

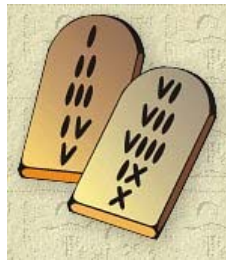

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## The Mark of the Beast



**The book of Revelation describes the last great conflict between Christ and Satan and this conflict is a conflict of authority. We saw in Revelation 12 that the dragon would make war on those that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17). There are thus two issues that the enemy will target in particular in the final conflict, namely: ♦The commandments of God♦ and ♦The testimony of Jesus Christ.♦ We will deal with the testimony later (see *God's Guiding Gift*), but the law of God is the issue, which touches the authority and government of God. In Revelation 11:19 we read:**

***And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. And there were lightnings, and voices and thunderings and an earthquake and great hail. Revelation 11:19***

### Quotes

"If thy labour is useful to thyself alone, the service that thou pretendest to render unto God is a lie."

**Martin Luther**  
*The Great Controversy, pg. 152*

### DidYouKnow?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ."

The prophecy is plain. Look for a church that keeps all of God's commandments and has a special unique

**The prophet John is alerting us to the fact that the issues in the last great controversy will center around the law of God. The enemy is going to challenge the authority of the Creator and try and establish his own sign of authority. Revelation 13 identified the powers that would be involved in the final challenge to God♦s authority and we saw that Papal Rome and the United States of America would play pivotal roles in this conflict. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Papal Rome spoke with the mouth of the lion, which in Daniel♦s prophecy represented Babylon. In other words, there would be a Babylonian component to the papacy, especially concerning his speech.**



**History tells us that during the fall of Babylon, its**

message for the last days. You can be sure God will not allow error to go unchallenged. He has not left this world to drift blindly into a fearful future when the enforcing of the mark of the beast will be attempted, with death as the alternative."

See Revelation 13:15-17



priesthood fled to Pergamum in Asia Minor, and there the Babylonian religion, its rites and rituals as well as its hierarchy were maintained. The last pontiff king of Pergamum, King Attalus, bequeathed his title (Pontifex Maximus), structure of the Babylonian priesthood, and vestments to Rome. [i] Initially only the pagan high priest of Rome used this title, but when pagan Rome fell, this Babylonian title was transferred to the pope. And the very first thing you see as you enter St. Peter's is this Babylonian title, Pontifex Maximus and this title is to be seen in the entrance to the Vatican and on every papal statue. Interestingly, the statue of pope Gregory XIII shows the title, but also shows him on top of the dragon, and according to Revelation 13 it is the dragon that gave his power to the sea beast, the Papacy. In a special sense, the Roman Pontiff is thus the spokesman of the dragon and it is through the papacy, the heir of the Roman Empire, that the dragon exercises his authority.

*After Emperor Constantine left Rome in AD 330 to make Constantinople, present Istanbul, his new capital, Pagan Rome transferred its power and throne, to papal Rome. Cardinal Henry Edward Manning of England says that the abandonment of Rome was the ♦ liberation ♦ of the Pontiffs. With the passage of time, he says, ♦ the Pontiffs found themselves alone; the sole fountains of order, peace, law, and safety ♦, in western Rome. [ii]*

The Roman pontiff claims to possess extraordinary powers in both moral and civil matters, even to the point of asserting his authority over the precepts of God. The Roman Decretalia states:

*He can pronounce sentences and judgments in contradiction to the rights of nations, to the law of God and man... He can free himself from the commands of the apostles, he being their superior, and from the rules of the Old Testament. ♦ He also states that: ♦ The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. [iii]*

A further statement to illustrate this point is:

*The Pope ♦s will stands for reason. He can dispense above the law; and of wrong make right, by correcting and changing laws. [iv]*

If, as we have seen, the commandments of God, and thus the government of God, are targets of the ire of Satan, then it stands to reason that these supposed powers of the papacy will be used in the final conflict between good and evil and will culminate in the enforcing of the mark of the beast on all the citizens of earth. The warnings concerning the mark of the beast are the most serious and solemn message to be found in the Bible and it is essential that we apply careful exegesis to unravel its meaning.

*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. 13:16,17***



***...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Revelation 14:9:11***



The mark of the beast carries with it the greatest punishment, which God has ever pronounced upon man. It is the punishment of eternal separation from God. The mark of the beast must therefore be an issue of vital importance, and since God searches hearts and characters, the issue must pertain to man's relationship with God. It is surprising how many theories there are on the mark of the beast, ranging from computer-generated I.D.s to implants of computer chips, none of which have any

bearing on man's character, personal relationship with God or subjection to the government of God. The beast in some of these prophetic interpretations has likewise been likened to a monstrous individual or a giant computer somewhere, containing all information about individual citizens. All of these may be useful to the enemy in terms of monitoring human activities and controlling access to resources, but they cannot be the mark of the beast as the beast refers to the papacy as we established in our study of the two beasts of Revelation 13. If we are going to identify the mark of the beast, then we must do so within the framework of the great controversy and how it effects the plan of salvation. It is through sin (breaking of God's law, 1 John 3:4) that separation between God and man came about, and this rebellion against His government has brought about the consequences which the human race is experiencing.

***But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Isaiah 59:2***

***The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23***

Justice demanded that the penalty for sin be paid, and Christ fulfilled these requirements by paying the price Himself. Through this sacrifice, grace could abound, and the broken relationship between man and God could be re-established. The renewed heart is one that



***...keeps the commandments, and the faith of Jesus Revelation 14:12***

***For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put My laws into***

***their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Hebrews 8:10***

A restored relationship implies a life that is once again in harmony with God's precepts. He who says that he knows God and keeps not His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4). If separation is the consequence of sin, then the mark of the beast must also pertain to sin, as this is the only cause for separation. If sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4) then, as in the beginning, the final cause for ultimate separation must be sought in the breaking of God's law.

The beast and its number were identified in *Two Beasts Become Friends*. Revelation 13 tells us that the mark would be enforced by the image of the beast. An image is something that has the attributes of the original, like a mirror image. The first beast of Revelation 13 (the Roman Catholic system) was a power that utilized state resources in order to enforce its doctrines even when these doctrines were contrary to the word of God. According to Revelation 13, the image is developed in the second beast, which was identified as the United States of America. The United States of America as the superpower in the world will likewise tend to use the power of the state to enforce religious doctrines even when contrary to the Scriptures. If the United States is to exercise all the authority which the papacy had and is to force all to worship the papacy, then it follows that they shall become like Rome was during the 1260-year period when she enforced her doctrines through the law and persecution. The United States will, however, enact papal laws and enforce their observance internationally. In becoming like Rome, by forming a union between church and state and using the power of the state to enforce such laws, the United States will make an image of the beast, a system that is like the original, or a reflection of the original. This religio-political giant will then enforce the mark of the first beast.

The manner in which the mark will be enforced, according to the Scriptures, is by first imposing economic sanctions on any organization or individual that would be unwilling to accept the mark.

***And that no man might buy nor sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name . . . and his number is six hundred, three score and six. Revelation 13:17,18***

A mark is something which distinguishes one thing from another. A mark of a religious power would be some outstanding belief that distinguishes it. The best way to determine the distinguishing mark of the Roman Catholic Church is to consult her teachings directly. Cardinal Gibbons claimed that Sunday-keeping was the mark of Roman Catholic authority.

***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, ecclesiastical and religious without her. This act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters. [v]***



***The sun was a foremost god with heathendom . . . The sun has worshippers at this hour in Persia and other lands . . . There is in truth, something royal, kingly about the sun, making it a fit emblem of Jesus, the Sun of Justice. Hence the church in these countries would seem to have said, ♦Keep that old, Pagan name. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified. ♦ And thus, the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus. [vi]***

**Sunday worship has no Scriptural authority, and rests solely upon tradition. Protestants have always claimed that the Bible and the Bible alone should be the standard for our religious beliefs. To meet this challenge, the Roman Catholic Church called the Council of Trent in 1545, and proclaimed that tradition stood above Scripture. The archbishop of Reggio, in a speech concerning this issue, maintained that proof for tradition superceding Scriptural authority could be found in the changeover from Sabbath to Sunday.**

***The Church has changed Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ but by its own authority. [vii]***

***Tradition, not scripture, is the rock on which the Church of Jesus Christ is built. [viii]***

**Protestants who observe Sunday as the day of worship are honoring the *mark* of Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholics claim:**

***The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic church, as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the protestant world. [ix]***

***Sunday is our mark of authority...the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact. [x]***

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

***A: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her, she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority. [xi]***

***You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! But by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment 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 the place of that which He has commanded. The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the ten commandments; you believe the other nine are still binding; who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principle, 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. [xii]***

***Why is the Sabbath commandment so relevant to God's law, and why is there such importance attached to the keeping of the particular day? The answer lies in the wording of the commandment which contains the seal of God.***

**The Sabbath commandment is not only the heart of the ten commandments, but it is the seal of the commandments. Remove it and the commandments have no authority or official seal.**

**Heaven and earth (His territory).**

**Remove this commandment and any**



**adherent of any religion could subscribe to the other nine. A change in the seal means a change of rulership, it implies a new authority with power to implement laws. Obedience to new laws ratified by the seal of authority entails submission to that authority. This was ever Satan's aim - to place his authority above that of the throne of God. By claiming authority as lawgiver, and enforcing his seal, in opposition to the seal of God, Satan shifts the position of authority from God to himself. Obedience to his seal (or mark) of authority means submission to his government in direct opposition to that of God. This is the ultimate apostasy. When mankind submits to this fake seal and openly confesses it by the proclamation of laws for the maintenance of Sunday, then man would have fully subjected himself to Satan's reign. Until such laws are enacted, freedom of choice is still possible. The mark of the beast only leads to ultimate separation from God once individuals are forced to choose whom they wish to obey. If they choose to obey God in this issue, then the penalty is persecution. If they choose to obey**

**A seal contains three specifications:**



- the name of the writer of the law,
- his office, and
- the name of the territory over which

**he rules.**

**Only the fourth commandment has these three items:**

- Yhwh God (God's Name)
- Creator (His office, position)

**the earthly authorities, then the penalty is separation from God. All will have to make this choice.**

**Throughout the Scriptures, the Sabbath of God is treated with the utmost solemnity.**

***And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.***

**Ezekiel 20: 20**

***For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.***

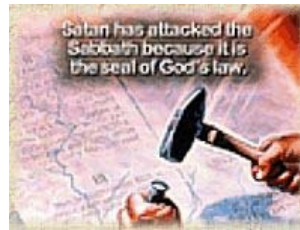
**Matthew 5:18**

***Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Matthew 15:3.***

***But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:9.***

***Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Matthew 15:13***

***Choose you this day whom ye will serve. If the Lord be God, follow Him. Joshua 24:15***



**The Church of Rome claims that Sunday is her mark of authority. Moreover, she claims that it is her right to legislate moral issues and that governments should subscribe to her directives. This is not only a right which she claimed for herself during the middle ages, but is a right which she claims for herself today. The official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sanctioned by Pope John Paul II, has this to say on the issue:**

***The Church, the pillar and bulwark of the truth, has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles to announce the saving truth. To the Church belongs the right always and everywhere to announce moral principles, including those pertaining to the social order, and to make judgments on any human affairs to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls. [xiii]***

**According to this Catechism, moral issues are dictated by the Ten Commandments, but not the Ten Commandments as found in the Bible, but the Ten Commandments as defined by Augustine, the Catholic Church father.**

***Ever since St. Augustine, the Ten Commandments have occupied a predominant place in the catechesis of baptismal candidates and the faithful. The catechisms of the Church have often expounded Christian morality by following the order of the Ten Commandments. The division and numbering of the Commandments have varied in the course of history. The present catechism follows the division of the Commandments established by St. Augustine, which has become traditional in the Catholic Church. [xiv]***

**What an amazing confession! Not the ten commandments as**

they occur in the Bible, but as defined by Augustine form the basis for Catholic morality. Since Sunday is also the mark of the Catholic Church's authority, it follows that this mark is in direct opposition to the declared will of God and that compromise on this issue is thus not possible. Sunday worship can be defended only on Catholic principles. The Catholic Church itself has this to say on the issue:



*Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles. From the beginning to the end of Scripture there is not a single passage, which warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first. [xv]*

*The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church, as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the protestant world. [xvi]*

*If Protestants would follow the Bible, they should worship God on the Sabbath Day. In keeping the Sunday they are following a law of the Catholic Church. [xvii]*

*Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the Roman [Catholic] Church, has no good reasons for its Sunday theory, and ought logically to keep Saturday as the Sabbath. [xviii]*

*Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible. [xix]*

One might think that some of these statements are dated, and that Rome would not pursue the issue as vigorously in our age. If, however, the enforcing of the mark of the beast is to become a reality, then one would expect this controversy to escalate and one could expect calls for legislation enforcing the maintenance of Sunday. This is precisely what John Paul II did just prior to the new millennium. Moreover, the Church has introduced strict obedience laws into its canon requiring total submission to the Pope in matters of doctrine. Strangely, words such as *heretic* and *punishment*, used in these Papal letters for dissenters, remind one of the persecutions in the time of The Inquisition. In his apostolic letter on Sunday sanctity, the pope repeatedly asks for Sunday legislation to enforce its observance:



*The day of rest 64. Only in the fourth century did the civil law of the Roman Empire recognize the weekly recurrence, determining that on the day of the sun the judges, the people of the cities and the various trade corporations would not work. (107) Christians rejoiced to see thus removed the obstacles which until then had sometimes made*

***observance of the Lord's Day heroic. They could now devote themselves to prayer in common without hindrance. (108)***

***It would therefore be wrong to see in this legislation of the rhythm of the week a mere historical circumstance with no special significance for the Church and which she could simply set aside. Even after the fall of the Empire, the Councils did not cease to insist upon the arrangements regarding Sunday rest...***

***When, through the centuries, she has made laws concerning Sunday rest, (109) the Church has had in mind above all the work of servants and workers, certainly not because this work was any less worthy when compared to the spiritual requirements of Sunday observance, but rather because it needed greater regulation to lighten its burden and thus enable everyone to keep the Lord's Day holy. In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical Rerum Novarum spoke of Sunday rest as a worker's right which the State must guarantee.. Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy. [xx]***

**This papal letter prompted the *Sunday Times* of London to write: "Pope launches crusade to save Sunday." 5-7-1998**

**Just a few days after issuing the directive on the maintenance of Sunday, on 18 May 1998, the Vatican issued its apostolic letter, AD TUENDAM FIDEM by which certain norms are inserted into the Code of Canon Law and into the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, which makes some strong statements with regard to submission to the pope on issues of doctrine.**



***Can. 1436 1. Whoever denies or places in doubt any truth that must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or repudiates the Christian faith as a whole, and does not come to his senses after having been legitimately warned, is to be punished as a heretic or as an apostate by major excommunication; a member of the clergy, furthermore, can be punished by other penalties, not excluding deposition.***

***2. Aside from such cases, whosoever rejects a doctrine proposed, as definitively to be held, by the Roman Pontiff or the College of Bishops exercising their authentic Magisterium, or else accepts a doctrine condemned by them as erroneous, and does not come to his senses after having been legitimately warned, is to be punished by an appropriate penalty.***

***5. We order that everything decreed by Us in this Apostolic Letter motu proprio be firm and valid and we command that it be inserted into the universal law of the Catholic Church that is, into the Code of Canon Law and into the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, respectively exactly as set forth above, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. Given at Rome, St. Peter's, 18 May 1998, in the twentieth year of Our Pontificate. [xxi]***

**Whoever denies or places in doubt any truth that must be believed with divine and catholic faith will be branded a heretic?**

**Punished by an appropriate penalty? That certainly sounds ominous and reminds one of the days when heretics received a penalty appropriate to their transgression. That penalty, of course, was death. The Bible says that history will repeat itself and that just as refusal to observe Sunday led to economic measures and eventually death in the middle ages, the same will happen just before the close of probation. However, this time the decree will be universal and the whole world will have to choose between allegiance to God or allegiance to man. Then, according to Daniel and John, will follow a time of trouble such as never was.**

**Referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and the events to occur just prior to the second coming of Christ, Jesus warned of the abomination that would make desolate. What Jesus and Daniel spoke of ties in with what John the Revelator saw. The destruction of Jerusalem serves as a type of what will happen in the whole world, and if we heed the warnings of the Bible, then God will protect His faithful people according to the promises.**

***So when you see standing in the holy place ♦the abomination that causes desolation♦, spoken of through the prophet Daniel ♦let the reader understand. Matthew 24:15***

**What is this ♦abomination♦ that causes desolation? In Luke 21:20 we find the answer.**

***When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Luke 21:20***

**This parallel text tells us that the Roman legions were referred to as the abomination that makes desolate. Pagan Rome was thus called an abomination, and we know that the Prince of Peace was crucified by this power. Moreover, they also persecuted God♦s people and mercilessly tried to exterminate them off the face of the earth. Their religion was also an abomination. Not only did they worship the emperor, but they also forced upon the world a false day of worship in 321 A.D. The Romans had a sacerdotal system, or priesthood where priests exercised supernatural powers, which the Bible also calls an abomination.**



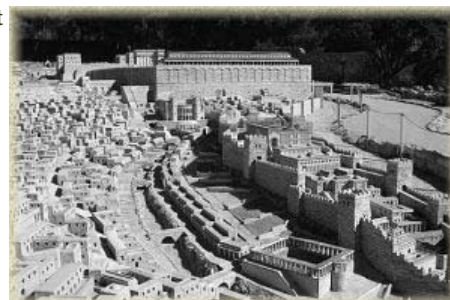
**A further reason for referring to Rome as the abomination that makes desolate is the idolatrous nature of their religion. They worshipped a pantheon of gods among which the female goddess played a prominent part. The Roman goddess Diana, whom the Greeks called Artemis, was worshipped as the main goddess in the pantheon of Roman goddesses, and 2 Kings 23:13 and Isaiah 44:19 call idol worship an abomination.**



**Since Jesus is referring to two time periods in the history of His people, the term ♦abomination that causes desolation♦ can not only apply to pagan Rome but must apply also to papal Rome which will repeat the atrocities at the end of time. In other words, when Jesus refers to pagan Rome who persecuted God♦s people and destroyed literal Jerusalem, He**

speaks of a type of which papal Rome is the antitype. Papal Rome is thus also an abominable system, a false religion that persecutes spiritual Jerusalem, God's worldwide people. Like the emperor's of old, the Pope possesses ecclesiastical as well as secular powers and the pantheon of gods is replaced by Mary and the saints, which all have the capacity to intercede on man's behalf.

To understand the antitypical fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24, it is necessary to study the type, the literal destruction of Jerusalem when the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem. Historians tell us that Cestius Gallus arrived at Jerusalem in October 66 A.D., he destroyed a



section of the wall that protected the city, but after the Jewish defenders fled to the confines of the temple, Josephus, the Jewish historian tells us that for no reason whatsoever, he suddenly withdrew from the city and headed back to Antioch. His decision however, was disastrous, as Jewish resistance fighters manning the ridges above the northbound mountain road succeeded in killing almost six thousand of the Romans. This respite gave the Christians who heeded the words of Jesus the opportunity to flee from Jerusalem.

*So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel let the reader understand then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. Matthew 24:15-20 NIV*

Why did Jesus here mention the winter and the Sabbath? Everything that Jesus said was important, and so we can assume that the Sabbath issue will be prominent at the end of time. We too will have to flee from the coming persecution of Rome, the abomination that desolates.

The Sabbath is the symbol of rest in His completed work on Calvary, and history tells us that God answered the prayers of those Christians who lived in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They fled Jerusalem in November, just before winter and the day was a Wednesday. They founded a colony at Pella, south east of sea of Galilee and not one of those early Christians who accepted the prophetic word of Jesus died. In the same way, those living at the end of time, when the mark of the beast is promulgated, will have the opportunity to flee to solitary places, as did those early Christians in Jerusalem and God promises protection during these times.

*Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Isaiah 26:20*

***A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Psalm 91:7,8.***

If we ignore the prophecies we will eventually perish as the disobedient Jews perished in the year 70 A.D. In the spring of that year, thousands of Jews flocked to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Suddenly the city was surrounded by the Romans who came to avenge their 66 A.D. defeat. The inscriptions on the Titus arch in Rome tell us that Titus besieged the city after the Jews had gathered inside Jerusalem. As the siege progressed, disease, filth, and famine took their toll, and amid the panic, three gangster groups added to the horror by terrorizing their fellow Jews and competing viciously for control of the dwindling supplies. The historian Josephus even records that mothers ate their babies.



In spite of Titus's orders to preserve the temple, the beautiful temple complex was burned down and destroyed just as Jesus had predicted. Not one stone was left upon another because, in their search for molten gold, the Roman soldiers overturned every single stone. All that is left of the original Jerusalem from the time of Christ is the Wailing Wall, which formed part of the outer court of the temple.

Two hundred fifty thousand Jews perished in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. After the Romans captured the city they sacrificed pigs on the temple site to show their contempt for the Jews and also worshipped their heathen Roman banners. Ninety-seven thousand men, women and children were taken prisoner and many others were sent to Egypt and other countries as slaves. Moses had predicted the results of disobedience.



***But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Deuteronomy 28:15***

***And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. Deuteronomy 28:52, 53.***

God told His people exactly what blessings they would enjoy should they obey and what curses they would experience if they should disobey. The choice was theirs. God's law is not

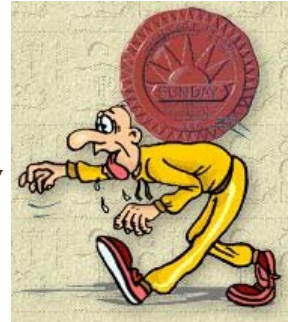
designed as a means of punishing the disobedient, but the consequences of disobedience are self-inflicted. God does not ask us to keep His law in order to be saved, but rather the law is given to those who are redeemed to protect them from harm. Obedience to God's law is an expression of love; it is the means whereby we develop a friendship with Him.



*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*  
*John 14:15*

What Jesus told those early disciples, He is also telling us. Rome will once again persecute God's people and we should read the signs of the times which tell us that the second coming of Jesus is nearer than ever before. When we study the prophetic word, we discover where we are in the stream of time. It is later than we think. It is time for us to wake up from our slumber and get ready for the second coming of Jesus.

The mark of the beast is the ultimate test of obedience. It will determine who will remain faithful to the precepts of Christ at all costs and who will fall under the banner of Satan. The keeping of the Sabbath is the greatest signal to the world that we believe that God is our Creator and our Redeemer. It is the signal that we acknowledge His authority and His authority alone in our lives, in terms of religious matters. In our time, anyone upholding the seventh day Sabbath will be subject to ridicule. The question might well be asked, ♦How can one keep the seventh-day Sabbath commemorating a six-day creation when the rest of the world adheres to evolutionary principles?♦ The question may also be asked how the whole world can be wrong, particularly in the light of miraculous signs among Sunday adherents, and only a few so-called fanatics be right. It will take courage to stand on God's side. The issue is not a day. The issue is the acknowledgement of the entire government of God, for which the day is merely a sign.



*...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they shall have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Revelation 14:9-11.*

This article is adapted from *Truth Matters* by Professor Veith

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