



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #26: "The Mark of the Beast"

SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 13 AND 14

Memory Verse: "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." Revelation 13:1.

In Revelation 13 and 14, an issue is sharply drawn between God and the leopard beast. Religion and government will cooperate in forcing the "mark" of the beast upon the world. God's people, though small in number, comparatively speaking, will stand out in definite distinction from the world in general. It will be God's last great test of loyalty, and His remnant people will stand in the spirit and faith of Elijah and John the Baptist. As the second coming of Christ approaches, no one can escape the issue. Everyone must decide. Satan will make war on God's people; but God will be with them and will come in glory to deliver them and reward them, along with the faithful of all ages.

1: WHO IS THE LEOPARD BEAST OF REVELATION 13?

The leopard beast represents the same power as the little horn of Daniel 7. And this power is papal Rome. The following will make this clear. Please look up the following texts:

1. It came up out of the sea (*Revelation 13:1*) or among multitudes (*Revelation 17:15*).

The little horn came up among the ten kingdoms of Europe. The leopard beast came up "out of the sea," which means that it arose among many peoples. Thus the two correspond here.

2. Like the "great red dragon," it had seven heads and ten horns (*Revelation 13:1: 12:3*).

Both the leopard beast and the great red dragon of your last lesson have seven heads and ten horns, identifying them both as Roman. The leopard beast is papal Rome; the dragon represents Satan working through pagan Rome. The terrible beast of Daniel 7 (pagan Rome) had ten horns, and then the little horn arose. In Revelation the dragon beast, or pagan Rome, is followed by the leopard beast, or papal Rome. To make it crystal clear, the terrible beast of Daniel 7 is the same as the great red dragon of Revelation 12, pagan Rome. The little horn, of Daniel 7, is the same as the leopard beast of Revelation 13. Now, let us continue the comparisons.

3. It had feet as a bear and a mouth as a lion (*Revelation 13:2*).

The leopard beast had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, thus combining the symbols of Daniel 7, in which a lion stood for Babylon, a bear for Medo-Persia, and a leopard for Greece. The leopard beast had seven heads and ten horns, connecting it also with Rome. Thus papal Rome is a composite of the

systems of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and pagan Rome.

4. The dragon (pagan Rome) gave its "seat," or "see," to the leopard beast (Revelation 13:2).

Papal Rome took the rulership following pagan Rome. A Roman Catholic writes:

"Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule over them; and thus . . . commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. And meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages" (*American Catholic Quarterly Review, April, 1911*):

The word, "seat," means the "seat of government." The word "see," used in the "Holy See," means the same. There the pope sits today in the City of Rome, the seat of the ancient pagan empire. Pagan Rome gave papal Rome its seat, or see.

5. The world "wondered after" and "worshipped" the beast (Revelation 13:3-4, 7-8).

The papacy is a world power. So the whole world wondered after the beast.

6. The beast spoke "blasphemies" (Revelation 13:5-6; Daniel 7:25).

By claiming to be the vicar of Christ on earth, and by assuming prerogatives that belong only to God, he "sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 *Thessalonians* 2:4). This is the very same power as the "little horn" of Daniel 7:24-25.

7. It was to continue 42 months (1,260 days, or years) [Revelation 13:5; Daniel 7:25].

The beast was to rule 42 months, or 1,260 days, or years. This again corresponds to the "little horn" of Daniel 7:24-25.

8. It was "to make war with the saints" (Revelation 13:7; Daniel 7:25).

Again we have a parallel with the little horn which was a persecuting power.

9. One head was to be wounded and taken captive (Revelation 13:3, 10).

This took place in 1798, when the French general, Berthier, took Pope Pius VI prisoner, and hastened him as a captive from prison to prison. He died in the French fortress of Valence eighteen months later. In 1870, the papacy received another blow, when Rome was seized by Italy. The pope became a voluntary "prisoner of the Vatican." Hence, in 1798, he who sent others into captivity went himself into captivity.

But the deadly wound was to be healed. In 1929, the Italian Government recognized Vatican City as an independent state. The pope was again a king. On March 9, 1929, the pope said, "The peoples of the entire world are with us."

Today the papacy is coming back into great power. "Yet since then (A.D. 1798), the papacy has been lifted to a pinnacle of spiritual power unreached, it may be, since earliest Christian history" (*The Modern Papacy, p. 1*).

10. The beast has a number—the number of a man's name (Revelation 13:17-18).

The man would naturally be the head of the papacy, or the pope. A leading title for the pope is "Vicar of the Son of God." In Latin this is Vicarius Filii Dei. Adding up the numeral letters (Roman numbers) in this title we have: V-5, 1-1, C-100, (A and R. no value), 1-1, V (U)-5, (S and F. no value). 1-I, L-50, 1-1, 1-1, D-500, (E, no value), 1-1. This totals 666, the number the Bible gives for the beast. This follows the ancient custom of a person's having a name and a number also.

The Douay Bible (Catholic) gives this note on Revelation 13:18: "Six hundred sixty-six. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number."

We would give this word of caution: The beast is not identified exclusively by the number 666. This is but the tenth point we have given. The number 666 is just another point in favor of a position already proved.

2: WHAT IS THE IMAGE TO THE BEAST? (*Revelation 13:14-15*)

Someone has said that "the papacy was a church dominating the state." An "image" to the papacy would therefore be another religious power functioning after the same order of things. The "image" power attempts to force, by pressure of civil law, the mark of the beast upon man.

The papacy dominates the state so that its own plans may be forwarded by civil law and government influence. Modern-day Protestantism is organizing its forces to play a forceful role in political, social, economic, and religious problems. By using civil law, it will someday force the papal mark upon the people. This image will not be fully formed until religious laws are enforced by state authority and punished by civil agencies of the government. These religious laws will bring persecution, perplexity, and hardship upon those who conscientiously follow the Scriptures.

3: WHAT IS THE SEAL OF GOD AND THE COUNTERFEIT MARK?

God has a sign, or mark, of His power and authority, as we read in the Scriptures:

Exodus 31:16-17: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."

God's sign is the seventh-day Sabbath. It was made at the close of creation to be a reminder of God's creative power (*Genesis 2: 1-3; Exodus 20:8-11*). It was based on the unchangeable facts of God's creation (*Exodus 31:17; 20:8-11*). It will remain unchanged throughout all eternity (*Isaiah 66:22-23*).

God's authority is based on the fact that He is Creator. He Himself states that the Sabbath is a sign because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (*Exodus 31: 17*). All the universe might dispute God's statement, but they could not change the fact that the seventh day is God's sign according to His own Word.

God made the Sabbath the sign or seal of His law. Laws are authenticated by the seal of the lawgiver. Now, a seal gives the name, title, and territory of a ruler. The Sabbath command does this. No other commandment does. God has "signed," or set His seal to, this law.

The fourth commandment is the only one that identifies the giver of the law, the source of authority, and the extent of the law's application. The lawgiver's name is "the Lord thy God." His title is Creator, or Maker, of heaven and earth. His territory, or dominion, is "heaven and earth" (*Exodus 20:11*).

You recall that God predicted that the papacy would think to change His law.

Daniel 7:25: "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."

The Sabbath commandment deals with time. It is also a part of the law.

The papacy claims that the change of the law in which she thought to transfer the solemnity of the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) over to Sunday is *the mark of her power and authority*. Yes, she put aside God's sign and put up her own, and claims the act of changing the Sabbath as a mark, or proof, of her power. Note the following from a recognized Catholic authority:

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?"

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;--she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority" (*A Doctrinal Catechism, (3rd Amer. ed., rev.). Stephen Keenan, p. 174.*)

From the office of Cardinal Gibbons, through Chancellor C. F. Thomas, came this statement: "Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act. . . *and the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things*" (italics supplied). Thus God's sign, or mark, or symbol, or flag, was pulled down and the Sunday institution was raised in its place; and the act was set forth as a proof and mark of papal power by the papacy itself.

4: WILL THE PAPAL MARK OF SUNDAY-KEEPING EVER BECOME LAW?

Revelation 13:15: "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."

Revelation 13:17: "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."

Both the way of life and business will be affected. Most states already have Sunday laws. Protestantism has been much more forward in seeking to enforce the papal mark than has Catholicism. This is true to the prophecy. The "image to the beast" is the one that is to press this matter to the limit of death itself. Religious freedom will be sacrificed on the altar of the "beast" by the "image of the beast" operating through the civil power.

5: WHAT WARNING DOES GOD GIVE AGAINST THE PAPAL MARK?

Revelation 14:9-10: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

How could we expect God to remain silent on such an issue as changing the only commandment that gives His sign and seal as Creator and Redeemer of the world? But God's wrath could not justly be visited upon men unless they had warning.

6: WHAT CHOICE MUST WE MAKE?

When we squarely face this issue, we choose between God and man. Our worship is "in vain" if we

choose the "commandments of men" in place of the commandments of God (*Mark 7:7*). Each of us will be responsible for the light he has (*John 9:41*).

Monsignor Segur (Catholic) writes:

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

Thomas Enright, CSSR (Catholic), was quoted in the *American Sentinel*:

"The Bible says, Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. 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 reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church" (*American Sentinel* N. Y., June 1, 1893, p. 173).

As Elijah would say, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (*1 Kings 18:21*). Surely this question of allegiance to God is one that demands the attention of every judgment-bound soul!

7: HOW ARE GOD'S OBEDIENT CHILDREN IDENTIFIED?

1. They carry these messages of warning to the ends of the earth (*Revelation 14:6-10*).

2. They keep all the commandments of God, and they have the true "faith of Jesus."

Revelation 14:12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

3. As God's servants they are sealed.

*Revelation 7:1-3: "After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (*Romans 6:16*).*

4. Satan will make war with them.

Revelation 12:17: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

5. They will be looking for the second coming of Christ.

Revelation 14:14-15: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to

Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe" (Isaiah 25:9).

The great issue discussed in this lesson will soon involve the whole world. Men will try to save themselves from the evils that overwhelm them by enforcing the papal rest day in order that proper attention may be given to religion. Those who refuse the papal mark and choose God's sign will be persecuted, even as Jesus was.

On the side of the commandment keepers will be God and His angels. Satan will lead the world to persecute them. But Christ will come again in power and majesty, and gather unto Himself those who "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." God's Sabbath is His sign, and it becomes a testing truth in these closing days of earth's history.

As God's children hold fast to the Sabbath of "the commandments of God," they also cling to Jesus, the Man of Calvary. So it shall be, dear friend. The mark of the beast will soon be enforced by law. No one will be marked until it is enforced by law. Please get this point clear. There is only one way to avoid the mark. Said the prophet:

Ezekiel 20:20: "Hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."

In other words, begin to observe the true seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible, and there can be no mark of the beast in your life. Let me ask a question: Is there room for the mark of apostasy when the seal of God is in the life? of course not. So you see, the way to prevent disaster is to prepare your heart to seek God and obey Him. I know you will make the right decision.