

receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Revelation 13:16).

Notice, the mark of the beast can be received in the right hand *or* forehead. This is not so with the seal of God. It can only be received in the forehead. This is because the forehead signifies what one truly believes with the mind, whereas the hand simply signifies what we do, our actions, regardless of what we believe (see Ecclesiastes 9:10). This prophecy predicts that there will be many who do not believe in Sunday observance, but will go along with it, refraining from work with their hands due to economic pressure. They receive the mark in the hand rather than in the forehead.

Who will enforce these economic sanctions against those who refuse the mark? Prophecy says the United States of America will. The U.S. is presently spearheading economic sanctions against various nations who are not compliant with United Nations policies. The stage is set. Even now millions of people have already experienced the pressure of economic boycott.

Could such pressure actually cause people, even non-Christian nations, to refrain from business on Sunday? Bible prophecy predicts it, and there are even present-day situations that prove it. For example, in the mid 1990’s, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with over 140 million Muslims, closed for business on Sunday. Why did they do this, when the Muslim holy day is Friday and most Muslims have no relish for western Christianity? The motivation behind this recent change has to do with economics, not religion. While Pakistan does not view Sunday as a holy day (only 2 percent of the country is Christian), due to the need to keep up economically with the rest of the world, they must stay open for business on Friday and close for business on Sunday.

The crisis is just before us. And while the issue will be worship, the bottom line for most people will be economics. From food, shelter and clothing to the luxuries of life, the test will come to all: will we obey man or God? That brings us to the number 666.

666—Man’s Number

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three-score and six” (Revelation 13:18).

We are told to count or calculate this number. Six hundred and sixty-six is the calculated total sum of the Roman numerical value of the title, “Vicarius Filii Dei,” the official title of the Pope, the man at the head of this power. (V=5; I=1; C=100; A=0; R=0; I=1; U=5; S=0; F=0; I=1; L=50; I=1; D=500; E=0; I=1).

This makes sense, since the power brought to view here is the papal power. Yet there is a deeper meaning to 666.

Six is the number of man because we, mankind, were created on the sixth day. God’s number is seven, which represents perfection and completeness (see Genesis 2:1-3). Six falls short of seven as the papal system falls short of the gospel. The religious system of Rome is represented by three sixes because it is man’s counterfeit to the completed and perfect work of God. Instead of pointing us to the three powers of heaven, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are directed to the beast, the dragon and the false prophet (see Revelation 16:13). The bottom line is:

6 = Man’s authority (see Acts 5:29).

6 = Man’s traditions (see Matthew 15: 3).

6 = Man’s commandments (see Mark 7:7).

Sunday, therefore, becomes the mark representing the exaltation of man above God. It is the symbol of man’s power to overrule God’s law. It is the sign that we take man’s word in the place of God’s Word, man’s power instead of the power of the gospel.

Papal Rome declares, “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 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” (Father Enright, C.S.S.R. of the Redemptoral College, Kansas City, Mo., *History of the Sabbath*, p. 802).

Will we remember the Sabbath as a sign of God’s completed work, His power, and His salvation? Or will we bow in reverent obedience to the commands of men? If we are to trust in the power of God and not in the power of man for salvation, there is only one logical thing to do. In the words of our Catholic friends:

“Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change the Church ever did happened in the first century. The holy day, the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday . . . not from any directions noted in the Scriptures, but from the Church’s sense of its own power. . . . People who think that the Scripture should be the sole authority, should logically become 7th Day Adventists, and keep Saturday holy” (*Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel*, May 21, 1995).

Summary

The Bible places an important emphasis upon our understanding and worship of God. “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). When we know God, we will choose to serve Him and worship Him according to His Word, because it is His Word and that Word alone that gives us life. Jesus is the Word. He is our salvation, our wisdom and righteousness. To worship Him is the only option for those who see this wonderful truth of the gospel. When should we do it? On what day? Whatever day He commands, whatever day He wishes, whatever day He, in His Word, calls us to remember to worship Him on. Because in the end, the power to worship Him is in His Word, not in man’s word. In the final analysis, we can only keep holy that day which God Himself has made holy. To remember the Sabbath is to remember that we are powerless to save and powerless to make holy. To remember that fact is to remember the gospel. Let the Sabbath of the Lord be to you a continual reminder of Him whom you worship and serve. Amen.

STUDY 11 OF 13

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GOD’S LAST MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

11

What is the mark of the beast? Is it a monster computer system hidden away somewhere in Europe? Or a microscopic chip to be imbedded under the skin? To millions of people the mark of the beast is something obscure and mysterious. If you were to take a random survey about this dreaded mark, most people would probably express fear of receiving it and yet not really understand exactly what *it* is.

The last book of the Bible has not given the prophetic warning of the mark of the beast in order that we would be afraid to receive something we know little about. In love and compassion, God opens the future of this world and what is going to take place in regard to the enforcement of this mark that we might not be deceived. God does not want any to perish, but desires all to be saved (see 2 Peter 3:9). Listen to His solemn call:

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘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: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name’ (Revelation 14:9-11).

In a previous study we learned that a beast in Bible prophecy is symbolic, representing an earthly kingdom or power (see Daniel 7:17, 23). This biblical truth uncovers an important clue to the mark of the beast, namely, that it is the mark of an earthly kingdom. But what kingdom? We also learned that, strictly from a historical perspective, the first earthly kingdom brought to view in Revelation 13 is Papal Rome.

And in our last study we learned that the second beast is the United States of America, which is identified as having the military might to enforce economic boycott upon the world. So far this prophecy is right on target. The United States is now the world’s sole superpower and is also more closely allied to Papal Rome, politically, than ever before.

Revelation also tells us that the first beast or kingdom in chapter 13 receives

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 14 Study Guides

As a beast in prophecy represents any earthly kingdom or power, the mark of the beast would constitute the distinguishing feature of such a power.

its power, seat and authority from the dragon (see Revelation 13:2). And the lamblike beast speaks like a dragon (see Revelation 13:11). Both of these powers are identified with the dragon, who makes “war with the remnant,” who “keep the commandments of God” (Revelation 12:17; Revelation 14:12). The mark of the beast, therefore, is in direct opposition to the commandments of God. What does all this mean? Simply put, the mark of the beast is a worship issue—worship of the first beast, the Papacy, versus the worship of God by those who keep His commandments.

The Seal of God

Every Christian in the world today worships God on one of two days, either Sunday or Saturday. Those who keep Saturday believe that the seventh-day Sabbath was given, not just to the Jewish nation, but to mankind at the creation of the world. It has never been set aside or changed by God (see Mark 2:27; Genesis 2:2-3; Matthew 5:17-18). In the context of the gospel, the Sabbath is a “sign” that God alone saves us and makes us holy (see Ezekiel 20:12). It acts as a continual reminder of what God has done *for us without us*. This is why the Sabbath commandment is so important. It stands as a “sign” or “seal” of salvation (see Isaiah 56:1-6). (The words “sign” and “seal” are used interchangeably in the Bible. See Romans 4:11).

The Sabbath contains three characteristics of a seal:

1. Name: The Lord God
2. Title: The Creator
3. Domain: Heaven and Earth

These characteristics are found in the Sabbath commandment.

“The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exodus 20:10-11).

So the Sabbath is the Lord’s day and stands as a sign or seal of His salvation.

Notice now how the Bible declares that God’s people are to be sealed into the gospel truth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of *truth*, the *gospel* of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

So we find that God’s people are to be sealed with the seal of God. This seal is directly connected with the word of truth, the gospel of salvation and the Sabbath, the fourth commandment of God’s law. This is because the Sabbath is a sign of the gospel, of resting in God for salvation (see Hebrews 4:1-10). Those who receive the mark of the beast have “no rest day nor night” (Revelation 14:11).

The Mark of the Beast

The mark of the beast is in conflict with God’s seal. Prophecy predicted that the little horn power of Daniel 7 would “think to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25). It is the fulfillment of this change by the Papacy that has educated millions of people into a counterfeit gospel. How? The Papacy views their change of the Sabbath as a sign that they have authority to change God’s Word and the way of salvation. Millions of people, including almost every Protestant church in

the world, are seconding that claim by observing Sunday in the place of the Bible Sabbath.

Yes, there are some plausible reasons for the worship of God on Sunday. It was the day Jesus rose from the grave; Christians have kept Sunday for many centuries and, therefore, it is a tradition; the disciples met together on that day to break bread and study the Scriptures. However, because none of these reasons are based on a direct command of God, Protestant Christians are forced to admit that while Sunday is *their* Sabbath, it is not the Bible Sabbath.

For a billion Catholics, however, the reason for keeping Sunday instead of the Bible Sabbath is more specific. The following quotations are taken from Catholic catechisms on church doctrine:

“**Question**—Have you any other way of proving that the church (Roman Catholic) has power to institute festivals of precept?

“**Answer**—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 not scriptural authority” (*A Doctrinal Catechism*, by Stephen Deenan, p. 174).

“**Question**—Which is the Sabbath day?

“**Answer**—Saturday is the Sabbath day.

“**Question**—Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

“**Answer**—We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday” (Peter Geiermann, *The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 50, 1977).

The Papacy has changed God’s appointed time of worship. It has put the first day of the week, Sunday, in the place of God’s seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday.

The Papacy claims to have the authority and power to do this:

The Papacy says, “The authority of the church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the Scriptures, because the church had changed...the Sabbath to Sunday, not by command of Christ, but by its own authority” (*Canon and Tradition*, p. 263).

The observance of Sunday, by the nature of this issue and by the direct confession of the Papacy, becomes the sign of man’s allegiance to tradition, rather than to the gospel, and of his trust in man’s authority rather than in God.

As a beast in prophecy represents any earthly kingdom or power, the mark of the beast would constitute the distinguishing feature of such a power. What is the distinguishing mark of the papal power? Could it be the substitution of Sunday observance in the place of God’s seventh-day Sabbath?

Rome says: “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” (*The Faith of Our Fathers*, Gardinal Gibbons, p. 14).

Again, Rome says of the change of worship from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, “It’s the *mark* of our authority to overrule God’s law” (Father Enright C.S.S.R. of the Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Mo., *History of the Sabbath*, p. 802).

Incredible! Prophecy predicts what the Catholic Church admits, leaving each of us without a doubt as to what constitutes the mark of the beast. Bible prophecy alongside authoritative Catholic statements designates that the distinguishing

mark of Roman Catholic Christianity is the worship of God on Sunday in place of the worship of God on the Bible Sabbath.

Religious Liberty Threatened

Does this mean that people who go to church on Sunday presently have the mark of the beast? No, it does not! The mark of the beast does not become a testing issue until all of the predictions of the prophecy are in place. No one will receive the mark of the beast until religious legislation is passed enforcing Sunday laws upon the masses under pain of economic boycott and death:

“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 causeth 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” (Revelation 13:15-17).

Is Papal Rome seeking to secure governmental enforcement of Sunday-keeping, the mark of its authority to overrule God’s law? First of all, we should consider that Rome calls all its church members to Sunday observance. Anyone who violates this, the pope has said, should be “punished as a heretic” (*Detroit News*, July 7, 1998). Beyond that, the Papacy calls its flock to seek civil enforcement of its dogmas, especially in regard to Sunday:

“The civil authorities should be urged to cooperate with the church in maintaining and strengthening this public worship of God, and to support with their own authority the regulations set down by the church’s pastor. For it is only in this way that the faithful will understand why it is Sunday and not the Sabbath-day that we keep holy” (*The Roman Catechism*, 1985).

More recently the Bishop of Rome issued an apostolic letter to his one-billion-member church reminding them to “naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy” (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, statement 67, paragraph 2).

The consequence of such natural striving in America would mean the destruction of the wall of separation that has stood between church and state, a wall that has made this country an example of religious freedom in the world.

The Papacy is strongly opposed to America’s principle of church-state separation. In a visit to Poland after the fall of Communism, the Bishop of Rome “denounced,” among other things, “the separation of church and state” (*Time*, June 17, 1991).

Pope Leo once stated, “All Catholics should do all in their power to cause the constitutions of states and legislation to be modeled on the principles of the true church, and all Catholic writers and journalists should never lose sight, for an instant, of the view of the above prescription” (*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, 1914 ed., p. 236).

The Forehead or the Hand

Following the above prescription will eventually lead to the direct fulfillment of the prophetic predictions found in the last book of the Bible:

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to