVALS—in place of God’s weekly and annual Sabbaths!

Towering—truly colossal!—prophecies, concerning the most terrible calamities to ever strike the earth, are now unfolding. You have seen them explained in clear and plain detail. A spiritually darkened, blind and deceived world rushes headlong toward disaster, now just ahead. They do not suspect that God’s wrath, poured out in full fury, and undiluted with mercy, will soon fall on a sin-ravaged humanity that God has *marked* to receive it.

These prophecies are certain—they are sure. They *will* happen!

Will *you* be deceived when they come to pass? Will you be seduced by miracles and lying wonders? Will you take the mark of the beast? Will you worship the beast and his image? Will you follow the masses and ignore God?

Or will you obey God, watch and pray always—and ESCAPE?

How the Mark is Made

At the conclusion of his booklet *Who or What is the Prophetic BEAST?*, under the section entitled *The Mark of the Beast...It is Here, Now!*, Mr. Armstrong wrote the following under the subhead “On Right Hand and in Forehead”:

“God says the penalty for SIN is DEATH! Sin is the transgression of the law. If we break only this one commandment, we are guilty. The penalty is DEATH!

“The Roman church caused people to receive the MARK of pagan ROME—the Sunday observed by the pagan Roman Empire—and the penalty for disobedience was DEATH! Fifty million or more were put to death—so says history.

“The Sabbath commandment is the ONLY commandment the world will not accept in its MIND (forehead) and OBEY (by work, or rest, with the HAND). It is the ONLY commandment that can distinguish between those who have the MARK of the BEAST, or the SIGN OF GOD.

“Now the book of Revelation is written mostly in symbols. The right hand symbolizes work or labor—the forehead, the intellect or mind. It has to do with what we BELIEVE, in the mind, and whether we OBEY, with the hand.

“HOW ABOUT GOD’S SIGN? *It also was received in the forehead, and the hand!*

“Regarding one of God’s annual Sabbaths, we read: ‘...it shall be for a SIGN unto thee *upon thine hand*, and for a memorial *between thine eyes* [forehead], that the Lord’s LAW may be in thy mouth’ (Ex. 13:9).

“Deuteronomy 6:1, 6-8: ‘Now these are the COMMANDMENTS...and these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart...and thou shalt bind them for a SIGN *upon thine hand*, and they shall be as frontlets *between thine eyes*.’

“Deuteronomy 11:18: ‘Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign *upon your hand*, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.’

“Also see Proverbs 7:2-3 and Revelation 7:3-4; 14:1.

“There is absolute proof! Yes, the truth is very plain!

“The Sabbath is God’s SIGN, standing, more than any commandment, for OBEDIENCE. It was symbolically in the HAND and in the FOREHEAD, just as the MARK of the BEAST—the pagan SUNDAY—was in the right HAND and in the FOREHEAD!

“SUNDAY observance—Christmas, New Year’s, Easter, etc.—*this is the MARK of the BEAST!*

“The church *did* cause all under the ‘Holy Roman Empire’ to receive this mark, during the Middle Ages. Not only were active church members caused to observe Sunday instead of the SABBATH, but it became a universal custom so that all the Western world—regardless of religious connection or belief, accepted Sunday instead of SATURDAY as the weekly day of rest. It has become universal in the Western world except for Judaism, Islam, a few sects of Christianity, and the comparative few whom God has called out of this world and into His true Church.

“*Has she stopped?*

“Just at present she has not the POWER to enforce this mark on everyone. But there will be a United States of EUROPE—a union of ten nations. It will be a UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE—and the church once again will sit astride ‘The BEAST.’

“Now notice Daniel 7:21-22: ‘I beheld, and the same horn [papacy] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; *until* the Ancient of days came [Second Coming of Christ] and judgment was given to the saints of the most High.’

“Yes, the MARK OF THE BEAST once again will be *enforced*! No one will be able to hold a job or engage in business without it. Those refusing will once again be tortured and martyred—probably *by* the secret police of the political *state*—but at the behest of the church!

“Today, ALL NATIONS are deceived by this paganism masquerading under the name ‘Christianity.’

“Today, America, Canada, Britain—Israelitish nations, descended from the ancient so-called lost ten tribes of Israel—are actually *in* the ways of this ‘BABYLON.’

“God’s *last warning* is this: ‘COME OUT of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and *that ye receive not of* HER PLAGUES’ (Rev. 18:4)!

“If you are branded by this MARK, *rejecting* the SIGN of God in your forehead and hand, you shall be tortured by God’s plagues without mercy! Yes, YOU!

“But if you OBEY God—if you are *watching*, praying without ceasing—you shall be accounted worthy to ESCAPE—and come under GOD’S PROTECTION (Luke 21:36).”

The following additional literature supplements the material in this booklet:

- The True Origin of CHRISTMAS
- The True Origin of EASTER
- CHRIST’S RESURRECTION was NOT on Sunday
- The SABBATH – Has *time* been lost?
- The SABBATH or Sunday – *which?*

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