

The MARK of the BEAST



Revelation 13

**The BEAST – WHO Is It?
His MARK – WHAT Is It?**

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The BEAST—Who Is It?

Chapter 18 of “This Is My Beloved Son ~ Hear Him”

I’d like to ask you something that to me seems so obvious, and so fundamental, that it baffles me that I don’t hear this thought brought up more often when this subject is discussed: Doesn’t it seem like one of the first and most important steps in discovering what the mark of the beast is would be to try to find out who or what the beast itself is?

I have another important question to ask before I go on: Does God want the truth of who or what the beast is to be proclaimed even if it will anger or sadden huge numbers of people? (I hope you agree with me that the answer has to be: of course He does.)

So, how do we figure out who or what the beast is? Well, one of the first things that would be helpful would be to identify some of the characteristics of the beast and then see if we can discover who or what it is that those characteristics can be most perfectly applied to.

There are a number of characteristics brought out concerning the beast, but to begin with there are five that I want to point out; all five of which are found in John’s description of the beast in Revelation 13:

#1—*“I...saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns.” (v.1)*

#2—*“There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things.” (v.5)*

#3—*“Power was given unto him to continue forty two months.” (v.5)*

#4—*“He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” (v.6)*

#5—*“It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” (v.7)*

Now, before I take the all-important step of trying to identify for you who or what it is that fulfills our characteristics, I want to do another very important thing first. I want to place alongside of our prophecy a second prophecy. And as our initial prophecy is found in the great prophetic book of the New Testament, so our second prophecy is found in the great prophetic book of the Old Testament—the book of Daniel. But before I do that I want to share with you a few select verses from Daniel’s prophecy so that it will be absolutely clear that his prophecy, like our Revelation prophecy, pertains not to the distant past, as some try to place it, but to *“the time of the end”*:

“...you must understand that the events you have seen in your vision relate to the time of the end... What you have seen pertains to the very end of time... Seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.”

{Daniel 8:17, 19, 26 NLT, NIV}

Now, just as I pointed out five characteristics of our beast in the book of Revelation, I want to point out five characteristics of our beast in the book of Daniel:

- #1—*"I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head." (7:20 NIV)*
- #2—*"In this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (7:8 ESV)*
- #3—*"The people that belong to God will be in the king's power for three and one-half years." (7:25 NCV)*
- #4—*"It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host." (8:11 NASB)*
- #5—*"...this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them." (7:21 NIV)*

So as to make certain that it can't possibly be missed, I'm now going to place the five characteristics of the two different beasts side-by-side (actually, one on top of the other).

The beast of Revelation 13

- #1—*"ten horns" (v.1)*
- #2—*"a mouth speaking great things" (v.5)*
- #3—*"continues forty-two months" (v.5)*
- #4—*"he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God" (v.6)*
- #5—*"makes war with the saints and overcomes them" (v.7)*

The beast of Daniel 7 & 8

- #1—*"ten horns" (7:20)*
- #2—*"a mouth speaking great things" (7:8)*
- #3—*"power for three and one-half years" (7:25) (3½ years = 42 months)*
- #4—*"it magnifies itself to be equal with the Commander of the host" (8:11)*
- #5—*"wages war against the saints and defeats them" (7:21)*

Clearly, except possibly for #4, which I believe will also be clear in a few minutes, these two prophetic beasts represent the same entity. The entity that not only is the great agent of Satan in seeking to cause God's last day people to receive the mark of the beast, but as the prophecies also inform us, *"opens his mouth in blasphemy against God"* and *"makes war with the saints and overcomes them."* Wouldn't you agree that this is a subject that should captivate the attention of all true Christians? And wouldn't you also agree that God wants the true identity of this beast to be proclaimed to all who will listen? So, are you ready?

I'll begin by allowing others, who are far better historians than me, to tell you who it is that best fulfills characteristic #5 of our list: *"makes war with the saints and overcomes them."* See if the evidence is not convincing.

"No computation can reach the numbers who have been put to death on account of their maintaining the profession of the gospel, and opposing the corruptions of the Church of Rome. A million of poor Waldenses perished in France; nine hundred thousand orthodox Christians were slain in less than thirty years after the institution of the order of the Jesuits. The Inquisition destroyed one hundred and fifty thousand within thirty years. These are but a few specimens of which history has recorded." {Scott's Church History}

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" - "Who can make any computation," says Bishop Newton, "or even frame any conception, of the numbers of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the bigotry and cruelty of Rome?" {Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, his notes on Revelation 13:7}

"That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history." {History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe}

"Can anyone doubt that this is true of the papacy? The Inquisition, the persecutions of the Waldenses, the ravages of Duke Alva—indeed, the whole history of the papacy may be appealed to in proof that this is applicable to that power... Indeed, the slightest acquaintance with the history of the papacy will convince anyone that what is here said of 'making war with the saints' and 'wearing out the saints of the Most High' is strictly applicable to that power, and will accurately describe its history." {Albert Barnes, in his notes on Daniel 7:25}

Before I go any further let me say one thing: I believe there's a huge difference between the Roman Catholic *system* and Roman Catholic *people*. It's the system that is the enemy of God and His church, not the people. As with pretty much all churches, I believe there are many good people and many true Christians in the Catholic Church.

Now, although the above quotations point an extremely damning finger at the Catholic Church, that's only one of the five characteristics of our beast; there's a second characteristic that I especially want to look at. I'll explain to you why after we look at it. It's characteristic #4:

"He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God." {Revelation 13:6 KJV}

"It even magnified itself to be equal to the Commander of the host."
{Daniel 8:11 NASB}

Before we see how the Roman Catholic Church fulfills this characteristic of the beast we need to briefly examine the above two verses and see how they're related. First, Daniel tells us that this power *"magnifies itself to be equal with the Commander of the host."* Most other translations translate that verse thus: *"It sets itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host."* In the very next chapter of the book of Daniel we read, *"Messiah the Prince."* (9:25 KJV) Without wanting to spend time on further evidence, I think that capital P and that capital C, combined with the fact that this Prince is the Messiah is sufficient evidence to show that it's none other than Jesus Himself that this power is setting itself up to be *"as great as,"* or *"equal to."* Of course, to make yourself equal with Jesus is also to make yourself equal with God, because the Bible is clear that Jesus is both equal with God and is God. And as for our Revelation passage, *"He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God,"* how does that equate to making yourself to be equal with God? Let me share with you two Biblical examples of blasphemy:

"Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' 'We are not stoning you for any of these,' replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.'"
{John 10:31-33 NIV}

"Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.' But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there said to themselves, 'What? This is blasphemy! Who but God can forgive sins!'" {Mark 2:5-7 NLT}

The first passage tells us that blasphemy is when *"a mere man claims to be God."* Obviously, claiming to be God would equate to making yourself equal to God, which is what our beast in the Daniel passage is said to do. And our second example of blasphemy, claiming to be able to forgive sin, which only God can do, goes right along with our first example. Claiming to be able to do what only God can do would be putting yourself in the place of God, which again, is pretty much the same as making yourself equal with God. (Of course, Jesus could legitimately do both because He was God. Unfortunately most of the Jews of Christ's day refused to see that.)

So, does the Catholic Church fulfill this characteristic of the beast? Once again I'll share with you some quotes, only this time they'll be quotes from within the church, not from without.

#1—"A mere man, claiming to be God"

"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." {Pope Leo XIII, Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae—The Reunion of Christendom, Rome: 1894}

"The Pope and God are the same, so he has all power in Heaven and earth." {Pope Pius V, quoted in Barclay, Cities Petrus Bertanous Chapter XXVII: 218}

"The Pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God." {Ferraris Ecclesiastical Dictionary}

"It is quite certain that Popes have never disapproved or rejected this title "Lord God the Pope" for the passage in the gloss referred to appears in the edition of the Canon Law published in Rome by Gregory XIII." {Statement from Father A. Pereira}

#2—Claiming to possess the power to forgive sin

"The priest does really and truly forgive sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ." {Joseph Devarbe's Catechism, p. 279}

"By Christ's will, the Church possesses the power to forgive the sins of the baptized and exercises it through bishops and priests." {Catechism of the Catholic Church, #986}

"Indeed bishops and priests, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'" {Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1461}

"Sins can be forgiven only through the Sacraments when duly administered; hence, it follows that both priests and Sacraments are the instruments which Christ makes use of to accomplish in us the pardon of sin." {Catechism of Trent, p. 115}

I can't help but sidetrack for a second. That last quote says, *"Sins can be forgiven only through the Sacraments when duly administered."* Until now I didn't even know what the Sacraments were; and I certainly have never had them *"duly administered."* According to the Catholic Church's teaching, what would that mean for me?

When I began this point I said that there was an important reason why I felt that this

particular characteristic of the beast needed to be considered—other than the obvious reason of providing further proof that it is in fact the Catholic Church to whom our prophecy applies. In getting to that reason I now want to share with you a passage from somewhere else in the Bible that sheds some valuable light on our study:

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report, or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” {2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 NIV, KJV}

It’s almost universally agreed that *“that man of sin”* and *“the son of perdition”* referred to in that passage applies to the last day Antichrist. It’s also almost universally agreed that the last day Antichrist is the same power as our beast in the book of Revelation. Going along with that, those words, *“he exalts himself over everything that is called God...proclaiming himself to be God,”* clearly coincide with that characteristic of our beast that we’ve just been looking at, only in our present passage something extra is brought out; something extremely important that I don’t want anyone to miss: He *“sets himself up in God’s temple,”* which means that this power, which is the same power as our beast of Revelation, is not—as so many Christians today believe—an openly anti-Christian power. This is a power that calls itself Christian and claims to be God’s representative. This of course rules out any of the non-Christian entities that are so often taught to be the fulfillment of our prophecy concerning who the beast is. This is also one very real reason why God’s people are in danger of worshiping the beast.

This brings to light another very important and very much misunderstood aspect of this subject: The mark of the beast has everything to do with *“worship;”* it has nothing to do with some mega-computer and a barcode:

“All the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast...” {Rev. 13:8 NIV}

“[He] made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast.” {Rev. 13:12 NIV}

“[He] causes all who refuse to worship the image to be killed.” {Rev. 13:15 NIV}

"Anyone who worships the beast...must drink the wine of God's wrath."
{Rev. 14:9 NLT}

"Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them...had not worshiped the beast." {Rev. 20:4 NLT}

Before we move on to the last—and most important—phase of our chapter, because it's such a serious charge I've brought against the Catholic church, I want to share some more quotes; quotes showing that the better share of the great religious leaders of past ages, leaders who today are acknowledged by almost all Protestants as true servants of God, believed and taught that *"the beast"* of Revelation 13, and *"BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS"* of Revelation 17, and the *"little horn"* power of Daniel 7 & 8, and *"that man of sin"* of 2 Thessalonians 2, and finally, the *"Antichrist,"* all point to but one entity—the Roman Catholic Church:

"Most Reformation writers and all Reformers themselves, from Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox identify the Roman Catholic Church with the Whore of Babylon... Identification of the Pope as the Antichrist was written into Protestant creeds such as the Westminster Confession of 1646. The identification of the Roman Catholic Church with the Whore of Babylon is kept in the Scofield Reference Bible."
{[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whore_of_Babylon_\(historicism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whore_of_Babylon_(historicism))}

"Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer; in the seventeenth century, Bunyan, the translators of the King James Bible and the men who published the Westminster and Baptist confessions of Faith; Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards; and more recently Spurgeon, Bishop J.C. Ryle and Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones; these men among countless others, all saw the office of the Papacy as the antichrist." {All Roads Lead to Rome, p. 205}

"Luther ... proved, by the revelations of Daniel and St. John, by the epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude, that the reign of Antichrist, predicted and described in the Bible, was the Papacy." {D'aubigne's History of the Reformation of the Sixteen Century, book vi, chapter xii, p. 215}

"'He shall speak great words against the Most High...' To none can this apply so well or so fully as to the popes of Rome. They have assumed infallibility, which belongs only to God. They profess to forgive sins, which belongs only to God. They profess to open and shut heaven, which belongs only to God. They profess to be higher than all the kings of the

earth, which belongs only to God..." {Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, his notes on Daniel 7:25}

"He (Daniel) especially desired to know respecting the little horn, which made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. Here is foretold the rage of papal Rome against true Christians." {Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary}

"Some persons think us too severe and censorious when we call the Roman pontiff Antichrist. But those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against Paul himself, after whom we speak and whose language we adopt... I shall briefly show that (Paul's words in II Thess. 2) are not capable of any other interpretation than that which applies them to the Papacy." {Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin}

"The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian Church: and in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness upon them." {The Fall of Babylon, by Cotton Mather}

PART II

His MARK—What Is It?

Having established, hopefully, who the beast is, we now come to the all-important question of what *"the mark"* of this beast is. And to find the answer to that we'll need to look at two key passages: one from those chapters of the book of Daniel that we've been looking at, and the other from that chapter of the book of Revelation that we've been looking at. But before doing that I want to present for your consideration what I believe is a very real clue as to what the mark of the beast involves. It consists of another set of two passages, both in the book of Revelation. (You'll recognize our first one from an earlier chapter.) What makes these two passages especially significant is where they happen to be located in the book of Revelation. The first immediately precedes the introduction of the beast and the second immediately follows that final climactic warning concerning worshipping the beast and his image and thereby receiving the mark. You'll have to decide if it's just a coincidence that God has put these two verses where He has, or if He has put them there for a reason:

“The dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring—*those who keep the commandments of God* and have the testimony of Jesus.” {Revelation 12:17 NIV, KJV}

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are *they that keep the commandments of God*, and the faith of Jesus.” {Revelation 14:12 KJV}

Something just dawned on me as I was sitting here thinking about that Revelation 12:17 passage. Immediately after telling us, “*the dragon* makes war with those who keep the commandments of God,” we then read, “*the dragon* gave the beast his power.” (Rev. 13:2 NIV) Doesn’t it seem logical that “the dragon gave the beast his power,” because the beast would be of like mind with him and pursue the same course as him—“*make war with those who keep the commandments of God?*” (We’ve already seen that the beast “*makes war*” with God’s children just as the dragon does.)

Now for our two identifying passages:

Our verse from the book of Daniel

“*He will try to change times and laws that have already been set.*” {Daniel 7:25 NCV}

Our verse from the book of Revelation

“*The whole world...followed the beast.*” {Revelation 13:3 NIV}

We’ll consider our Daniel passage first. But before we do, I’d like to quote it in its entirety:

“*He will speak great words against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High. He will try to change times and laws that have already been set. The saints will be handed over to him for three and one-half years.*” {Daniel 7:25 KJV, NCV}

It just hit me as I was sitting here looking at that verse and thinking about it: everything else in it has a direct and important connection to God and His people. Doesn’t it seem logical that the remaining part, he will “*try to change times and laws,*” would also have to do with God and His people?

Since I’ve started in this line of thought: if those “*times and laws*” that this power “*tries to change*” have nothing to do with God and His people why would God place them in a verse that has everything to do with God and His people? And why would it even be worthy of note for the Bible to tell us that this mighty conquering power thought to change laws? Don’t conquering powers pretty much always establish their own laws? Along with that—why does it say he “*tries*” to change laws? Why doesn’t it just say he changes them? And finally, how does changing “*times that have already been*

set” fit into the whole equation?

In keeping with what I just said, that everything else in that verse has to do with God and His people, let me see if I can make the case that so does this remaining portion of it. First, I’ll share with you what Albert Barnes has to say about those “times” and “laws” that this power “tries” to change:

“The word “times” would seem to refer properly to some stated or designated times... undoubtedly, to such periods set apart as festivals or fasts - seasons consecrated to the services of religion.” {Albert Barnes Commentary on the Bible, Daniel 7:25}

“The word rendered “laws” here... while it might refer to any law, would more properly designate laws pertaining to religion.” {Albert Barnes’ Commentary on the Bible, Daniel 7:25}

To go along with Mr. Barnes’ understanding, let me now share with you how a couple of the more modern Bibles translate that verse:

“He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws.” {NLT}

“He will try to change the times and laws that were given by God.” {NirV}

I think that last translation really hits the nail on the head—for what would be the significance of informing us that this power that makes war against God and His people changed some local laws; but if this power tried to change God’s law, well, that would be significant; and it might even qualify as making war against Him.

Now, with those words fresh in your mind, “He will try to change times and laws that were given by God,” consider what one of the most historic, authoritative, and respected Catholic works has to say:

“The Pope has the power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has the authority, and often exercised it, to dispense with the command of Christ.” {Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop. (The pope can modify divine law) Ferraris' Ecclesiastical Dictionary}

That’s quite a statement; and not only a perfect fulfillment of our text, “He will try to change times and laws that were given by God,” but also a pretty good fulfillment of those words—“he exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped” and “He opened his mouth in blasphemy.”

Now I want to show you what is truly the ultimate fulfillment of those words, “he will try to change the times and laws that were given by God.” First, those two important verses:

“Then as the LORD finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, written by the finger of God... These stone tablets were God’s work; the words on them were written by God himself.” {Exodus 31:18; 32:16 NLT}

When I first shared those two verses I pointed out that in all the history of the world those words, “written by the finger of God” & “written by God himself,” are spoken in reference to but one thing: the Ten Commandments. What I didn’t point out was that both of those verses, along with the only other verse in the Bible that tells us that God wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger, Deuteronomy 9:10, make it a point to tell us *where* He wrote those Ten Commandments: on “*stone tablets*.” Everyone knows what it means when we say that something is written in stone—it means it can’t change. And if there’s anything in this world that can’t be changed, especially by man, it’s what God Himself wrote on those tables of stone:

*“We believe the Scriptures teach that the law of God is the eternal and **unchangeable** rule of His moral government.” {The official teaching of the Baptist denomination in 1934}*

*“It [the law] is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must, therefore, be as **unchangeable** as the justice of God.” {John Calvin}*

*“Jesus did not come to **change** the law... That the Master did not come to alter the law is clear...” {Charles Spurgeon}*

*“The moral laws are such as grow out of the nature of things, which cannot therefore be **changed**.” {Dr. Albert Barnes, his comments on Matthew 5:18}*

But changing the law is only half of our prophecy. Our beast is also prophesied to change “*times*.” Why do you think it is that God placed those two things together? Certainly you would think there has to be a reason. And could that reason be that the law that this power thinks to change—a law so important that the changing of it merits it a place in this prophecy—is the only law which God wrote with His own finger that has to do with time? Think about that while you read this next set of quotes:

*"We have made the **change** from the seventh to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy, catholic, apostolic church of Christ." {Bishop Seymour, Why We Keep Sunday}*

*"Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church **change** the seventh day -Saturday- for Sunday, the first day? I answer yes. Did Christ change the day? I answer no! Faithfully yours, J. Card. Gibbons" {The Catholic Mirror, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore Sept. 23, 1893}*

*"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the **change** was her act..." {Letter from C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons on October 28, 1895}*

*"The Catholic Church...by virtue of her divine mission, **changed** the day from Saturday to Sunday." {Catholic Virginian Oct. 3, 1947, p. 9, art. "To Tell You the Truth."}*

*"Protestants accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the **change**." {Our Sunday Visitor, February 5, 1950}*

I want to share one more quote with you, just to try to further impress you as to how significant this changing of the Sabbath actually is, and how the Catholic Church realizes its significance. (For those who aren't familiar with the word "Decalogue," it's just another name for the Ten Commandments.)

"They [Roman Catholics] refer to the Sabbath Day, as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath Day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!" {Augsburg Confession of Faith art. 28; written by Melanchthon, approved by Martin Luther, 1530}

Now our second all-important passage:

*"The whole world...**followed** the beast." {Revelation 13:3 NIV}*

Although only one of these next three quotes contains the actual word "followed," they all give that same message:

*"If Protestants would **follow** the Bible, they should worship God on the Sabbath Day. In keeping the Sunday, they are **following** a law of the Catholic Church." {Albert Smith, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, replying for the Cardinal in a letter, February 10, 1920}*

"It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and all other Christians, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in their observance of Sunday. Sunday is an institution of the Roman Catholic Church, and those who observe the day observe a commandment of the Catholic Church." {Priest Brady, in an address reported in The News, Elizabeth, New Jersey, March 18, 1903}

"The Protestant mind does not seem to realize that...In observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." {Our Sunday Visitor, February 15, 1950}

Now, as you'll remember, our prophecy contains more detail than just "the whole world follows the beast." It also informs us that, "All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast." (Rev. 13:8 NIV) Consider these next two quotes in the light of that aspect of the prophecy:

"The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) church." {Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, p. 213}

"The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church." {Father T. Enright, C.S.S.R. of the Redemptoral College, Kansas City, in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, printed in History of the Sabbath, p. 802}

Another amazing statement!

But there's still more. Along with those other elements of the prophecy comes this one: "Anyone who worships the beast...or who accepts his **mark**." (Rev. 14:9 NLT)

*"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act...And the act is a **mark** of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." {Letter from C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons on October 28, 1895}*

*“Sunday is our **mark** of authority...the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.” {Catholic Record of London, September 1, 1923}*

Once again, another amazing statement: *“the church is above the Bible.”* And it’s right here that the ultimate question confronts every one of us—and I pray that we’ll all arrive at the right answer: When the Bible directs one way, but the church directs a different way, what would God have us to do? Allow me to broaden my question: When the Bible directs one way, but the church, or the world, or our friends and family direct a different way, what would God have us to do?

Now I want to return to our title passage, only this time I’ll include a few quotes to go along with it:

*“Jesus replied, “Why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your **tradition**? ...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your **tradition**... In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” {Matthew 15:3-9 KJV, NIV}*

*“Sunday is founded, not of scripture, but on **tradition**, and is distinctly a Catholic institution.” {Catholic Record, September 17, 1893}*

*“From this we may understand how great is the authority of the church in interpreting or explaining to us the commandments of God - an authority which is acknowledged by the universal practice of the whole Christian world, even of those sects which profess to take the holy Scriptures as their sole rule of faith, since they observe as the day of rest not the seventh day of the week demanded by the Bible, but the first day, which we know is to be kept holy only from the **tradition** and teaching of the Catholic Church.” {Catechism Made Easy, #2, 9th edition, vol. 1, p. 341-342}*

*“We Catholics then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday as we have for every other article of our creed, namely, the authority of the Church... whereas you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatsoever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow **tradition** in this matter.” {The Brotherhood of St. Paul, The Clifton Tracts, Vol. 4, tract 4, pg. 15}*

If you were to read back over those many quotes from the various Catholic sources you would find that the word “*authority*” was used quite often. (Five times in that last quote alone.) Again, we have the clear word of God pointing out our duty:

“We must obey God rather than human authority.” {Acts 5:29 NLT}

I believe the evidence is absolutely overwhelming. The only question is: What will you do with it? Or maybe I should ask: What should you do with it? (Remember: it’s God, not me, who has made the things we’ve looked at in this chapter the great central theme of end-time prophecy.) And yes, I realize that great men of God have kept the first day of the week instead of the seventh, but so do I also realize that great men of God—Abraham, Jacob, and David to name a few—had multiple wives. Dare we use that as justification to have multiple wives today? Why is it any different in this case?

I don’t claim to have all the answers, but I do have what I believe is a major part of the answer. And it’s this: There’s all the difference in the world between willfully and knowingly choosing to walk in a path that’s contrary to what God says, and doing it ignorantly:

“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.” {Acts 17:30 NIV}

“Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.” {James 4:17 NLT}

I’d like to touch on one more thing: When the Catholic Church was at the height of its power what we had was a church that held control over the power of the State and used it to enforce her decrees and punish those who refused to conform. History teaches us that that’s always what happens when the church gains control of the State. (So it is today in Muslim countries where the religious element has gained control of the reins of government.) The founders of this country, many of whom were godly men, knew this and made very specific provisions to safeguard against the same thing ever happening here: *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” (The Constitution)*

In connection with that I want to share with you a quote that I believe every American should be aware of, especially those who prize their religious freedom. I’d like to ask you to take a couple extra minutes to really think about what the quote says. (Because there’s a word in the quote that I’m certain most people today aren’t familiar with, I’m going to include its definition in brackets.)

“There are many who are disposed to attribute any fear of Roman Catholicism in the United States to bigotry or childishness. Such see

nothing in the character and attitude of Romanism that is hostile to our free institutions, or find nothing portentous in its growth. Let us, then, first compare some of the fundamental principles of our government with those of the Catholic Church.

"The Constitution of the United States guarantees liberty of conscience. Nothing is dearer or more fundamental. Pope Pius IX, in his Encyclical Letter of August 15, 1854, said: 'The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error--a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a state.' The same pope, in his Encyclical Letter of December 8, 1864, anathematized [to excommunicate with cursing] 'those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,' also 'all such as maintain that the church may not employ force.'

"The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O'Connor: 'Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.' ...The archbishop of St. Louis once said: 'Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes.'" {Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis" (1885) Josiah Strong, an American Protestant clergyman}

As the quote said, *"nothing is dearer or more fundamental"* than freedom of conscience—and every true Christian, and every true American, should give a hearty amen to that. But as the quote so clearly showed, true Catholicism hates that principle. I just pray that Protestantism will never adopt the philosophy of Catholicism. But I have reason to fear that it will.

Before I finish I want to repeat what I said earlier: I believe there's a vast difference between the *members* of Catholicism and the *system* of Catholicism. It's the system of Catholicism that's the enemy of God and the Bible, not the people of Catholicism. And as with all churches, I believe there are many good people and many true Christians in the Catholic Church.

Now I'd like to finish with a few of the passages we've had throughout the book:

Passage #1:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law... I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these

least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” {Matthew 5:17-19 NIV, KJV}

Lest the Devil, the world, or even your own heart, should try to mislead you: When Jesus says, “whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, *he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven,*” He’s not saying that they’ll be in heaven. He’s saying that in heaven’s estimate that’s the worst thing one can do.

Allow me to try to persuade you via a different argument: If Jesus presents to you two opposing courses, and says that if you pursue the one you’ll be called “*great*” in the kingdom of heaven, but you pursue the opposite, what does that say about your belief in Him and your love for Him?

Passage #2:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” {John 14:15 NASB}

Passage #3:

“Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man... But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man.” {Matthew 7:24, 26 NIV}

Passage #4:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” {Matthew 7:21 NIV}

And finally:

“God spake all these words, saying... Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” {Exodus 20:1, 8 KJV}

Because you weren't able to read the two chapters that preceded the one this little booklet is taken from I'd like to share with you one final set of quotes:

"Where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh, but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day." (Plain Sermons on the Catechism, Isaac Williams—**an Anglican**)

"There is nothing in Scripture that requires us to keep Sunday rather than Saturday as a holy day." (Christianity Today, Nov. 5, 1976, Harold Lindsell, former editor—**a Baptist**)

"Let us be clear on this point. Though to the Christian 'that day, the first day of the week' is the most memorable of all days ... there is no command or warrant in the New Testament for observing it as a holy day." (Bible Standard, May, 1916—**Church of Christ**)

"Nowhere in the Bible is it laid down that worship should be done on Sunday." (Toronto Daily Star, October 26, 1949, Phillip Carrington—**an Episcopalian**)

"The Sabbath was founded on a specific divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday... There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday." (The Ten Commandments, Dr. R.W. Dale—**a Congregationalist**)

"The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command. One will search the Scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first." (Ten Rules for Living, Clovis G. Chappell—**a Methodist**)

If what you've read in this little booklet was new to you, and if you see it to be true—or even the possibility that it's true—then I would urge you to write to us (or call us) and ask for a copy of the book from which this little booklet was taken, because there's more that you need to know. (Because we believe the truths it contains are so important, and because we believe the souls for whom Christ died are so important, and because Christ has said —“freely ye have received, freely give”—we're offering it for free.) The book consists of 20 chapters, with each chapter being based on a verse by Jesus. Many fundamentally important subjects are dealt with. A few controversial subjects are also examined. I try hard to make things as simple and as clear as possible. I also try hard to back up everything I teach with the Bible. One thing I think I can guarantee you: The book is absolutely full of many wonderful Bible passages—shared from whichever translation(s) I felt made the passage as clear, as simple, and as powerful as possible. (Truly, one of our greatest needs is to have God's word—in all its truth and bearing and power—written in our minds and hearts.) From the first page to the last page I try my best to uplift God's word. And from the first page to the last I try to write with this wonderful truth in mind:

“I have come so that they may have life.

I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.”

{John 10:10 CJB, NIV}

God Bless, and we hope to hear from you.

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