

DISCOVER PROPHECY



The Mark of the Beast

19

A Solemn Appeal

One of the most solemn and serious appeals ever written in scripture is found in Revelation. This warning against worshiping the beast and receiving his mark is a most urgent warning. The world will be forced by the beast to worship it and its image. If the people don't, a great decree of death will be installed. "And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed" Revelation 13:15.

Just the same, God says that those who do give in and worship the beast or receive his image will be eternally lost. "And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of his anger'" Revelation 14:9,10.

If God gives so strong an appeal not to receive the mark of the beast and if the devil will do all in his power to enforce the world to receive it, it would be crucial to our salvation to understand and know what it is. Together we will identify the beast and his mark and learn how we can avoid receiving it or worshiping the beast.

A Matter Of Worship

The issue in Revelation chapter 13 and 14 can be best summarized with the one word "worship." Twice in verse 4, then in verses 8, 12 and 15 the word worship is mentioned in chapter 13. Then in verses 7, 9 and 11 of chapter 14, worship is mentioned again. With it being mentioned so many times, it is clearly the theme of the chapters. If we were to summarize it, the two chapters are calling us to not worship the dreadful beast. If we worship the beast, we essentially are worshiping the devil or Satan. God is instead calling us to worship Himself.

Four Kingdoms

Before we can move into the nature of the beast's mark, we must discover the actual identity of the beast. "And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw

a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority." Revelation 13:1,2

Here in Revelation we find a gruesome description of the beast. However, we find that Daniel also explains the nature of this beast. As this beast in Revelation has the characteristics of four different animals (or beasts), Daniel has each one mentioned. "And four great beasts were coming up out from the sea, different from one another" Daniel 7:3.

The first beast that Daniel saw in vision was the lion. "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle" Daniel 7:4. Next Daniel saw the bear. "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth" Daniel 7:5. After the bear came yet another beast. The third beast was like a leopard. "After this, I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it" Daniel 7:6. Finally, one that could not be described; unlike any on earth came along. "...and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth" Daniel 7:7.

Each of these beasts represents a different kingdom or power, much like those described in Daniel chapter two. It is important to remember that in Bible prophecy a beast represents a kingdom or political power. "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth" Daniel 7:17. The first was the Babylonian empire (see Countdown to Eternity and The Beast of Revelation 13 sermons), the second was the empire that conquered Babylon, the Medo-Persian empire. After it came the kingdoms of Greece and Rome.

Rome was the kingdom that was described as a dragon or dreadful beast. It was the iron monarchy of Rome that had the iron teeth that crushed kingdoms.

Identity Of The Beast

There are several different clues that help us to identify the beast. Using the Biblical characteristics and understanding history, here are just six:

- 1 *A Roman Power*: “And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority” Revelation 13:2. According to the Bible, Rome (the dragon) would give the authority to this power to rule. Papal Rome is this power or beast. “The transfer of the emperor’s residence to Constantinople was a sad blow to the prestige of Rome, and at the time one might have predicted her speedy decline. But development of the Church and the growing authority of the Bishop of Rome, or the pope, gave her a new lease on life, and made her again the capital - this time the religious capital - of the civilized world.” Abbot’s Roman History, page 236.
- 2 *A Worldwide Religious Power*: “And all who dwell on the earth will worship him” Revelation 13:7,8. The beast will not only be a political power, but a religious power. “Under him was very nearly made good the papal claim that all earthly sovereigns were merely vassals of the Roman pontiff. Almost all the kings and princes of Europe swore fealty to him as their overlord. Rome was once more the mistress of the world.” Myer’s General History, page 455.
- 3 *A Blasphemous Power*: “And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies...And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle...” Revelation 13:5,6. To blaspheme God is to claim the prerogatives of God; a man putting Himself in the place of God. “Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come [the second coming] unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4. Pope Leo XIII said of himself and other popes in the Ecclesiastical Letters of Leo XIII on page 304, “We hold upon the earth the place of God almighty.” The Bible however says, “For there is One God, and One mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” 1 Timothy 2:5.
- 4 *It Would Reign 1260 Years*: “And authority to act for forty-two months was given to him” Revelation 13:7. Forty two months equals 1260 days, with each day for a year (Ezekiel 4:6). That would be

1260 years that the beast power would dominate. At the end of the 1260 years, it would receive a deadly wound. “And I saw one of his heads as if it has been slain, and his fatal wound was healed” Revelation 13:3. The Papal system was dominant in political-religious power from 538 to 1798. “Vigilius...ascended the papal chair (538 AD) under the military protection of Belisarius.” History of the Christian Church, Volume 3, page 327. The legally recognized supremacy of the pope began in 538 AD when there went into effect a decree of Emperor Justinian, making the bishop of Rome head over all the churches, the definer of doctrine and corrector of heretics. “In 1798 he [Berthier]...made his entrance into Rome, abolished the papal government and established a secular one.” The Encyclopedia Americana, 1941 edition. “Berthier entered Rome on the tenth of February, 1798, and proclaimed a republic...”

- 5 *Would Be Healed*: “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed” Revelation 13:3. Sometime after its wound (1798) it would again regain its strength. “The Roman question tonight was a thing of the past and the Vatican was at peace with Italy...In affixing the autographs to the memorable document healing the wound...extreme cordiality was displayed on both sides.” San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 11, 1929.
- 6 *End time Worldwide Prominence*: “And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast” Revelation 13:3. The papacy again would regain its worldwide prominence. The papacy again has regained this power and ability!

The Mark Of The Beast

Now that we have the beast clarified, it will be easier to identify the beast’s mark. Remember that the mark of the beast is an issue of worship. Showing one’s allegiance and homage to the beast rather than to God. It would be something related to worshiping the beast rather than worshiping God. Therefore, the mark of the beast must be a sign of the Roman church’s authority. So the question is, “Does the papal system have anything that they claim to be their mark of authority?”

“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, October 28, 1895, from C. F. Thomas, Chancellor

of cardinal Gibbons.

“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. September 1, 1923.

The Catholic Church is open and honest in its claim of changing the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday and claim that her doing so is her mark of authority. The Catholic Church has attempted to change the law of God. “The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ.” Decretal De Translat. Espiscop. Cap. The Bible says that this power would seek to do so; that the Catholic Church would, “...think to change times and laws” Daniel 7:25.

If then the issue in Revelation 13 and 14 is worship, if God is calling you to worship him, and if the devil is using this system to follow him by enacting its own day of worship, then we are choosing between God and the beast. Whom are we to worship, the beast or God. The beast is clear as to what his mark of authority is.

Dies Domini

In July of 1998, the Vatican released a letter from the pope, John Paul II, and was released in just about every language to every nation via churches, newsletters, newspapers, magazines and internet. The title of the letter was Dies Domini, which in Latin means, “Day of the Lord” or “Lord’s day.”

This letter, over 34 pages long when printed in a small font, speaks exclusively on the subject of the Lord’s Day and Sabbath. In this letter John Paul says a great deal on the history and future of this doctrine.

In the letter John Paul states that the sacredness of the Sabbath was changed by the church in honor of the resurrection. Because Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, they transferred the holy day to Sunday. “This is why Christians...felt that they had the authority to transfer the meaning of the Sabbath to the day of the Resurrection” Section 63.

Revelation says that the mark of the beast would be at the heart of worship in the last days. Notice how the sacredness of Sunday is key to the church. “Significantly, the catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that ‘the Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and His Eucharist is at the heart of the church’s life” Section 32.

At the heart of the church’s life is the sacredness of Sunday. The mark. But does the church have plans to use the force of Sunday sacredness in the future? Do

they have plans for Sunday sacredness? “The Lord’s day has structured the history of the Church through two thousand years: how could we think that it will not continue to shape her future?” Section 30. The Church does plan on seeing more activity in the sacredness of Sunday in the future.

I will share with you more in the future how they are planning to do this. You will be amazed at what else this important document says.

There is no doubt that Sunday sacredness, a sign of the church’s authority, has duped most of mankind into following and worshiping as she has stated rather than God’s method of worship. To worship on Sunday is to worship as the church (the beast) has structured. The populous worships on Sunday in honor of the Catholic Church and tradition rather than the authority of God’s word. Many people today honor Sunday as the Sabbath but do so based on the authority of the church, not scripture and the authority of God. So when people worship on Sunday, they are paying homage to the church, not God.

Worship God

Instead, God is calling us to worship Him. Here in Revelation 14 we see God’s call to true worship. “And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” Revelation 14:6,7.

God is calling us to worship Him. How? How are we to worship Him? Note what it says again. Right here in this verse, between the verses of warning against worshiping the beast, God clearly shares with us how to worship Him. “...Worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of water.” God is calling us to worship Him as creator.

Amazingly, the book of Revelation uses a great deal of symbolism from the Old Testament, but rarely does it actually quote from the Old Testament. Right here in this passage on worship is a quote from the Old Testament. A quote using the most words from the Old Testament found in the book of Revelation. What is God saying in worship? How are we to worship Him? The verse is a quote from Exodus 20:8-11. Note the similarity:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you

shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” There you have it. How shall we worship God, as he has stated in His commandment, to keep the Sabbath day.

Amazing isn't it? The beast is very open as to what its mark of authority is. It has the whole world worshiping in honor of its authority. Yet God says that He would rather have people worship Him as He has instructed. The choice is depicted in God's word, worship the beast and his image or worship God and His Sabbath.

Not A Literal Mark

The mark is not a literal mark that you find on your forehead or upon your hand, but is symbolic of something else. “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God” Revelation 14:9,10.

Here it says that one would receive the mark on the forehead or upon the hand, but you must remember that Revelation is symbolic.

In Deuteronomy, God is talking again about the ten commandments. You'll find them listed again in chapter five. After reminding them again of the ten commandments, God shares with them the importance of His law and summarizes it by love and devotion to Him. “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart....And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead” Deuteronomy 6:5-8.

God's law and will is so precious, so dear to the heart that God says that it is like writing them out and putting them upon your hand and forehead. Did God want all of the Israelites to write out the commandments and put them on their hands and foreheads? No, it was symbolic of their devotion to God.

The hand represents our actions, the forehead represents the mentality. God wants us to follow him in our thoughts and actions. God's people will follow His will in their thoughts and in their actions!

In contrast, the people in the last days have something very separate on their foreheads and hands. There is no physical mark, but a representation of their actions and

thoughts. Have you accepted God's truth and are you following it or are you deceived by the beast's teachings and carrying it out in your actions?

The mark is a decision to accept the unbiblical teaching of truth. The mark of the beast is accepting in either thought or action the Catholic Lord's day.

As God's law was to be placed on the people's head and hand, God instead wants you to follow His truth in your thoughts and keep His Sabbath day in your actions.

Has Anyone Received The Mark?

Has anyone then received the mark of the beast? “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead, and he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark” Revelation 13:16,17.

According to the Bible, people will be forced to receive the mark. Though the Catholic Church has its identity of authority. Though Sunday sacredness is prevalent today, the Bible says that the mark doesn't begin until people are forced to receive it. At present, as far as I know, people aren't being forced to receive the mark of the Beast. In time, we will. But presently we are not. Therefore no one has of yet received the mark of the beast. That will be soon enough!

Worshippers Of God

As there will be people who worship and follow after the beast, there will be a people that will worship God. “Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus” Revelation 14:12. As the people who receive the mark are those who follow after the beast's mark, Sunday sacredness, God will have a people who keep the commandments. All ten of them!

This Sabbath commandment will mean a great deal to them. “And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them” Ezekiel 20:12. As Sunday sacredness is a sign of loyalty to the beast, the Sabbath is a sign between us and God and our loyalty to Him.

The difference between those who worship the beast and those who worship God are those who follow God and His word over traditions of men.

I like the way this Catholic friend says it: “Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the

Church ever did happened in the first century. The holy day, Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday...not from any directions noted in scripture but from the church's sense of its own power. People who think that the scriptures should be the sole authority, should logically become Seventh-day Adventist, and keep Saturday holy." Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel, May 21, 1995.

I would agree with him. If you wish to make the Bible your sole source of authority, then you would want to keep the Bible Sabbath. If however, you want to follow tradition and the beast, you can do as you wish, in contrast to God's word.

God desires to put His law into the hearts of His people. "I will put My laws into their minds, and will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people" Hebrews 8:10. As the Israelites did in old, God desires that His law, including the Sabbath be valued by His people. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples" Isaiah 8:16.