

**Seal of God
or
Mark of the Beast?**



THE IDENTITY OF THE BEAST POWER

Revelation 14:9-10 "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.' "

Those who receive the mark of the beast will be recipients of the wrath of God. They will not be on God's side in these final days—they will be part of an age-old rebellion against God. Therefore it is important for us to understand who the beast is and what comprises this "mark" of the beast, so that we can avoid deception, and survive spiritually in the end time. These are life and death issues, and God wants us to understand these issues.

Satan usually tries to accomplish his purposes through a seemingly angelic instrumentality. He appears in these last days as an "angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14), cloaking his evil in the guise of religiosity. He rarely appears as his hideous self. He works through people, systems, and powers to accomplish his agenda. It has always been this way. So remember that the beast power is merely being used by Satan. It is an instrument.

First we must go back, for the beast of Revelation 13 is but a culmination of evil and rebellion which started long ago.

Isaiah 14:12-14 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' "

Long ago, Lucifer had "I" problems. He wanted to be "like the Most High."

Ezekiel 28:12-15 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you." ' "

God created Lucifer perfect. He was a covering cherub—evidently a very high figure in the angelic world. But his own pride caused his fall, and "iniquity was found in him."

Verse 17 says that God cast Lucifer to the ground. He spread discord to the other angels--and the rebellion against God and His government was on.

Revelation 12:7-9 "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

There was war in heaven. The devil and his angels were cast out of heaven (verse 4 "a third"). The devil is described as a dragon in this chapter.

The rebellion--the great controversy--spread to earth. Remember the two major players in this controversy are Jesus Christ and Satan. Every generation has witnessed a new manifestation of that evil power in its untiring warfare against God and His law. The final form of the enemy opposition will be that of the beast of Revelation 13.

Revelation 13:1-7 "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation."

A composite beast rising up out of the sea, which represents "peoples, multitudes, languages and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). A beast in Bible prophecy represents a king or kingdom (Daniel 7:17).

We will come back to this beast in a moment. First let's review God's wonderful prediction of the rise and fall of earth's great empires, in Daniel 7. Daniel and Revelation are sister books—meant to be studied together. They are both apocalyptic in nature, and contain much symbolic language. Thankfully, the Lord has given us His explanation of His symbolic language! The Bible interprets itself.

Daniel 7:2-3 “Daniel spoke, saying, ‘I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.’ ”

Daniel saw the prophetic waters just as John did in Revelation. Again, the waters represent many people.

Daniel 7:17 "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth."

Daniel 7:23 "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." So, the first three beasts must also be earthly kingdoms as well.

Daniel 7:4 The first beast was like a lion--
Babylon--606 B.C. to 538 B.C.

Daniel 7:5 The second beast was like a bear--
Medo-Persia--538 B.C. to 331 B.C.

Daniel 7:6 The third beast was like a leopard--Greece--this is the kingdom of Alexander the Great. Upon his death, the kingdom was divided among his four leading generals--Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy (331 B.C. to 168 B.C.)

Daniel 7:7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

The fourth beast is "dreadful and terrible"--the iron monarchy of Rome, which conquered Greece. "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (verse 24). These ten horns correspond to the ten toes of Daniel 2, and to the ten horns of Revelation 13. Rome ruled from 168 B.C. to 476 A.D.

The ten horns represent ten invading tribes which attacked the Roman Empire from the north, dividing it into ten parts. These tribal conquerors were the Anglo-Saxons, Alemanni, Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Suevi, Lombards, Burgundians and Franks. Seven of these tribes are still in existence to this very day—having grown into the modern nations of Europe. But three of them disappeared from the stage of history.

Daniel 7:8 "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

A "little horn" comes up sometime after the time of the fourth world empire--Rome. It plucked up three of the other horns, or invading tribal kingdoms.

Let's look at the **nine characteristics of Daniel's Little Horn power:**

First, the little horn came up among the ten. This places it geographically in Western Europe. **Second**, it came up after the ten arose, because it came up "among them." Since the ten arose in 476 A.D., the little horn would have to begin its reign sometime after that date. **Third**, it would uproot three of the ten tribes as it came to power (verse 8).

Fourth, the little horn would have "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (verse 8). This indicates that a human being would be at the head of power represented by the little horn.

Fifth, "he shall be diverse from the first (horns)" (verse 24). This means that the little horn would be a different kind of power from those purely political kingdoms which preceded it.

Sixth, "he shall speak great words against the Most High" (verse 25—see Revelation 13:5— "great words and blasphemies."

Blasphemy is speaking against God, or claiming to have the prerogatives of God— i.e. claiming to be able to do that which only God can do.

John 10:30-33 Jesus claimed to be one with the Father (He was). This verse makes it clear that it is blasphemy for a man to be accorded the place of God (the Pharisees didn't know or accept that Jesus was God Incarnate).

Mark 2:7 Claiming to be able to forgive sins constitutes blasphemy (Jesus was not a blasphemer, because He was God in human flesh).

Seventh, "he shall wear out the saints of the Most High." The little horn is a persecuting power—it will make war with God's people, and cause them to be put to death.

Eighth, the little horn will "think to change times and laws." This power seeks to change the law of God, which is a symbol of God's government, and a transcript of His loving character. No one can really change God's law, so this is only an attempt on the little horn's part—and on the part of the devil, who is working through the little horn.

Ninth, "and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (verse 25). This is the time period that the little horn power would reign. In Revelation 12:14, we read "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." In Revelation 12:6 it reads "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The two time periods are identical--two ways of saying the same thing.

- Time = one year
- Times = two years
- Half or Dividing of Time = one half year
- 3.5 times equals 3.5 prophetic days, or years
- 1260 days equals 3.5 years
- The beast of Revelation 13:5 rules for 42 months
- One Bible month contained 30 days. 42 months at 30 days each comes out to 1260 days as well.

In predictive Bible prophecy and probationary time, a day equals one year of real time. For one thing, this is the only rendering which makes sense in the book of Daniel, where we have contemplated world empires and hundreds—even thousands of years. To render the "days" as literal in Daniel would make absolutely no sense. Also, we do have other times in the Bible where a day stood for a year—see Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34.

An Exact Fulfillment

There is only one possible entity which fulfills all of Daniel's characteristics of the little horn power. It is the Papacy, or the Roman Catholic Church. Not the people of the church—not the wonderful Christians who comprise this church—but the **SYSTEM** itself.

First, the Papacy did arise in Western Europe, at the very heart of the territory of the Pagan Roman Empire—in Rome itself. **Second**, it did come up after 476 A.D. It was in the year 538 A.D. that the Emperor Justinian appointed that the Pope should be the temporal as well as the spiritual ruler of the world. These are facts of history that you can find in any good historical resource.

Third, when the Papacy arose, it was opposed by three of the tribes which had taken over at the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Heruli were Arian powers which strongly opposed the rise of the Catholic Church. With the help of Zeno and Justinian, the Papacy destroyed the Heruli (493), the Vandals (534), and finally the Ostrogoths (538). These were symbolized by the three uprooted horns of Daniel 7.

Fourth, the Catholic Church did, and continues to have a man at the head of its system. **Fifth,** the Papacy was a diverse kind of power from the other political kingdoms before it. It was a church-state authoritarian power, which exercised its dominion over the entire earth. It was totally new and unique.

Sixth, the Papacy fits the characteristic of blasphemy. "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. The Pope is, as it were, God on earth, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power." Volume VI, pp. 25-29 of F. Lucii Ferraris' book, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica Moralis Theologica* --printed at Rome, and sanctioned by the Catholic Encyclopedia.

Add to this the practice of Auricular Confession, and you have what amounts to a Biblical definition of blasphemy.

Seventh, millions of Christians were tortured and killed during the Catholic inquisitions. Here is what a Catholic Cardinal wrote in a book fully sanctioned by the Church:

"The Catholic Church...has a horror of blood. Nevertheless, when confronted by heresy...she has recourse to force, to corporal punishment, to torture. She creates tribunals like the Inquisition. She calls the laws of the state to her aid...Especially did she act thus in the 16th Century with regard to Protestants...In France, under Francis I and Henry II, in England under Mary Tudor, she tortured the heretics." The Catholic Church, the Renaissance and Protestantism, pp. 182-184.

Eighth, the little horn would think to change times and laws. The Catholic Church has removed the Second Commandment from her doctrinal books and catechism, because it condemns the worship of images. The tenth commandment is then divided so that they still have Ten Commandments. But two are against coveting (instead of one), and there is none against idolatry. The Papacy has also reinterpreted the fourth commandment to read "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." The wording of the seventh day of the week has been removed. The Roman Catholic Church freely admits transferring the solemnity from the seventh day to the first--Sunday.

Ninth, the little horn would rule for 1260 prophetic days or literal years. Using 538 A.D. as a starting point for Papal supremacy, and counting down 1260 years, we come to the year 1798. In that very year the French general Berthier marched his armies into Rome and pulled the Pope off his throne. He was carried away into exile, where he died. The French Directory government decreed that there would never be another Bishop of Rome. As far as the world was concerned, the Catholic Church was dead.

Daniel's Little Horn and Revelation's Beast are Identical

1. They both speak blasphemies against God
2. They both rule for 1260 years
3. They both persecute the saints of God
4. They both involve ten divisions
5. They both are situated geographically at Rome

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 indicates that, already in Paul's day,

the spirit of lawlessness was present . . .

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’ And another angel followed, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. 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 ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’ Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Revelation 14:6-12

In **Revelation 14:6-12**, we have the proclamation of the three angels. It is a worldwide message—verse 6. It is a message which involves worship—two kinds of worship. We have, in verse 7, true worship defined: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and fountains of water."

Then we have a warning against a false system of worship, described in verses 9 and following—
"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand . . ."

We are told in verse 12, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." There are only two types of worship and two groups of people. We see many groups at present but God reveals to us, in the book of revealings, how He sees it. There will only be two groups in the final analysis. The first group will be comprised of those who worship the Creator God, keep His commandments, and exercise faith in Jesus Christ.

The second group will be comprised of those who worship something other than the Creator God—they worship the beast and his image, they do not keep the commandments of God, and they do receive the mark of the beast.

What I want you see here is that the mark of the beast is set in the context of a discussion on WORSHIP—TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP. The warning against receiving the mark of the beast is placed contextually in a discussion on WORSHIP OF GOD, and WORSHIP OF THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE. Is this clear?

We have here contemplated one's surrender, one's loyalties, one's heart and allegiance to either God or something other than God. This is the theme of Revelation 14:6-12. This is the flavor, the tenor of the discussion on the mark of the beast. Is this clear?

What I want you to see is that even without looking anywhere else in the Bible—just staying right here in Revelation 14—even a person who has never picked up a Bible can see that **THOSE WHO WORSHIP THE GOD WHO MADE ALL THINGS, WHO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, AND HAVE FAITH IN JESUS—WILL NOT RECEIVE THE MARK OF THE BEAST.**

Can you see this on the page before you just now?
Look at Revelation 14:6-12. It is unmistakably clear. The mark of the beast is placed in opposition to the commandments of the Creator God. Those who worship God and keep His commandments WILL NOT receive the mark of the beast. Those who do not worship God and keep His commandments WILL receive the mark of the beast. Is this clear?

The mark of the beast then—regardless of how it will actually look and manifest itself in daily life—the mark of the beast involves matters much, much deeper than a mere laser-scanned chip under one's skin, or one's social security number. Whatever may be its manifestation is very much secondary. The focus of the passage is on the deeper issues of love and loyalty to God.

So if you think that all you have to do is to be up on the latest conspiracy theory, and you will make it--Revelation 14 says "Wake up!! It's much deeper than that!" Or if you are smug in your end-time order of events, and you are comfortable in your knowledge of the Scriptures, and think that you have nothing to worry about--Revelation 14 says "Watch out!! It will involve your HEART--not just your head!"

When the testing time comes, it will not be enough to merely know the truth. You will have to know the One who is the Truth—Jesus Christ. It is your LOVE that will be tested, in the final days. Yes, your knowledge of God's Word will inform your love, but your heart-love of God will be on the line! Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Remember that Christians must keep God's commandments, and have faith in Jesus! It is not merely cognitive! It is very experiential. Always keep your obedience and your love together—and you will avoid the many unbalanced positions people take today.

We have previously identified this beast as the Roman Catholic system (see "Identity of the Beast"). We noticed how the Little Horn of Daniel 7 and the beast of Revelation 13 were synonymous, with several strong parallels.

Since the "mark" belongs to the beast, we will need to explore this further. But before we do so, we need to look at the genuine article. Remember that Satan always tries to have a counterfeit to everything God does. We have the mark of the beast in Revelation 14, and the seal of God in Revelation 7. The seal of God is genuine; the mark of the beast is a counterfeit. We have already seen that the mark of the beast has something to do with God's law. Now we shall see that the seal of God is also associated with the law of God.

Revelation 7:1-3 "After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.' "

Before the winds of strife are allowed to blow, God seals "the servants of our God" in their foreheads.

A seal has to do with legal matters. Official documents are always stamped with the seal of the governing body. The seal of a king or official has three aspects: the name of the authority, the office or title of the authority, and the territory over which he has power (Barak Obama, President, United States of America)

Isaiah 8:16 "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." The seal of God is connected with His law, and His law is sealed among the disciples of God.

Jeremiah 31:33 & Hebrews 10:16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them."

The New Covenant involves spiritual heart surgery! God writes His law on our hearts and minds, so that, like David, we can say, "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). Therefore, there is HOPE for the child of God! Our lives can actually be changed by depending on God daily. What used to be foreign to us can now become natural to us--doing the will of God. And what used to be natural to us can now become distasteful and foreign to us! Praise God and praise His Son Jesus, that we can reap the benefits of His shed blood on Calvary!

This is why Paul could say things like, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), and, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

Ezekiel 9:1-4 While seeing a vision of the departing of the Spirit of God from the Temple at Jerusalem, Ezekiel sees a man with an inkhorn in hand. God tells this angel, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

God tells the angel to destroy everyone else who does not have the "mark." There were prevalent idolatrous practices--even in the temple of God! And God was about to put an end to them, by allowing Judah to be deported to Babylon.

Revelation borrows heavily from the Old Testament. The idea of marking someone symbolically in the forehead was not new to the book of Revelation. Those who were loyal to God and refused to be a part of a false system of worship were protected and set apart by God in the book of Ezekiel. The same thing happens in Revelation. Those who love God, are loyal to Him, and refuse to be a part of a false system of worship, are "sealed" by God.

The Seal in God's Law

Genesis 2:2-3 "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Exodus 20:8-11 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God [name]. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made [office: Creator] the heavens and the earth [territory], the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

There are strong linguistic parallels between the Sabbath language of Creation week, the Sabbath language of the Fourth Commandment, and the immediate context of the mark of the beast discussion in Revelation 14: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of waters" (Revelation 14:7b).

Ezekiel 20:12 "Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them." The Sabbath is a "sign" between God and His people. Theologically, the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification and a conduit for an acknowledgment of God as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

Practically speaking, those who observe the Sabbath should be learning that there is nothing in themselves that commends their souls to heaven; it is the grace of God which gives us heaven, and prepares us for heaven; it is all God, and not ourselves. The Sabbath was instituted as an eternal reminder that we did not create ourselves, and we cannot save ourselves. It is a picture of grace. This is what the Sabbath should be teaching us.

Dr. Meredith Kline, in his book *Treaty of the Great King*, reveals the remarkable resemblance between God's covenant of Ten Commandments with Israel and the suzerainty (also called vassal) type of international treaty found in the ancient Near East. Here is how he describes one of the similarities:

"As a further detail in the parallelism of external appearance it is tempting to see in the Sabbath sign presented in the midst of the ten words the equivalent of the suzerain's dynastic seal found in the midst of the obverse of the international treaty documents. Since in the case of the Decalogue the suzerain is Yahweh, there will be no representation of him on his seal, but the Sabbath is declared to be his 'sign of the covenant' (Exodus 31:13-17)."

Dr. Kline, a Sunday-observer, honestly discusses the role of the Sabbath in the relationship between God and His people. He continues to describe the centrality of the Sabbath, perhaps without realizing that it is also Revelation's "Seal of God":

"By means of his Sabbath-keeping, image-bearer of God images the pattern of that divine act of creation which proclaims God's absolute sovereignty over man, and thereby he pledges his covenant consecration to his Maker. The Creator has stamped on world history the sign of the Sabbath as his seal of ownership and authority."

Is it any wonder that the devil, through human instrumentality, would want to tamper with this particular commandment? Is it any wonder that Satan, via the little horn power, would "think to change times and laws"? To seek to change God's holy Sabbath is to play God! It is a direct assault on God Himself! This is why there is such a serious warning against receiving the mark of the beast. To do so is to place your self on the side of rebellion. To do so is to take part in Satan's attack on God and His truth.

Luke 4:16 "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read."

Jesus was a faithful Sabbath keeper. It was his "custom" to keep the Sabbath holy.

Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said He didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Jesus showed, in His daily life and teachings, what He meant by "fulfilling" the law: He kept it, honored it, magnified it, and showed the spiritual nature of the law. Jesus had plenty of opportunities to change His Sabbath. He could have very easily. But He never mentions anything about changing the Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week. Not one word. if you are serious about God and the Bible, my friend, this fact should be important to you, because we are talking about true worship versus false worship of our Holy God.

Jesus identifies for us which day He claims as His own in **Matthew 12:8**-- "**The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.**"

Jesus predicted that the Sabbath would still be kept at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (**Matthew 24:20**). Paul kept the Sabbath himself—he met with the whole city—Jews and Gentiles alike (**Acts 13:42-44**). In Philippi, Paul met privately on the Sabbath with a group of Christians in a country setting (**Acts 16:13**). Paul kept a total of 84 Sabbaths in the book of Acts! (**Acts 17:2; 18:4, 11.**)

Isaiah 66:22-23 “ ‘For as the new heavens and
the new earth

Which I will make shall remain before Me,’
says the LORD,

‘So shall your descendants and your name
remain.

And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me,’
says the LORD.”

Even in the new heavens and new earth we will
observe the seventh-day Sabbath each week.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST, part 2

It was the sixth day of Creation, and the first day of life for Adam and Eve. Everything was brand new. As they walked together in the beautiful Garden of Eden, they could smell the sweet fragrance of newly-formed flowers that basked in the warmth of the sun. The trees lifted their branches heavenward in adoration, and tiny birds fluttered here and there, raising a song of gladness to the sky.

All of nature was in praise and thankful celebration when God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had finished creating the heavens and the earth. All was well.

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made"
(Genesis 2:3-4).

Why did God bless the seventh day? Why did He rest on the seventh day? Was He tired? I don't think so. The Sabbath was to be a perpetual memorial of Creation. In fact, if the Sabbath had always been observed, there would never have arose an evolutionary theory, which claims that we originated from chance circumstances in the form of tiny organisms, and then through millions of years developed into what we are today. How unlikely! How absurd! And yet it is taught in our schools as a fact.

Australian scientist Michael Denton, in his *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, expresses the pervasiveness of evolutionary thought, as well as its meaninglessness:

"The entire scientific ethos and philosophy of modern western man is based to a large extent upon the central claim of Darwinian theory that humanity was not born by the creative intentions of a deity but by a completely mindless trial and error selection of random molecular patterns" (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, Publishers, Inc., 1986, p. 358).

Life is not intentional. It is mindless; it is random. This is not only the conclusion of Darwinism. It is also its foundation. While Denton repeatedly dismisses Creation as the great myth of the ages, he also has grown increasingly critical of the theory which he espouses:

"One might have expected that a theory of such cardinal importance, a theory that literally changed the world, would have been based on something more than metaphysics, something more than a myth. Ultimately, Darwinian's theory of evolution is the greatest cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century" (Ibid. p. 358).

It is not only evolutionists who are questioning their theory. Phillip E. Johnson, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley, and former law clerk for Chief Justice Earl Warren, has taken a few swipes at evolution himself. Here he confronts Darwin's idea of "descent with modification," which tried to account for the development of species by saying that all animals had common ancestors which were linked to their descendants by long chains of transitional intermediates:

"If common ancestors and chains of linking intermediates once existed, fossil studies should be able, at least in some cases, to identify them. If it is possible for a single ancestral species to change by natural processes into such different forms as a shark, a frog, a snake, a penguin, and a monkey, then laboratory science should be able to discover the mechanism of change and if laboratory science cannot find the common ancestors and transitional links, then Darwinism fails as an empirical theory" (Darwin on Trial, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991, p. 66).

Ariel Roth is a zoologist and director of the Geosciences Research Institute at Loma Linda. His research has funded, at times, by the National Institute of Health, the Atomic Energy Commission, and other entities. In a recent interview, Roth was asked why he believed in a relatively young earth (under 10,000 years old). Here is what he said:

"If this earth is 3.5 million years old, then at present rates of sedimentation, all the oceans would have filled up with sediments 19 times over. At current rates of erosion the continents would have eroded several hundreds of times!"

(Richard H. Utt, "The Working Model Doesn't Work," Liberty, March/April, 1993, p. 14).

When asked what other evidences he considered stronger for Creation, Roth summarized:

"There's the problem of accounting for the beginnings of life without intelligent design and effort—which creationists identify with God. Also, there are serious gaps in the fossil record and missing strata in the earth's crust, that have proved most difficult for the evolutionary model" (Ibid.).

The seventh-day Sabbath points us to a Creator-God, who does everything intentionally and with style. We are amazing; we humans, all of these systems run smoothly and constantly inside without any effort on our part and not one of us are clones, (At least not yet)! Don't tell me it all just "happened." That would be the same as saying you could blow up a warehouse full of watch parts and it would produce working watches. The Sabbath reminds us that there is a God in heaven who is to be worshipped because He created all things.

It should not surprise us that God chose something in the realm of time to regularly focus our attention and adoration. Time is the one thing that we can do absolutely nothing about. We all stand helpless in the face of time. That is the point.

God knew that time was a realm beyond our control, so He chose to commune with us during a piece of time—called the Sabbath—to draw our minds into a deeper acknowledgment of His lordship. The Sabbath was instituted as an eternal reminder that we did not create ourselves, and we cannot save ourselves. It is a picture of grace.

For six days God worked. Adam and Eve's first full day was the Sabbath. They had nothing to offer God except their praise and thanksgiving. They joyfully celebrated the gift of life, and openly communed with their Father. For six days God worked; and then He rested. And we would do well to do likewise.

The Sabbath is a breath of fresh air in today's atmosphere of pressure, deadlines, self-centeredness, and intense competition. For six days we manipulate, exert our influence, scheme, and somehow try to make the most of our time. But on the seventh day, God exerts His influence on us. We allow ourselves to be enamored with Him; to be caught up in His love, His fellowship, His truth, and His joy.

Returning to Revelation 14, it is clear that the mark of the beast is placed in contrast with the Ten Commandments. Those who keep God's commandments and have faith in Jesus will not receive the mark of the beast, according to Revelation 14:12. So we are already in the realm of the law of God, are we not?

The mark of the beast appears to be a counterfeit to the seal of God. There are various Scripture passages which indicate that, in the New Covenant, God writes or seals His law in the minds of His people (see Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10, etc.). Spiritual heart surgery, if you will.

The "seal" of God's law is the Sabbath commandment, which identifies God as our Creator, and tells us that His territory is comprised of the heavens and earth and seas and fountains of waters.

In other words, the seventh-day Sabbath is a symbol of God's government—a symbol of His office of Creator.

There is only one entity in existence which, through history, fits perfectly the characteristics of both the little horn of Daniel 7, and the beast power of Revelation 13. It is the Roman Catholic system.

We are told in Daniel 7 that the little horn power would "think to change times and laws" (verse 25). We are further informed by Revelation 13:8 that the entire world will worship the beast, and we are given a grave warning against receiving the mark of this beast in Revelation 14.

The only aspect of worship or doctrine—the only part of God's law which the entire Christian world—at this time—follows after and emulates the Roman church in is the observance of Sunday as a holy day, instead of Saturday, the seventh day of the week.

Revelation 13:16-17 “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

The mark of the beast will be state-enforced, so that no one can buy or sell unless they have this mark. Therefore, the mark of the beast will be state-enforced Sunday observance.

It may surprise you to learn that there are Sunday "Blue Laws" laying dormant on the books of many of our states. There is also currently a powerful push on the part of Christian fundamentalists to make Sunday a mandated national day of rest.

People will receive the mark of the beast when governments enforce Sunday observance as a law. Those who believe this should be done will be receiving the mark in their "foreheads" (has to do with agreement and the will).

Those who just go along with it for the sake of convenience will be receiving the mark in their "right hand" (has to do with acting—going along with it--but not really agreeing). My friends, there is nothing "convenient" about serving Jesus Christ. There is a cost to discipleship. There is a denial of oneself, and a wholehearted following after the Lord Jesus--no matter what people think, no matter how unpopular it may be. Remember that Jesus said and did some fairly unpopular and inconvenient things as well.

Notice that one can only receive the seal of God in the forehead. God wants us to follow Him only if we truly believe in Him and love Him. He doesn't want us to serve Him out of fear or because it is convenient. Many times following the Lord is not convenient at all! But the devil doesn't care how he gets you. He knows that people do not have to choose him or his way in order to be on his side. They simply have to neglect to obey God, then they are automatically under the control of Satan.

There are only two spirits in the universe, the Spirit of the Living God, truth and righteousness and the spirit of the Devil, rebellion and sin. The two sides are being drawn up in these final days.

We should not be surprised that God's test of loyalty in these final days involves something as simple as a day. After all, the object God chose in the Garden of Eden was rather simple as well. It was a tree of all things. And yet the issues surrounding that tree and its forbidden fruit were enormous. The failure of that simple test has had far-reaching effects on the human race. And so it is with the Sabbath-Sunday test.

You can find the month and the year in nature.

These are the number of days it takes the moon to revolve around the earth, and the earth to revolve around the sun, respectively. But you won't find the seven-day week anywhere in nature. It is not arrived at by observing the stars or the seasons. Though the seven-day week makes good sense to most people, it is not logically determined; it is not based on mere human reason. Rather, God Himself instituted the week when He created this world.

Similarly, all the other nine commandments make logical sense. Even resting one day in seven has seemed like a good idea to many throughout the millennia. But the only way to know which day (and likewise which tree in the Garden) is to trust what God says, even though it cannot be scientifically proven. This is the highest test of morality--to take God at his word, because He is trustworthy.

Acts 5:28-29 " 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend this Man's blood upon us!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said:

'We ought to obey God rather than men.' "

Will you, my friend, take your stand for the Lord Jesus in earth's final chapter? Will you respond to Jesus' words, "**If you love Me, keep My commandments**" (**John 14:15**)? Will you be among those disciples "who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus" (Revelation 14:12)? Or will you settle for something less than God's best for your life.

THE ATTEMPTED CHANGE OF THE SABBATH TO SUNDAY

God does not change. His law does not change. God specifies the seventh day, Saturday, as the Sabbath. The Bible gives no indication of any New Testament change in the day of worship. Let us open the pages of history after the Bible was written, and discover when the attempt to change God's Sabbath to Sunday was made.

The New Testament is completely silent on any controversy over the Sabbath in the New Testament Church. The issue of circumcision nearly split the New Testament Church and entire books of the Bible (e.g. Galatians) were written over the issue of circumcision. Sabbath-keeping was more deeply rooted in Judaism than circumcision, yet we find no discussion over the Sabbath in Bible times. Likewise, for one hundred years after Christ, there is no discussion of the Sabbath question. However, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, there is considerable discussion over this issue, which would indicate that this would be the time when men attempted to introduce a new day of worship.

Not only Daniel (7:25), but the apostle Paul predicted that there would come a falling away, an apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2). The predicted apostasy arose as changes were made in Christian practices 100-300 years after the early church arose. The change in the Sabbath was only one of the many changes in the practice of the early church that occurred during this time.

Sunday-keeping was introduced into the Christian church rather innocently, and its first advocates never dreamed that it would take the place of the seventh-day Sabbath of God. Sunday-keeping had its origin in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian in the second century. Hadrian persecuted the Jews in Rome incessantly. In an attempt to separate themselves from the Jews and avoid being persecuted with them, these early Roman Christians began keeping Sunday in addition to the Sabbath. Later they gave as their reason Christ's resurrection on Sunday. Very gradually this practice of keeping Saturday as the Sabbath, and Sunday in honor of the resurrection, spread to other parts of the Christian world. To accentuate the importance of Sunday in honor of the resurrection, the Roman Church prescribed the keeping of one special Sunday in special memory of the resurrection—Easter. Many Christians wished to keep Easter on the same **date** each year, but Rome insisted that it be on Sunday, and Rome won.

Notice how many early Christian writers refer to the fact that in the third and fourth centuries A.D. both Saturday and Sunday were kept by the church:

"In some places no day is omitted, on which the Communion is not offered; in some [it is offered] only on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day [Sunday], and in some only on the Lord's day."
Augustine (died 430 A.D.). **Letter 54 to Januarius**, Chapter 2, in MPL, Vol.33, Col. 200.

"Keep the Sabbath, and the Lord's day festival; because the former is the memorial of creation, and the latter of the resurrection."

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Bk. 7, Sec. 2, Ch. 23, trans. in ANF, Vol.7, p. 469.

"Let the slaves work five days; but on the Sabbath day, the Lord's day, let them have leisure to go to church for instruction and piety."

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, Bk. 8, Sec. 4, Ch. 33, trans in ANF, Vol. 7, p. 495.

"There are no public services among them in the day except on Saturday and Sunday, when they meet together at the third hour for purpose of Holy Communion." John Cassian (died around 440 A.D.), **Institutes III**, Book 3, Ch. 2, trans. in NPNF 2nd series, Vol. II, p. 213.

"With what kind of eyes do you see the Lord's Day [Sunday], you who dishonor the Sabbath? Do you not know that these days are sisters?" Gregory of Nyssa (331-396), **De Castigatione** ("On Reproof") in MPG, Vol. 46, col. 309. Greek.

Thus we see that for several centuries the church kept both Saturday and Sunday. Gradually, however, the Sabbath became less and less important, and Sunday became more and more important. This change in emphasis was particularly noticeable in Rome.

To the early church, the Sabbath was a day of delight, a day that they looked forward to and really enjoyed. However, at Rome, the Sabbath was made a fast day, a day of gloom, and Sunday was the day of delight. Thus, individuals came to look forward to Sunday, but to dread the Sabbath. Eventually this paved the way for the Sabbath to be completely disregarded, and the people were already conditioned to accept Sunday. However, we do notice that other Christian churches did not immediately follow Rome's example:

"The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which is never observed at Rome, or at Alexandria." Sozomen, **Eccl. History VII**, Ch. 19. (Died 440 A.D.).

Thus, as late as four hundred years after Christ the historian testifies that almost all Christian churches in the world were still keeping the Sabbath, but at Rome things were different. They had ceased to keep the Sabbath and were now keeping Sunday only.

Evidently there was considerable discussion in the church over this substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath of the Bible. The discussions of many have been recorded and preserved for our benefit today. Notice a few of these:

"On Saturday the Gospels and other portions of the Scripture shall be read aloud." Council of Laodicea (A.D. 343-381), Charles Joseph Hefele, **A History of Christian Councils**, Vol. 2, trans. and ed. by H.N. Oxenham, p. 310, Can. 16.

"Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath [i.e. Saturday] of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this."

Socrates Schutasticus, **Ecclesiastical History**, Bk. 5, ch. 22, trans. in NPNF, 2nd series, Vol. 2, p. 132.

"On the Sabbath day we gathered together, not being infected with Judaism, for we do not lay hold of false Sabbaths, but we come on the Sabbath to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath." Athanasius, **Homilia de Semente**, sec. 1, in MPG, Vol. 28, col. 144. Greek.

Thus we see that there was considerable discussion of the Sabbath question during the latter part of the second, third and fourth centuries. The practice of keeping both Saturday and Sunday started at Rome. Then the practice of downgrading the Sabbath and uplifting Sunday also began in Rome. As Rome spread and began to exercise jurisdiction over other churches, Sunday worship spread with it. When the Roman Church attempted to take over the Celtic Church around A.D. 600, one of the issues over which the two churches differed, and one of the issues used by the Celtic Church in England to refuse to submit to Rome, was the Sabbath issue. Notice what the historian says:

"The Celts permitted their priests to marry, the Romans forbade it. The Celts held their own councils and enacted their own laws, independent of Rome . . . The Celts used a Latin Bible unlike the Vulgate, and kept the day Saturday as a day of rest with special religious services on Sunday."
Flick, The Rise of the Medieval Church, p. 237.

Thus Sabbath-keeping was so deeply rooted in the early New Testament Church, that in spite of the attempts of the Roman Church to suppress it and exalt Sunday in its stead, true Sabbath-keeping remained in the church for over 600 years after the coming of Christ. It was only after the Roman Church attained full control of Christendom during the Middle Ages that the Sabbath was lost sight of.

Years later as the Roman Church looked back on these centuries when she had gradually changed the Sabbath into Sunday, she boldly declared that this was her act, and proved that she has power to ordain feasts and festivals because all other churches eventually went along with Rome in the change of the Sabbath, and even Protestants today still submit to this law of the Roman Church to honor Sunday. Notice these claims:

Q. "What is the Third Commandment?"

A. "The Third Commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day."

Q. "Which is the Sabbath day?"

A. "Saturday is the Sabbath day."

Q. "Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"

A. "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." Peter Geierman, **The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine** (1951) p. 50.

Q. "How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days?"

A. "By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church." Henry Tuberville, **An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrines**, 1833, p. 58.

It is hard to believe that the once pure Christian Church could so apostatize from the truth, even in six hundred years. But here is a solemn warning for all of us. Apostasy does not occur overnight. It occurs gradually and begins when one small principle is sacrificed. Once that is sacrificed, it is always easier to sacrifice another principle. And so the process goes, until apostasy has gone deep.

At the beginning of the second century the Church was still pure. But by the end of the second century, just one hundred years later, it was hardly recognizable as the same church. During the second century the seed was sown for most of the unbiblical teachings that sprang up in the centuries that followed. The seed of Sunday-keeping was one of those teachings that arose in the second century rather innocently, as we have seen, but fully mushroomed into a great departure from Bible truth in the centuries that followed. What was it that paved the way for the apostasy on the Sabbath?

The first reason for the acceptance of Sunday was a strong anti-Jewish feeling that permeated the church in the early centuries. The Christian Church was attempting to do everything possible to be completely separate from the Jews, especially after the persecution of Hadrian began in A.D. 121-124. Thus any institution that was kept by both Jews and Christians became a target for change. Sunday-keeping may possibly have started simply as an attempt to show that Christians not only honored the Sabbath, but also had another day that was kept in addition to the Sabbath. In this way they would be different from the Jews. In order to emphasize their hatred toward the Jews, doctrinal change took place; and these changes began, as we have seen, in Rome.

Anti-Jewish writers, such as Barnabas and Justin Martyr, first wrote against the Sabbath. Their arguments were that Christians should not keep the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is Jewish, and if they kept the Sabbath, they would be considered Jews. Then in the fourth century, the following decision was made:

"Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's Day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." Oh. Y. Hefele, **A History of the Councils of the Church**, Vol. 2, p. 316.

Here it is noticed that one of the reasons why they were advocating Sunday-keeping was because the Sabbath was thought to be Jewish. But at the same time notice that there was an admission that Christians were idle on Saturday. In other words, there were many Christians who were still keeping the Sabbath at this time, and the church at Rome was attempting to legislate a change.

Another influence that resulted in the acceptance of Sunday was the spread of Gnosticism and Platonic philosophy. These were pagan philosophies that were attempting to gain control over the Christian Church in the early centuries.

The Gnostic day of worship was Sunday, the day consecrated to the sun, which was their god. Many of the early Christian writers who supported Sunday were influenced by Gnostic and Platonic philosophies. In fact, Gnostic and especially Platonic influence on Christian thinking was greater in Alexandria and in Rome. Thus here was further support for Sunday.

Another influence in the early Christian Church was Mithraism, an ancient Oriental cult of the sun. This cult came to Rome in the first century A.D. and became popular in the second and third centuries. The central feature of this cult was the worship of the sun on the first day of the week. Historians have written concerning the influence of Mithraism on Christianity in this way:

"Aurelian . . . created a new cult of the 'Invincible Son,' worshipped in a splendid temple, served by pontiffs who were raised to the level of the ancient pontiffs of Rome . . . On establishing this new state cult, Aurelian in reality proclaimed the dethronement of the old Roman idolatry and the accession of Semitic Sun-Worship." Franz Cumont, **Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans**, p. 55, 56.

"The two opposed creeds [Christianity and Mithraism] moved in the same intellectual and moral sphere, and one could actually pass from one to the other without shock or interruption." Cumont, p. 210.

"The worshippers [of Mithra] held Sunday sacred and celebrated the birth of the Sun on the 25th of December." Franz Cumont, **The Mysteries of Mithra**, trans. by Thomas J. McCormack, p. 191.

"Our observance of Sunday as the Lord's day is apparently derived from Mithraism. The argument that has sometimes been used against this claim, namely, that Sunday was chosen because of the resurrection on that day, is not well supported." Gordon J. Laing, **Survivals of Roman Religion**, p. 148.

"As a solar festival, Sunday was the sacred day of Mithra; and it is interesting to notice that since Mithra was addressed as Dominus, 'Lord,' Sunday must have been the 'Lord's Day' long before the Christian times." A. Weigall, **The Paganism in Our Christianity**, p. 145.

When Constantine was converted to Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century, he attempted to unite his empire in the Christian faith. Since many of his subjects were pagans, and had been accustomed to pagan practices and pagan days of worship such as Sunday, it is only reasonable that Constantine would use his influence to make it easier for these pagans to become Christians. Thus he gave official sanction to Sunday and encouraged the practice of the Roman Church in keeping Sunday by passing the first legal Sunday law, stating that all should rest on the venerable day of the sun:

"On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed."
Constantine, March 7, 321 A.D., Codex Justinianus lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; trans. in Philip Schaff, **History of the Christian Church**, Vol. 3, p. 380, note 1.

Thus we see that as the early church apostatized from the truth, they introduced the day of the sun in place of the Lord's Sabbath. This was a gradual change, innocent in its beginnings, but devastating in its final results. The way was paved for its acceptance because of the anti-Jewish feeling, the Gnostic and Platonic thinking that influenced Roman Christianity, and the influence of pagan Mithraism and its observance of Sunday. With Christians and pagans keeping the same day, it was much easier for the pagans to come to the church. Rather than be converted, they brought their paganism with them, and Christianity was thus corrupted.

PROTESTANT QUOTES REGARDING THE SABBATH AND SUNDAY

BAPTIST

"There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday....It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week....Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament--absolutely not. There is no scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week....Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the name of the sun god...." --Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of The Baptist Manual, in a paper read before a New York ministers' conference held Nov. 13, 1893.

CHRISTIAN

"The first day of the week is commonly called the Sabbath. This is a mistake. The Sabbath of the Bible was the day just proceeding the first day of the week. The first day of the week is never called the Sabbath anywhere in the entire Scriptures. It is also an error to talk about the change of the Sabbath. There never was any change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is not in any place in the Bible any intimation of such a change." --First-Day Observance, pp. 17, 19.

CONGREGATIONALIST

"The current notion that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day for the seventh, is absolutely without any authority in the New Testament." --Dr. Lyman Abbott, Christian Union, Jan. 19, 1882.

EPISCOPAL

"Is there any command in the New Testament to change the day of weekly rest from Saturday to Sunday, None!" --Manual of Christian Doctrine, p. 127.

LUTHERAN

"They [Catholics] allege the Sabbath changed into Sunday, the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it appears, neither is there any example more boasted of than the changing of the Sabbath day. Great, they say, is the power and authority of the church, since it dispersed with one of the Ten Commandments." --Martin Luther, Augsburg Confession of Faith, Art. 28, par. 9.

METHODIST

"The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command. One will search the Scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first. The early Christians began to worship on the first day of the week because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. By and by, this day of worship was made also a day of rest, a legal holiday. This took place in the year 321. Our Christian Sabbath, therefore, is not a matter of positive command. It is a gift of the church."

--Clovis G. Chappell, *Ten Rules for Living*, p. 61.

MORMON

"In....Exodus 31, and in the Decalogue the most positive and weighty reasons are given by the Lord to the fathers of the house of Israel, for keeping the Sabbath day. The obligation is evidently as binding upon the Latter-day Saints as it was upon their fathers, and they in like manner will reap their reward of obedience."

--Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel, p. 226.

PRESBYTERIAN

"The Sabbath is a part of the Decalogue--the Ten Commandments. This alone forever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the institution....Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand....The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath." --T.C. Blake, D.D., *Theology Condensed*, pp. 474, 475.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S ADMISSION OF CHANGING THE SABBATH

"You will tell men that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed, But by whom? Who has the authority to change an express command of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead. This is a most important question which I know not how you can answer."

"You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in place of the day which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding: who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered." **Library of Christian Doctrine, Why Don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day?** p. 5.

Thomaston, Georgia

May 22, 1954

Pope Pius XII

Rome, Italy

Dear Sir;

Is the accusation true, that Protestants accuse you of? They say you changed the Seventh Day Sabbath to the, so-called, Christian Sunday: Identical with the First Day of the week. If so, when did you make the change, and by what authority?

Yours very truly,

J. L. Day

The Reply:

THE CATHOLIC EXTENSION MAGAZINE
180 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Illinois
(Under the Blessing of Pope Pius XII)

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:

(1) 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. The fact they do not, but on the contrary observe Sunday stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man.

(2) We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say, this Church, instituted by Christ, to teach and guide men through life, has a right to change the Ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, "yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday Abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages, and a thousand other laws.

(3) We also say that of all Protestants, the Seventh-day Adventists are the only group that reason correctly and are consistent with their teachings. It is always somewhat laughable to see the Protestant Churches, in pulpit and legislature, demand the observance of Sundays of which there is nothing in the Bible.

With best wishes,
Peter R. Tramer, Editor

"Finally, at the last opening on the eighteenth of January, 1562, all hesitation was set aside. The Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that tradition stood above Scripture. The authority of the church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the Scriptures, because the church had changed....Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ, but by its own authority." Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, **Kanon und Tradition** (Ludwisburg: Druck and Verlag von Ferd Riehm), 1859, p. 263 in the German.

"Ques.- Have you any other way of proving that the (Catholic) Church has power to institute festivals of precept (to command holy days)?"

"Ans.- 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. --Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism, p. 176.

"Protestants....accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change....But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that....in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." --Our Sunday Visitor, Feb. 5, 1950.

"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, Sept., 1893.

"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." -- H.F. Thomas, Chancellor for Cardinal Gibbons (emphasis added).

NOBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO CHANGE
GOD'S LAW! GOD NEVER CHANGES, AND
HIS PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT NEVER
CHANGE. THIS ISSUE MAY SEEM
INSIGNIFICANT, BUT IT WILL ACTUALLY
BE VERY IMPORTANT IN THESE LAST
DAYS, WHEN TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP
ARE THE MAIN ISSUES.

SUNDAY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

If God changed His Sabbath, we ought to be able to find a record of it. Surely He would tell us about something this important. Let's look at every text in the New Testament that mentions the first day of the week. There are only eight.

Matthew 28:1 Jesus rose from the grave on the first day of the week, and most Christians who worship on Sunday do so in honor of that event. Of the eight New Testament texts that mention the first day of the week, six deal with the events of Jesus' resurrection. The first is Matthew 28:1. "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." Here we have Matthew's account of what happened early on resurrection Sunday. He wrote His Gospel a number of years after Jesus had gone back to heaven--some scholars think as much as thirty years later. Here would be an ideal place to tell his readers about God's new worship day--if indeed the apostles understood that God had made a change. Yet Matthew says nothing about this day being holy because on it Jesus rose from the dead. In fact, he clearly says that the first day of the week came only "in the end of the Sabbath" or "after the Sabbath"--the seventh day of the week--had passed.

Mark 16:1, 2 Here is Mark's version of what Matthew has already told us: "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun." Mark agrees with Matthew in saying nothing about keeping Sunday or about its being a holy day in honor of the resurrection.

Mark 16:9 "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." Mark simply repeats here what he has said earlier.

Luke 24:1 "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." Luke's version of Jesus' resurrection adds nothing new to what Matthew and Mark have already told us. Luke says nothing about Sunday sacredness either.

John 20:1 This text is the same story of the resurrection that we have heard from the other three Gospel writers. John says, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taketh away from the sepulcher."

John 20:19 This text also refers to resurrection Sunday, but it tells us of an event later in the day. "Then the same day at evening, being the first of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Some have thought that this verse describes a worship service that the apostles held in honor of the resurrection. But what does John say? He says that the disciples were together "with the doors locked for fear of the Jews." They weren't holding a worship service. They were huddled together, afraid that the Jews who had killed their Lord would come looking for them! In fact, Mark and Luke make it clear that the disciples didn't even believe Jesus was alive until He appeared to them in the room that evening. The women had already told them that they had seen Him, but the disciples thought they were confused (see Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:9-12, 36-44).

These first six texts all refer to the day on which Jesus arose from the dead, and they all say nothing about a change of God's rest day from the seventh-day Sabbath to the first-day Sunday.

Acts 20:7 "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." According to the Bible, each day begins at sundown and ends at the next sundown (see Genesis 1:5, 8, etc. and Mark 1:32) and the dark part of the day comes first. So Sabbath begins at Friday night sundown and ends Saturday night at sundown. This meeting of Acts 20 was held on the dark part of Sunday, or on what we now call Saturday night. (The New English Bible gives this translation: "On the Saturday night in our assembly," etc.). It was a Saturday night meeting, and lasted till midnight. Paul was on a farewell tour and knew that he would not see these people again before his death (verse 25). No wonder he preached so long! (No regular weekly service would have lasted all night).

This meeting was held on the dark part of the first day of the week (or what we now call Saturday night) because Paul was "ready to depart on the morrow." The "breaking of bread" has no "holy day" significance at all, because they broke bread daily (Acts 2:46). There is not the slightest indication in this Scripture passage that the first day is holy, or that these early Christians considered it so. Neither is there the remotest evidence that the Sabbath has been changed. The Bible refers to Sunday as a "working day" in Ezekiel 46:1. God has never asked anyone to observe Sunday as a holy day for any reason whatever. Incidentally, this meeting seems to be mentioned in the Scriptures only because of the miracle of raising the boy to life who had fallen out of the window.

1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." There is no reference here to a public meeting. The money was to be laid aside privately at home. This is what the phrase "lay by him in store" means. There was a famine in Judea (Romans 15:26; Acts 11:26-30) and Paul was writing to ask the churches in Asia Minor to give help. These Christians all kept Sabbath holy, so Paul suggested that on Sunday morning, after the Sabbath was over (which was the time they paid bills and settled accounts) they put aside something for their needy brethren, so it would be on hand when he came. It was to be done privately, as the Spanish translation says, "at home." Notice also that there is no reference here to Sunday as a holy day. In fact, the Bible nowhere suggests or commands Sunday-keeping.

These are all the texts in the New Testament—every one—that speak about the first day of the week. And as we have seen, they do not give any hint of a change in God's holy day. If we are to take what the Bible says, it seems clear that the seventh day is still God's Sabbath, the day Christians this side of the cross should keep holy.

There is one other New Testament text we should look at. Although it doesn't mention the first day of the week, it does speak of "the Lord's day"--a title that is often applied to Sunday today. John says in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." John received visions from God on a day he calls "the Lord's day." He doesn't say which day that was. But we have already seen that Jesus claims to be Lord of the Sabbath day (see Matthew 12:8). If any day can be rightfully called "the Lord's day," it must be the day of which Jesus Himself claims to be Lord. It must be the day He set aside at creation.

THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH

Revelation 14:6, 7 God's final message to mankind is a call to worship the Creator.

Revelation 4:11 The basis of all worship is the fact that God created us.

Colossians 1:12-17; Ephesians 3:9 Jesus Christ was the active agent in creation. Therefore Revelation's final call to worship the Creator is a call to give honor to Jesus.

Exodus 20:8-11 We worship Him as Creator by keeping His Sabbath. The Sabbath is the Fourth Commandment of God's moral law. God told us to "remember" the Sabbath, because He knew His people would forget. But Mt. Sinai is not the first time the Bible mentions the Sabbath:

Genesis 2:1-3 The Sabbath was set apart at Creation. God "rested on the seventh day", "blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Only God can make something holy. If you or I would declare Tuesday or Sunday or Thursday holy, our declaration would not really change anything about these days, for God has already made His day holy--the seventh. And what God has sanctified, let no man *unsanctify*.

Mark 2:27, 28 The Sabbath was given to the human race 2300 years before the existence of the Jews, as a memorial for all mankind. Jesus said the Sabbath was made for "man", not merely for the Jews. We all need Sabbath rest. We need God.

Ezekiel 20:12, 20 The Sabbath was established for all mankind as a "sign" between God and His people.

Luke 4:16 Jesus was a faithful Sabbath keeper. It was His "custom" to keep the Sabbath holy. This is not surprising, since He was with the Father when they both sanctified the Sabbath at the end of creation week (see also Mark 6:2).

1 Peter 2:21 We should always, "follow in His steps", in attitude and in behavior. Since Jesus kept the Sabbath so should we.

Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said He didn't come to "destroy the law", "but to fulfill." Jesus showed, in His daily life and teachings, what He meant by "fulfilling" the law: He kept it, honored it, magnified it, and showed the spiritual nature of the law (see Matthew chapters 5-7). He warned us not to teach people to break even one of His commandments (Matthew 5:19). Jesus had plenty of opportunities to change His Sabbath. He could have very easily. But He never mentions anything about changing the Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week. Not one word. If you are serious about God and the Bible, my friend, this fact should be important to you, because we are talking about true worship versus false worship of our Holy God.

Matthew 24:20 Jesus predicted that the Sabbath would be kept in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem—over 35 years after His death! If our Lord believed that His resurrection would change the Sabbath to Sunday, He would not have said this.

Acts 13:42-44 Paul kept the Sabbath himself, and met to worship God with the whole city, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Acts 16:13 In Philippi, Paul met privately with a group of believers in a country setting, since there was no established church.

Acts 17:2; 18:4, 11 It was Paul's "manner" or custom to reason with the Jews in the synagogue on Sabbath. In fact, Scripture records that brother Paul kept a total of 84 Sabbaths in the book of Acts! And it wasn't just to reach the Jews. He actually believed it was the right thing to do! If anyone would have reason to say the Sabbath is Jewish and therefore Christians ought to keep Sunday holy, it would be Paul. But he makes no such statement. Paul said that through faith "we establish the law" (Romans 3:31).

Acts 20:27 Paul told the Ephesians that he had not hesitated to proclaim to them the "whole will of God" (NIV). Surely Paul upheld, along with the truth of Jesus Christ, the truth about the Sabbath, which is established by 140 verses in the Bible, and the law of God, which is established by 200 verses! We know that Paul believed in the law of God, because he urged Christians to obey it (Romans 3:31; 6:15).

Revelation 1:10 The Lord still has a special day at the end of the first century. Revelation 1:10 does not clearly reveal which day is the Lord's Day, but Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:27, 28, and Luke 6:5 do.

Matthew 12:8 The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. If the Son of Man (Jesus) is Lord of the Sabbath, the Sabbath must be the Lord's Day. We must allow the Bible to interpret itself—it will, if we let it. We need not speculate about things God has made clear. He's made the Sabbath clear, my friend.

Luke 23:54-56; 24:1 This passage lists three days in succession: The day Christ died--the preparation day—Friday; the day Jesus rested in the tomb—Sabbath—Saturday; the day Jesus resurrected—the first day—Sunday. The Sabbath is clearly Saturday, the seventh day of the week. In many languages, the seventh day still sounds like "Sabbath"--e.g. "Sabado."

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus is "the same yesterday, today and forever." His law does not change because He never changes (Malachi 3:6)

Isaiah 66:22, 23 In the new heavens and new earth we shall keep Sabbath each week.

James 4:17 If we know what is right and do not do it, it becomes "sin" to us. God does not hold us accountable for what we do not know about His Sabbath. But when we see what He says about the Sabbath in His Word, and still do not obey Him, we are willfully sinning against our God.

John 14:15 Love always leads to obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

1 John 5:2, 3 To love God is to "keep His commandments." God the Father and God the Son have the same commandments.

Micah 6:8 The Bible says the child of God ought to "do justly." In Isaiah 56:1-6, God describes the keeping of His Sabbath as doing "justice." He tells us that "blessed is the man . . . that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it."

Revelation 14:12 This chapter describes only two groups of people alive just before Jesus returns: those who worship the beast and receive his mark (verse 9), and those who worship God (verse 7) and keep His commandments (verse 12). God's commandment, or moral law, found in Exodus 20, includes the Sabbath commandment, which itself draws us back to true worship of our God, who has created us and redeemed us. My friend, worship God! Do not settle for anything less than God's best for your life! Obey His voice in Scripture today. It's the only safe course to take. Do not be deceived by false doctrine.

Summary: God instituted the seventh-day Sabbath at Creation, placed it in the middle of His law on Mt. Sinai, and told us to "remember" it. All the prophets kept it, Jesus Himself kept it, Paul kept it, God's people in the last days keep it, and we will keep the Sabbath in heaven. Not one word in the Bible tells us that the Sabbath (Saturday) has been changed to Sunday.

Has Time Been Lost? Since the time of Christ there has been only one major change in the calendar. This was the switch from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1582. The Julian calendar had allowed too many leap years. As a result, the calendar was out of kilter with the solar system. In order to rectify it, ten days were dropped from the calendar in October of 1582. Thursday the 4th was followed by Friday the 15th. Even though ten days were dropped from the calendar, the weekly cycle was not changed at all. The order of the days of the week remained the same. Our seventh day is the same as Christ's.

Other Evidences: In 140 languages in use today the word for Saturday has as its root meaning "Sabbath," for example the Latin **Sabbatum**, the Greek **Sabbaton**, the Russian **Subbota**, the Italian **Sabbato**, the Spanish **Sabado**. In other words, in over 140 languages of earth today the word currently used for Saturday basically means "Sabbath."

Astronomy: The leading astronomers in the world testify to the fact that the weekly cycle has never changed. Centers like the Royal Naval Observatory in the U.S. and The Royal Greenwich Observatory in England affirm the fact of a constant cycle.

The history of the Jews, who have consistently kept the Sabbath from the Exodus event, and still keep the Sabbath on Saturday today, indicates clearly which the seventh day is. During the Exodus event God by a double miracle of the manna clearly revealed which was the seventh day. On every day a certain portion of the manna would fall. There was always enough for everyone every day, but not enough to be kept for the next day. However, on Friday a double portion of manna fell and people had enough for two days, whereas on Saturday, no manna fell. For forty years God performed this double miracle every week, to thoroughly establish which day was the seventh. The Jews have kept that same seventh day until this present time (see Exodus 16).

Note on Colossians 2:16, 17 This passage is one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible. One principle of Bible interpretation is that you do not allow what may be somewhat unclear to keep you from doing what you already understand. The Bible is plain on the Sabbath. It was given at Creation (Genesis 2:1-3). Jesus observed it (Luke 4:16). Paul observed it (Acts 13:42-44), and it will be observed in heaven (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

Note on Colossians 2:16, 17, cont.

The Bible mentions two kinds of Sabbaths: the seventh-day Sabbath and the yearly Sabbaths. The seventh-day Sabbath, instituted at Creation and part of the Ten Commandment law, is a weekly reminder of the loving, all-powerful Creator. The yearly Sabbath relates specifically to the history of Israel. Colossians 2:16, 17 specifically states, "Let no man judge you regarding Sabbath days [Greek, sabbatone-- "of Sabbaths"] which are a shadow of things to come." The seventh-day Sabbath is a memorial of Creation--not a shadow of something to come. Hebrews 10:1 connects the law of shadows with animal sacrifice. Ezekiel 45:17 uses the exact same expressions in the exact same order as Colossians 2:16, 17, and connects it all with the ceremonial systems of feasts and sacrifices (meat offerings, drink offerings, feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths to make reconciliation for the house of Israel).

Leviticus 23:3 discusses the seventh-day Sabbath. Leviticus 23:5-32 discusses the ceremonial Sabbaths (Passover, verse 5; unleavened bread, verse 6; wave sheaf, verse 10; first fruits, verse 17; trumpets, vs. 24; Day of Atonement, verses 27-32; tabernacles, verses 34-36). Both the feast of trumpets (verse 24) and the Day of Atonement (verse 32) are specifically called Sabbaths. These annual Sabbaths were intimately connected to events foreshadowing Christ's death and His Second Coming. They were designed by God to be shadows or pointers to the coming Messiah.

Leviticus 23:37 uses the language of Colossians 2:16, 17 to describe these ceremonial Sabbaths. Leviticus 23:38 distinguishes the ceremonial Sabbaths from the seventh-day Sabbaths by using the expression "*Besides* the Sabbaths of the Lord." Since Christ has come, the shadowy Sabbaths of the ceremonial law have found their fulfillment in Him. The seventh-day Sabbath continues to lead us back to the Creator God who made us. God's people will keep it as a distinguishing sign of their relationship to Him (Revelation 14:12; Ezekiel 20: 12, 20).

Note on Romans 14:5 Sometimes it's helpful to carefully notice what a Bible text doesn't say as well as what it does say. Verses 5 and 6 say nothing about either worship or the Sabbath. They simply talk about regarding a day. To say this particular day is the Sabbath is an unwarranted assumption. Romans 14:1 set the tone for the entire passage, indicating that the discussion focuses on "doubtful disputations" or disputes on doubtful matters. Is the seventh-day Sabbath, set apart by God at Creation (Genesis 2:1-3), and placed within the heart of the moral law (Exodus 20:8-11) a doubtful matter? Certainly not!

Note on Romans 14:5, cont.

The key to our passage is found in verse 6 which states, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." The issue revolved around fast days, not Sabbath days. Some Jewish Christians believed there was particular merit in fasting on certain days. They judged others by their own standards. The Pharisees fasted at least twice a week and boasted about it (Luke 18:12). In Romans 14, Paul is pointing out that to fast or not to fast on a certain day is a matter of individual conscience, not a matter of God's command.

We must remember that the Sabbath will not benefit us unless we are in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, whom to know is life. The Sabbath was given to us as a gift. It is a palace in time, meant to be a day of spiritual rejuvenation. On this day you may grow your relationship with God in a special way, and lay aside your burdens and worries.

It is our hope that you will enter into the Sabbath rest to which Jesus invites you.

If you have any questions, we would be happy to be of assistance. You can email us at: believersunited7@gmail.com

May God bless you richly!