



## THE ANTICHRIST AND THE MARK OF THE BEAST

In the early days of Christianity the grossest errors and darkest superstitions began to creep into the church, which prompted the apostles to give numerous warnings concerning false teachings, false teachers, and apostasy. The Apostle Paul warned the young preacher Timothy that "time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (1 Timothy 4:3, 4) He later explained that those who would not accept "sound doctrine" but rather turn "from the truth" were thereby departing "from the faith" and "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (2 Timothy 4:1-3) This trend to follow these false teachers became extremely prevalent, even in the light of such counsel as the following. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:28-30)

This widespread apostasy caused the Apostle John to declare: "ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." Where did these "antichrists" come from? "They went out from us," said the apostle, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (1 John 2:18, 19)

Because of this rise of many antichrists many began to believe that the coming of Jesus was imminent. Therefore, Paul wrote to the church that they "be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ 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; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:2-4) This antichrist power is the one with which every one of us living in these last days will have to contend and oppose if we are to meet Jesus in peace.

The word antichrist is a compound of two Greek words, "anti" and "christos". The word anti has a dual meaning in Greek and can mean either "against" or "in the place of." This word is found 20 times in the New Testament, 15 of which it is translated "in the place of." Christos is the word from which we get the English word "Christ." Thus, we find that the

Anti-Christ is a power that professes to stand in the *place* of Christ, yet works *against* Him. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) This power has Christian names and forms, and even claims to be Christ's only true church; but in reality it works against Christ and is Satan's master counterfeit. It claims to be God on earth and demands all the world pay homage to it (Revelation 13:3, 8) under the penalty of boycott and eventual death (Revelation 13:15-17).

The identity of this power is so intricately detailed in the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation that none need be confused or uncertain as to who this power is, when it is to arise, how long it is to rule, what it will do, and what will eventually become of it. One of the most detailed descriptions of this power is given in Revelation chapter thirteen, which opens with a composite beast arising out of the sea. In Bible prophecy we find a beast is a symbol of kings or kingdoms (Daniel 7:17, 23) and the sea, or water, is representative of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Revelation 17:15) Thus, what we have before us here a power that would arise out of the multitudes and nations of the world.

This beast of Revelation is identical with the "little horn" of Daniel chapter seven. In this prophecy Daniel is shown four beasts, which represent the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. After Rome falls and is divided among the ten kingdoms, represented by the 10 horns, another power, a little horn, is to arise and destroy three of these ten and begin to war against God's people. (Daniel 7:17-25) Therefore, what we have presented by this beast is a power that would arise to a place of prominence shortly after the fall of Rome and begin immediately to persecute those Christians who would not submit to her decrees.

To further substantiate that this beast and the little horn are identical we need only to draw a parallel between the two.

1. They are both a blasphemous power. (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:5-6)
2. They both make war with the saints. (Daniel 7:21, Revelation 13:7)
3. They both have a mouth speaking great things. (Daniel 7:8, 20; Revelation 13:5)
4. They were to arise about the time of the fall of Rome. (Daniel 7:23, 24; Revelation 13:2)
5. They both were to reign supreme for 1260 years. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5)
6. At the end of this time the saints were to be delivered from persecution and the power was to be led into captivity. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:10)

Since Daniel seven and Revelation thirteen both expose powers that arise at the same time, occupy the same territory, reveal the same character, perform the same function, endure for the same length of time, and meet the same fate, they must of necessity be the same identical power. It is also interesting to note that the animals which make up this composite beast of Revelation thirteen are the same as those seen by Daniel in chapter seven, the only difference is they are given in reverse order. This difference is due to the fact that Daniel was looking forward, whereas John would be looking back in time.

In Revelation 13:2, John informs us that this power is to receive "his power, and his seat, and great authority" from the dragon. Revelation 12:9 readily reveals that the dragon primarily refers to "the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." However, in a secondary sense it applies to Rome; which was the power through which Satan conducted his warfare against Christ and His church. So here we find that this power was to receive "his power, and his seat (literally throne), and great authority" primarily from Satan and secondarily from the Roman Empire.

Not only was this blasphemous, persecuting power to arise about the time of the fall of Rome, but it was to actually ascend the throne of the Caesars, receive its power and

authority from Rome, and eventually rise to a place of world-wide prominence; for "all the world wondered after the beast." (Revelation 13:3)

The most frightening statement in this entire chapter however, is found in the fourth verse where it is declared that those who submit to the decrees and teaching of this power are thereby worshiping the dragon, or Satan. This is why God has given us such a strong warning in Revelation 14:9-11 not to worship the beast or receive its "mark." This is the most fearsome warning found in the Word of God, and one of the last.

"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 for ever 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)

There are at least seventeen different distinguishing points that clearly identify this apostate power.

1. It is a power that was to arise during the time of the kingdoms which immediately followed Rome. (Daniel 7:24)
2. It was to be a "diverse", or different, power than any of the previous kingdoms. That is to say it was to be a religious power as well as a political one. (Daniel 7:24)
3. It was to ascend the throne of the Caesars. (Revelation 13:2)
4. It was to receive its power and authority from Rome. (Revelation 13:2)
5. This power was to destroy three kingdoms in its rise to supremacy. (Daniel 7:24)
6. It was to maintain its power for a period of 1260 years. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5)
7. During this 1260 years it was to make war against God's people. (Daniel 7:21)
8. At the end of the 1260 years this power was to receive a "deadly wound." (Revelation 13:3)
9. The "wound" would eventually be healed. (Revelation 13:3, 12)
10. It would speak "great things" against God. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5)
11. It was to be guilty of blasphemy. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5, 6)
12. It would think itself able to change God's time and His law. (Daniel 7:25)
13. The man at the head of this power exalts himself above God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
14. He actually claims to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
15. It would have the incriminating number 666, which is "the number of a man." (Revelation 13:18)
16. It would be an amazing world-wide power. (Revelation 13:3)
17. It shall deceive multitudes into accepting its "mark" and following her into perdition. (Revelation 13:16; 14:9-10)

Keeping these seventeen points in mind we must, out of necessity, look into the past, about the time of the fall of Rome, to discover what power emerged as the successor of ancient Rome and fulfills all of these points of identification.

History clearly reveals that "out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the giant form of the Roman church." (A.C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church*, p. 150) That this power was "diverse", or different, than any of the previous kingdoms is also most evident. "Out of the ruins of the Roman Empire there gradually arose a new order of states whose central point was the Papal See. Therefore, inevitably, there

resulted a position not only new, but very different from the former." (*The Church and Churches*, pp. 42, 43)

The third identifying point is that it was to ascend the throne of the Caesars. Again history shows "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 the 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*, p. 236)

"The Bishop of Rome, in the seat of Caesar, was now the greatest man in the West, and was soon forced to become the political as well as the spiritual head. To the Western World Rome was still the political capital hence the whole habit of mind, all ambition, pride, and sense of glory, and every social prejudice favored the evolution of the great city in the ecclesiastical capital. Civil as well as religious disputes were referred to the successor of Peter for settlement." (Alexander Clarence Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church*, p. 168)

"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 centuries." (*American Catholic Quarterly Review*, April 1911)

Point number four requires that it receive its power and authority from Rome. We find that in 537 Silverius was banished by the Roman general Belisarius and the deacon Vigilius elected Pope. "From this time on the popes, more and more involved in worldly events, no longer belong solely to the church; they are men of the state and then rulers of the state." (LeRoy Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 516) "Vigilius.... ascended the papal chair (538 AD) under the military protection of Belisarius." (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, p. 327)

Professor La Bianca, Professor of History at the University of Rome has attested: "To the succession of the Caesar's came the succession of the Pontiffs in Rome. When Constantine left Rome he gave his seat to the Pontiff."

In fulfillment of the fifth point we discover that as the Bishop of Rome assumed control of the western empire, he found strong opposition in the form of three arian powers. These three kingdoms, the Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths all held beliefs contrary to those of the established church and were therefore considered enemies of the church, which needed to be disposed of. The first of the three to fall was the Heruli in A.D. 496, then in 534 the Vandals were destroyed, and in 538 the Ostrogoths were dealt their fatal blow. For a year and nine months, this last opposing power was under a siege that brought about its total annihilation. "In the month of March, 538, dangers beginning to threaten them from other quarters, they raised the siege, burned their tents, and retired in tumult and confusion from the city, with numbers scarcely sufficient to preserve their existence as a nation or their identity as a people." (Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p.278)

After destroying the third kingdom, in 538, the church of Rome stood as the undisputed power in the western world and remained so for a period of 1260 years, bringing us to the year 1798, at which time it was to receive its "deadly wound." It was during this 1260 year period that it "made war with the saints and prevailed against them." (Daniel 7:21) Again we must but look into history to discover during this period (which will be forever known as the Dark Ages) God's people suffered the severest forms of persecution imaginable. Of this persecution Cardinal Bellarmine once proudly boasted, "almost an infinite number (of heretics) were either burned or otherwise put to death...that heretics were often burned by the church, may be proved by adducing a few from many examples." (Dowling, *The History*

*of Romanism, From the Earliest Corruptions of Christianity, p. 547)*

The highly renowned commentator, Albert Barnes, has recorded just a few of these "many examples" for us.

"The Inquisition, the persecutions of the Waldenses; the ravages of the Duke of Alva; the fires of Smithfield; the tortures of Goa - indeed, the whole history of the papacy may be appealed to as proof that this is applicable to that power. If anything could have 'worn out the saints of the most high' - could have cut them off from the earth so that evangelical religion would have become extinct, it would have been the persecutions of the papal power. In the year 1208, a crusade was proclaimed by Pope Innocent III against the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which a million of men perished. From the beginning of the order of the Jesuits, in the year 1540, to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred fifty thousand perished by the Inquisition in thirty years. In the Low Countries fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, burned, and buried alive, for the crime of heresy, within the space thirty-eight years from the edict of Charles V against the Protestants, to the peace of Chateau Cambreses in 1559. Eighteen thousand suffered by the hand of the executioner in the space of five years and a half during the administration of the Duke of Alva. Indeed, the slightest acquaintance with the history of the papacy will convince anyone that what is here said of 'making war with the saints' (verse 21), and 'wearing out the saints of the Most High' (verse 25), is strictly applicable to that power, and will accurately describe its history." (Barnes, *Notes: Critical, Illustrative, and Practical, on the Book of Daniel, p. 328*)

This attitude of the church is further revealed in a letter written by Pope Martin V to the king of Poland. In this letter we find the following instructions: "Know that the interest of the Holy See, and those of your crown, make it a duty to exterminate the Hussites...turn your forces against Bohemia; burn, massacre, make deserts everywhere, for nothing could be more agreeable to God, or more useful to the cause of kings, than the extermination of the Hussites." (Cormenin, *The Public and Private History of the Popes of Rome, Vol. II, pp. 116, 117*)

British Historian William Edward Lickey proclaims "That the church of Rome has shed more blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history." William Lickey, *The History of the Rise of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Vol. 2, p. 32.*

Truly this power "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them," yet at the end of 1260 years it was to receive a deadly wound; and in 1798, 1260 years after the destruction of the Ostrogoths in 538, the papacy did indeed receive a deadly wound when the French general, Berthier, marched into Rome and took the Pope, Pius VI, captive. "In 1798 he (Berthier)... made his entrance into Rome, abolished the papal government and established a secular one." (*The Encyclopedia Americana, 1941 edition*) Having been stripped of both his civil and ecclesiastical power, the captive pope died in exile at Valence in France, August 29, 1799. It appeared that with the death of the Pope the Papacy was dead. It appeared as if this great religious power was about to die, but the Word of God declared that the "deadly wound" would be "healed." This healing began March 14, 1800 when, with the permission of Napoleon, the College of Cardinals elected another pope.

After this election the church began to grow in strength, but only as a religious power, for its political power and prestige had been stripped from it. However, a most significant event took place on February 11, 1929 when Benito Mussolini and Cardinal Gasparri signed the Lateran Treaty in which temporal power was restored to the Church. It was also given

rulership of Vatican City, an area of some 108.7 acres in the city of Rome, making it a nation within a nation. When this treaty was signed, the United Press came out in America with the words, "The Wound Has Been Healed." Imagine that. The very language of the Revelation.

Points ten and eleven require that this power "speak great words against the most high" and "speak blasphemy against God" Himself. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:6)

For a biblical definition of blasphemy we need only look in Luke 5:20,21. Here we find Jesus saying, "thy sins are forgiven thee" to which the Pharisees declare that Jesus "speaketh blasphemies" for "Who can forgive sins, but God alone." Jesus was not guilty of blasphemy for He was indeed "God with us." (Matthew 1:23) But for a mortal man to claim this power is most certainly an act of blasphemy.

We have seen the church of Rome fits all of the other specifications of this prophecy, but does she claim to have the power to forgive sins? Indeed she does, as can be seen from some of her own publications. The book *Dignity and Duties of the Priest* (a book primarily for the use of the clergy and which has the special apostolic blessing of the pope upon it) contains such statements as these.

"The priest holds the place of the Saviour Himself, when, by saying 'Ego te Absolve', (I absolve thee) he absolves from sin. To pardon a single sin requires all of the omnipotence of God." (Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, p. 34)

"Were the Saviour to sit in one confessional booth and the priest in another, the Saviour would say to the penitent sinner, 'I absolve thee', both penitent sinners would go away equally absolved." (Ibid., p. 36.)

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* claims that "this judicial authority will even include the power to pardon sins" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, p. 265) and the position of the church is that "God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution.... The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it." (Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, p. 27) Pope Innocent III even proclaimed: "Indeed it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices the priests are so many gods." (Ibid., p. 36)

There can be no doubt that this power does claim to have the ability to forgive sins, but let us look again to the word of God for yet another definition of blasphemy. In John 10:33 we find that for a man to claim to be God is also an act of blasphemy. The question that now demands an answer is: "Does the church of Rome make such a claim for any of her leaders? As we have seen above she has declared that "the priests are so many gods", but the "great things" she speaks are even more blasphemous as her following declarations reveal.

"All the names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ... all the same names are applied to the Pope." (Robert Bellarmine, *On the Authority of the Counsels*, Vol. I, p. 266) To illustrate the absolute arrogance of such a statement consider just a few of the numerous names of our Lord. He is called Jesus (Saviour) [Matthew 1:21], Immanuel (God with us) [Matthew 1:23], The Mighty God [Isaiah 9:6], the Prince of Peace [Isaiah 9:6], the First and the Last, the Almighty [Revelation 1:8], the Author of Eternal Salvation (Hebrews 5:9), the King of kings and Lord of lords [1 Timothy 6:15], the Bread of Life [John 6:35], the Creator [Romans 1:25], the Great God [Titus 2:13], the Head of the body, the church [Colossians 1:18], the Image of the invisible God [Colossians 1:15], the Only Wise God [1 Timothy 1:17], the Resurrection and the Life [John 11:25], Saviour [Titus 2:13], and a multitude of other blessed and holy names.

Knowing that one holds such blasphemous beliefs as this it easy to understand why they

could brazenly boast that "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God." (Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, p. 26) A further example of these blasphemous claims can be found in the letters of Pope Leo XIII where we find the claim "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, p. 304) Finally we discover that not only does the Pope claim to be God on earth, but also declares he has this position in the heavenly kingdom as well. "The Pope is as it were God on earth sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plentitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom." Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, p. 26)

As for these claims of the Papacy and its Pope, I declare them all to be blasphemous, but more than this, I repudiate them as having originated in the abysmal depths of the devil's kingdom. However, I want it to be known that I am not condemning or criticizing anyone for their religious beliefs. It is the system that is evil, not the people who are caught up in it. God has many people within this apostate power and always has had. But His call to them today is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

The Roman Catholic Church has truly perverted the gospel of Christ by further teaching that salvation is dependant upon being in subjection to the Pope rather than to Jesus Christ. "There is only one holy and Catholic and apostolic church, outside of which there is no salvation for every creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." (Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctam*)

In addition to these, and many other Bible truths, the church of Rome has also "cast down the truth" of the complete and final sacrifice of the "Lamb of God" on the cross. The teaching that the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary was not sufficient; but that he must be offered up anew each day through some ordinance or sacrament, is to say the least, blasphemous, for "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Hebrews 9:28)

What glorious "good news"! Jesus has already paid the price for our sins, "for this he did once, when he offered up himself" and now He has "entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12) Therefore, you may rest assured that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

The twelfth identifying point is that this power will "think" it has the power "to change times and laws." Satan has always been at war with the law of God and those who seek to be obedient to that law, but how has he used the Catholic Church to accomplish his purpose. This becomes conspicuous by inquiring of the Church of Rome which is the second commandment, for her response is quite different from Exodus 20:4, 5 as can be observed from *Gierman's Catholic Catechism*.

"Question - Which is the second commandment?

Answer - The second commandment is: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.'" (Peter Geiermann, *The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 49)

The second commandment is a prohibition against making and bowing before graven images, but because of the abundance of idolatry found in the Catholic church they have taken it upon themselves to remove this commandment from the ten. Thus, all of the other commandments were moved up one (the third became the fourth, the fourth the third, etc.), and when they were finished there were only nine commandments. In order to solve this problem they simply took the tenth commandment and divided it into two; making the ninth

commandment "Do not covet your neighbor's wife" and the tenth "Do not covet your neighbor's goods".

Truly, this power has thought it has the authority to change, not only God's law, but God's time within that law. Notice this brazen declaration from their own publications. "The Pope has the power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ." (*Decretal De Translat. Episcop. Cap.*)

The fourth of the ten commandments reads: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11), but the church of Rome has sought to abolish this commandment and substitute in its place the day of pagan sun-worship.

Of this attempted change of the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week, Sunday, they haughtily boast: "Of course the Catholic church claims that the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her and the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (James Cardinal Gibbons, November 11, 1895)

This change from the Sabbath of the Lord to the day of the sun god was a slow process, but nevertheless it took place and to this day the Church of Rome points to this deed with pride as evidence of her power to even change a commandment of God, as can be seen by the following extracts from Catholic catechisms:

"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. 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (Peter Geiermann, *The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 50)

"Question - Have you any other way of proving that the church 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 no Scriptural authority." (Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, p. 174)

Again, these brazen statements can be found throughout their publications as the following clearly indicates.

*The Catholic Mirror*, the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, has openly declared that "the Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." (*The Catholic Mirror*, September 23, 1893)

Another official publication of Catholicism, *The Catholic Virginian*, brazenly boasts: "Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the seventh day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the church [Catholic] outside

the Bible." (*The Catholic Virginian*, October 3, 1947)

A Roman Catholic Priest in St. Louis, Missouri audaciously declared: "If you go to the Bible you find that the seventh day Sabbath was the original Sabbath, but there is one thing you must understand and that is that we Catholics take the stand that the Bible does not contain all truths necessary to salvation, but that tradition of the Fathers and acts taken by the church are of equal importance with the Bible. The early church Christians observed the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as the Sabbath. In the early day the early Christian fathers began advocating Sunday as the Sabbath in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Early church councils took certain actions changing to Sunday as the Sabbath. There is no text in the Bible that gives authority for this change. Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church in the 15th and 16th centuries, but they did not go back to the Bible Sabbath: they are still following the Catholic Church in the observance of Sunday." (Roger Holley, *Bible Lectures: The Mark of the Beast*, p. 12)

The following insensitive impeachments emanating from the Catholic Church are truly embarrassing and condemnatory for the Protestant churches who claim all of their teachings are based upon the Bible alone.

"Question - What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the Seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?

"Answer - If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jews. But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine, infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church... Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the tradition of the Catholic Church?" (Conway, *The Question Box*, pp. 254-255)

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." (Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers*, p.89)

"Sunday is founded not on Scripture, but on tradition, and is distinctly a Catholic institution. As there is no Scripture for the transfer of the day of rest from the last to the first day of the week, Protestants ought to keep their Sabbath on Saturday and thus leave Catholics in full possession of Sunday." (*The Catholic Record*, September 17, 1891)

"Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or another of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping of Sunday. Compromise is impossible." (*The Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893)

It light of all the biblical and historical facts the consequent conclusion of Catholicism can not be contended when they declare: "Dear Sir: Regarding the change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday, I wish to draw your attention to the facts: "That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath...We also say, that of all Protestants, the Seventh-day Adventists are the only group that reason correctly and are consistent with the teachings." (*Extension Magazine*, April 1, 1929)

Perhaps the most insolent allegation ever made came from Priest Enright, former President of Redemption College, a Catholic school located in Kansas City, Missouri who boastfully declared: "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. 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."

Can you see the monstrous religious counterfeit this reveals? There has never been anything like it in all the annals of time. This great religious power, which claims the authority of God on earth, reaches into the very heart of God's law and changes it to suit her own idolatrous practices. Daniel predicted the change and the church of Rome admits they did it. The question that remains is: "Whom do we obey?" The decision is up to each of us, individually. May your response be: "but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

We have already ascertained that points 13 and 14 are fulfilled by the papal power through such statements as: "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God." (Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, p. 26) "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." (*The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, p. 304) "The Pope is as it were God on earth sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plentitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom." (Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Vol. VI, p. 26)

Although the Lord has made the identity of this antichrist power most clear, He has still given us still another identifying mark in the last verse of Revelation thirteen. "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 threescore and six." (Revelation 13:18) Here we find that it has a number of 666, and that it is the number of a "man," not the number of a computer, a bar code, or any of the other wild and fanciful theories being circulated today. It is a man's number, but does this number apply to a man within the Roman Catholic church? As in each of the previous specifications, we shall once again let the church of Rome answer for itself with the following quotation from one of its official papers:

"Question - Is it true that the words of the Apocalypse in the 13th Chapter 18th verse refer to the Pope?

"Answer -The words referred to are these 'Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man; and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six.' The title of the Pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei. This is inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals (printed large) and add them together, they come to 666:

V I C ar I V s f I L I I D e I  
5 1 100 1 5 1 50 1 1 500 1 = 666

Add these together and the results are 666." (*Our Sunday Visitor*, Nov. 1, 1914)

Why they would ever have let such an amazing admission as this slip into their publications is most difficult to understand, but with her own mouth the Church of Rome pleads guilty before the bar of the universe that she is the antichrist of Bible prophecy. We must keep in mind, however, that the number 666 is only one of 17 specifications which identify this power, and there is not anyone, anywhere able to find another power in all the earth, other than the Roman Catholic church which fills all 17 of these biblical points.

Identifying point number 16 is that this antichrist power would be an amazing world-wide power that would impact the entire planet for "all the world wondered after the beast." None could possibly doubt that this is true of the papacy in a magnitude far above what any religious, or political, power has ever experienced. "Which other visitor to the United States

has had 16,000 journalists assigned to cover their visit?" (Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood*, p. 490) The bold caption on the cover of the May 8, 1979 *Esquire* magazine thundered "HOW THE POPE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD" and since that time the Pope has met with nearly every political leader in the world, including several of the U.S. presidents. The Vatican has established personal relationships with the governmental leaders of 91 different countries. It is also most interesting that he does not go to the Kremlin or the White House, but these world leaders go to him.

*Time Magazine* recorded in its February 24, 1992 issue that "one of the earliest goals as President, Reagan says, was to recognize the Vatican as a state and make them an ally." This endeavor met with tremendous success, with minimal protest from the citizens of this country, and today we have an ambassador from the United States sitting as a representative before the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican in Rome. But in addition to this the Vatican has an ambassador sitting in Washington D.C. as a representative of the Roman Catholic Church. Why is this not true of the Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or other churches? The answer is simple. "All the world wondered after the beast" and with its world membership of approximately one billion it is a power that causes many to want to "make them an ally." At the Pope's home, around the Vatican, are 120 diplomatic ambassadors sent to represent their governments before the Roman Catholic Church.

Mikhail Gorbachev admitted: "Now it can be said that everything which took place in Eastern Europe in recent years would have been impossible without the Pope's efforts and the enormous role, including the political role, which he played in the world arena. Pope John Paul II will play an enormous political role now that profound changes have occurred in European History." (*Toronto Star*, March 9, 1992)

Jesuit priest, and Vatican insider, Malachi Martin, has given the following very candid warning. "To endow his papacy with international profile and, as Pope, move around among world leaders and nations, vindicating a position for himself as a special leader among leaders, because of that competition he plans to emerge the victor." (Malachi Martin, *The Keys of This Blood*)

Dear reader, the things presented here are not new teachings, but ancient teachings of the Christian church that have been suppressed. For centuries God's people have presented these Bible truths, even at the cost of their lives. It has been estimated that before the Protestant Reformation as many as 150,000,000 were martyred for standing in opposition to this apostate power. In addition to those mentioned in the preceding pages the accounts of many others can be found in the renowned *Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe.

Many of the great Christians of previous centuries, including those of the Reformation, shared this biblical understanding of prophetic truth and identified the antichrist with the Roman Papacy. Among them were the Waldenses, Albigenses, Huguenots, Huss, Jerome, Wyclif, Luther, Calvin, Zwingle, Melancton, Osiander, Gill, the martyrs - Crammer, Tyndale, Latimer, Ridley, and a host of others.

John Calvin wrote in a letter to Charles V: "I deny that see (the pope) to be... the vicar of Christ who, in furiously persecuting the gospel, demonstrates by his conduct that he is antichrist... and I deny him to be the head of the church, who by his tyranny lacerates and dismembers the church after dissevering her from Christ, her true and only head." (*Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, Vol. 1, pp. 219, 220)

Ulrich Zwingle declared: "I know that in it (the Papacy) works the might and power of the Devil, that is, of the Antichrist. Yet I cannot approve their proclaiming the Word of God

solely because of their hatred against the Pope. I desire much more that the love of God would be their motive in resisting Antichrist." (*Hauptschriften*, Vol. 7, p. 135)

Andreas Osiander stated in 1524: "I proved to my listeners, solely from the Holy Scriptures, who this Antichrist is, simply by lining up all the texts referring to him, and did not need to give any additional comments on them... When Constantine moved out of Rome, the Antichrist moved in." (Moller, *Andreas Osiander*, pp. 13, 14)

Martin Luther agonized: "O' how much pain it has caused me, though I had the Scriptures on my side... that I should dare to make a stand alone against the pope, and hold him forth as antichrist. Twas so I fought with myself and with Satan, till Christ, by His own infallible word, fortified my heart against these doubts." (*Martyn*, pp. 372, 373)

Again, I want to emphasize, God has many people today that are a part of this corrupt, apostate organization; and many more who are following her cunningly devised fables and devilish doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1) without even realizing it. His call to them all is: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

Jesus said "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27. Can you hear Him calling you out of all error, superstition, and vain man-made tradition?

The final identifying point of the Antichrist is that this power will have a universal mark of its power and authority which will be enforced upon all mankind through boycott and eventually a death decree. There will be a union of church and state to enforce this mark, which stands in contrast to God's seal.

Once the Protestants join hands with the Catholics and Spiritualists and seek the power of the civil authority in enforcing their decrees, the world will then be plunged into the most dreadful campaign imaginable, for we read:

"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)

Now that we have verified the first 16 points there remains only to discover what this mark is. This is a most important issue with which every individual upon this earth should concern himself, for whether or not one receives it shall result in either eternal life or eternal damnation. As can be seen in Revelation 14:9-11, the most awesome punishment to be handed out by God will fall upon those who receive this mark.

"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 for ever 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)

Notice how the word of God immediately contrasts those who have the mark of the beast with another group who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:12) There is great significance to this contrast.

It should not be very hard to find what this mark is, for all we must do is try and discover if there is any teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that has been accepted by all people: Protestants, Catholics, and non-church members alike, and which can be considered a universal mark of acceptance by all people.

There are several teachings which have been handed down by the church of Rome which have been quite widely accepted around the world, such as the use of images in divine worship, or the change in the mode of baptism from immersion to sprinkling or pouring, as well as infant baptism, yet none of these can be considered as universal. But there is one thing that they have done that both Christians and non-Christians have accepted on a world-wide scale. That is the change of the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week, Sunday, and of this they haughtily boast:

"Of course the Catholic church claims that the change was her act. It could not have been otherwise as none in those days would have dreamed of doing anything in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical and religious without her and the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." (James Cardinal Gibbons, November 11, 1895) {Emphasis supplied}

The earliest known Sunday law was issued in A.D. 321 by Constantine, the emperor of Rome from A.D. 306-337, which contained the following.

"On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. (Given the 7th day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls each of them for the second time)." (Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, p. 380)

Before his professed conversion Constantine had been a sun-worshiper and even afterward had remained at heart a devotee of the sun. Of his religion the renowned historian, Edward Gibbon, has said:

"The devotion of Constantine was more peculiarly directed to the genius of the sun, the Apollo of Greek and Roman mythology; and he was pleased to be represented with the symbols of the god of light and poetry. The unerring shafts of that deity, the brightness of his eyes, his laurel wreath, immortal beauty, and elegant accomplishments, seem to point him out as the patron of a young hero. The altars of Apollo were crowned with the votive offerings of Constantine; and the credulous multitude were taught to believe that the emperor was permitted to behold with mortal eyes the visible majesty of their tutelary deity; and that, either waking or in a vision, he was blessed with the suspicious omens of a long and victorious reign. The sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine." (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, p. 291)

Even with the infiltration of pagans into the early church and with them the institution of the day of their sun god, we find from history that "Down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath (more precisely Bible Sabbath) was continued in the Christian church, but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing until it was wholly discontinued." (Lyman Coleman, Quoted in *Bible Readings for the Home*, p. 422)

Sozomen, a church historian of the fifth century informed us, "The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria." (Sozomen,

Ibid.)

As we can see, this change from the Sabbath of the Lord to the day of the sun god was a slow process, but nevertheless it took place. To this day the Church of Rome points to this with pride as evidence of its power to even change a commandment of God as we have seen in the preceding pages under point 12.

Prophecy informs us that this issue is to eventually carry with it a death decree for those who do not accept the mark and thereby pay homage to the beast. Yet those who do accept it willingly disobey our Creator who has commanded us, "Remember the Sabbath day."

In Revelation 7:2, 3 we have pictured yet another mark or "seal". This seal is to be received by a small group just before the second coming of our Lord and it is referred to as "the seal of the living God". But what is this seal? Let us first note that an official seal must contain three things:

- (1) The name of the law giver.
- (2) His official position, title, or right to rule.
- (3) His kingdom or the territory over which he rules.

For example: Name - George W. Bush; Position - President; Extent of Jurisdiction - United States of America.

Since the mark of the beast is received through disobedience to the commandments of God, through disregard of His Sabbath, we shall also turn to His commandments to see if they also contain "the seal of the living God." There we find that the seal of God is found in the very same command that the world in general has disregarded, the same commandment which the papacy has claimed to have changed and declared to be a "mark" of her power and authority. Let us look briefly at this commandment as found in Exodus 20:8-11.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God": (Here we have His name) "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made." (Here not only have we His name again but also His office, that of Creator). He is the Creator of, "Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." (Here is presented His territory, the whole vast universe).

Now we can plainly see the revolting religious counterfeit this reveals. There has never been anything like it in the history of the world. This great apostate religious power, which claims the authority, prerogative, and position of Almighty God, reaches down into the very heart of God's law and removes the true Sabbath, God's seal. Then with an audacity that can be matched nowhere in the universe, this power which God has identified as the antichrist, puts in place of the true Sabbath a false sabbath and says, "This is my mark. You will keep this day, and this is *the mark of my authority* in the earth."

As we have seen, the Lord has given such precise details identifying this antichrist power that there can be absolutely no doubt that it is the Roman Catholic church.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns in the near future He will find only two classes of people. Those who have "the seal of God" and those who have "the mark of the beast." Those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord and those who keep the Sunday of the Catholic church. Those who have the seal of God are given eternal life and are permitted to spend eternity with their God.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more,

neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:15-17)

And of those who have "the mark of the beast" we read: "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 for ever 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)

To which class an individual will belong at this time will be completely dependent upon the personal decision made by each person upon this earth and it must be made on an individual basis. Do we obey our Creator or the papacy? Jesus said, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9) Therefore, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) Yet Priest Enright, President of Redemption College, has boastfully declared: "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. 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."

Whom do we obey? The decision is up to us.