

Warning against worshipping the beast and his image and receiving his mark

(The last message of mercy to a dying world)

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Revelation 14:9-11

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning the meaning of these symbols. The warning against this sin of worshipping the beast, his image and receiving his mark is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.

And the way of escape is found in verse 12: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” In contrast to the first group they are justified through faith in Jesus and receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the 10 commandments of God.

So we will start with Revelation 12, and although it does not contain the symbols (the beast, the image of the beast and the mark of the beast), it will become clear later how this chapter links with the other chapters that do have the symbols.

Here in chapter 12 beginning with verse 1 we read: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” Revelation 12:1-4

A “woman” symbolises a church, a pure woman--a pure church, e.g. “I promised you to one husband, to Christ” says Paul, “that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him” 2 Corinthians 11:2 NIV. An impure woman an impure church, e.g. Israel because of her rebellion against God is called a harlot (Isaia 1:21). And the “dragon” represents the devil “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:9

So God’s church “a woman clothed with the sun”, the light and glory of the gospel dispensation, was about to present Jesus Christ to the world the “man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” Rev. 12:5 And "The moon" being under the woman’s feet represents the Mosaic dispensation. As the moon shines with a borrowed light derived from the sun, so the former dispensation shone with a light borrowed from the present. There they had the type and shadow; here we have the anti-type and substance. And the “12 crowns upon her head” represents the 12 apostles.

But Satan “the dragon” working through the Roman Empire stood ready to kill Jesus as soon as He was born. So while the “dragon” primarily represents Satan, in a secondary way it represents also the Roman Empire with “7 heads and ten horns, and 7 crowns upon his heads”. These symbols will be explained later. So the Roman empire, specifically Herod the governor of Judea saw Jesus as a challenge to his throne and sought to kill him while He was a baby (Matthew chapter 2)

The “7 heads and ten horns” symbols are more fully explained in Revelation 17 where John in vision is shown a woman sitting upon a beast having “7 heads and ten horns”. The 7 heads are first explained as representing 7 mountains, “The 7 heads are 7 mountains on which the woman sits” verse 9. This gives us a location of where this church “woman” rules from. As we saw in Revelation chapter 12 that it was Satan using the Roman empire, represented by the dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns, to try and kill Christ, then the 7 mountains have something to do with Rome. And it is common knowledge that Rome the capital of the Roman Empire is built on 7 hills. That is why sometimes it is called the city of 7 hills.

The we are also told in verse 10 that the 7 heads represents 7 kings and that “5 are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he comes, he must continue a short space”. History tells us that Rome had 7 forms of governments. And these heads of governments in succession are (1) Kingly (2) Consular (3) Decemvirate (4) Dictatorial (5) Triamvirate (6) Imperial (7) Papal. (Wikipedia on line)

Verse 10 continues by saying that “5 are fallen (Kingly, Consular, Decemvirate, Dictatorial, Triamvirate) , one is” that is to say, 5 are in the past and the now ruling form of government is the 6th , which is the imperial- the Caesars. The apostle John himself who wrote the book of Revelation was banished to the Isle of Patmos by Emperor Domitian, condemned “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9. Here, his enemies thought, his influence would no longer be felt, and he must finally die of hardship and distress.

The verse goes on to say that “the other is not yet come, and when he comes, he must continue a short space”. This form of government cannot refer to the Papal (the 7th) because as we shall see the papacy rules Rome for more than a 1000 years. Therefore there must be an interim form of government between the 6th (Imperial) and the 7th (Papal) which rules for a short time. And indeed we find this fulfillment in the Exarch of Ravenna, who ruled Rome for about 100 years. That is why the prophecy points to the 3 phases of Rome between the 6th and the 7th by these words “beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Rev. 17:8.

The 3 phases which also reveals Satan’s master plan of turning the church of Christ into his own because he had failed to extinguish the Christians by persecution. The 3 phases are (1) “The beast that was” ferociously persecuting Christians i.e. Imperial Rome- the 6th head or pagan Rome (2) “And is not” The transitional period from Imperial to Papal starting in 313 AD, when Emperor Constantine issued the edict of Milan which legalized Christianity and eventually Rome adopted a false form of Christianity, which is a combination of paganism and Christianity as its state religion. In this transitional phase, Rome is “is not” because it has lost its ferocious and persecuting character. The other reason for losing the persecuting character was that Western Imperial Rome eventually fell in 476 AD to the Barbarians and was later ruled by the Exarch of Ravenna for a short period of time as mentioned (Wikipedia online)

(3) “And yet is” phase is when Rome’s new state religion, which is a combination of paganism and Christianity led by the papacy, the 7th head, had been formally installed, then Rome resumed its bloodthirsty and aggressive character by persecuting all Christians that did not agree with its false Christianity. And because there is a “head” that rules for a short period between the 6th and the 7th the papal head is actually “the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into perdition” verse 11

And now for the “10 horns” symbol. “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” verse 12. During John’s time in the 1st century these 10 kingdoms were future kingdoms. When Western Imperial Rome fell in 476 Ad to the Barbarians, Rome was divided into exactly 10 kingdoms as prophecy had predicted. These nations were: (1) Alemanni – Germany (2) Anglo-Saxons- Britain (3) Burgundians – Switzerland (4) Franks - France (5) Heruli (6) Lombards - Italy (7) Ostrogoths (8) Suevi - Portugal (9) Vandals (10) Visigoths- Spain.

The verse goes on to say that these kingdoms “receive power as kings one hour with the beast”, that is they rule at the same time with Rome but subject to the papacy because verse 12 says “These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” No king during this period could rule his kingdom without the approval of the pope.

We have seen how Satan using the Roman Empire tried to kill Jesus Christ when He was a baby but failed (Matthew 2). So he persecuted Christ through the Jewish leadership till he inspired them to crucify Christ. But in this act also he failed because in crucifying Christ, He, Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and rose on the 3rd day and went back to His Father in heaven. Jesus death also meant that Satan’s ultimate destruction was certified (Genesis 3:15)

So Satan having failed with Jesus, he then persecutes his followers through his agents on earth. And we now turn to Chapter 13 of Revelation where the symbols of the beast, the image of the beast and the mark of the beast are found. We will read some of the verses:

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.... And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.....Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”
Revelation 13: 1-3,5-8, 18

There are 2 beasts mentioned above. We will for now concentrate on the first beast. The above verses reveal 10 specific characteristics of the first beast which will help us to identify who this beast represents:

1. This beast rises up out of the sea. (verse 1)
2. This beast has 7 heads and 10 horns and 10 crowns upon its horns. (verse 1)
3. The dragon gives this beast its power and great authority. (verse 2).
4. This beast has parts of 3 different beasts within it - Leopard, Bear and Lion. (verse 2)
5. This beast rules for 42 months. (verse 5).
6. This beast receives a deadly wound, which becomes healed over time. (verse 3).
7. This beast is both a political as well as a religious power. (verses 3, 7-8)
8. This beast commits blasphemy against God. (verse 1, 5,6).
9. This beast makes war with and overcomes the saints. (verse 7).
10. This beast has the number 666. (verse 18)

Characteristic #1: This beast rises out of the sea “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea” (verse 1).

The beast symbol here represents a “king” or a kingdom (Daniel 7:17). The sea (or water) symbol represents “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). This kingdom arises from among the established and densely populated nations of the then-known world, which is Europe, Asia and North Africa.

Characteristic #2: From the symbol of the “seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy”, we immediately recognize from what we have learned so far, the kingdom of Rome (verse 1). And that it had 7 forms of government and that 5 were in the past with the last 2 being Imperial and Papal. When John was given this vision he was living under Imperial Rome with the papal still in the future. Since the “head” is the controlling agent of the kingdom and no longer had crowns upon it as was the case in Revelation 12 which represented Imperial Rome, then this is further evidence that this beast of Revelation 13 represents Papal Rome, the 7th head. The “heads” instead of crowns have the “name of blasphemy” on them which deals with religion. Therefore the pope as the religious leader is now controlling this kingdom.

(Please note! That the symbol number 7 here in Revelation 13 and also in Revelation 12 represents completeness or all. It is not a literal number. In Revelation 12 there are 7 heads and 7 crowns upon the heads, that is all the heads, the Caesars have crowns on their heads. Then in Revelation 13 there are 7 heads and upon the heads the name of blasphemy, that is all the heads have upon them a blasphemous name which we will learn about later.)

We have already seen that the 10 horns represent 10 different powers which are connected which uphold the papacy. And we read from wikipedia on line that: “After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century there emerged no singular powerful secular government in the West., but there was a central ecclesiastical power in Rome, the Catholic Church. In this power vacuum the church rose to become the dominant power in the West” Church and State in Medieval Europe <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church> and state in medieval europe.

And historians state that: “The Church gradually became a defining institution of the Roman Empire (see The Church in the Roman Empire Before A.D. 170, Part 170, by Sir William Mitchell Ramsay). Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 proclaiming toleration for the Christian religion, and convoked the First Council of Nicaea in 325 whose Nicene Creed included belief in ‘one holy catholic and apostolic Church’. Emperor Theodosius 1 made Nicene Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire with the Edict of Thessalonica of 380 (see The Ecclesiastical Edicts of the Theodosian Code, by William Kenneth Boyd, Columbia University Press, 1905).

So from just these 2 characteristics and from what we learned earlier, we have identified the beast symbol to represent the Roman Catholic church. But in order for the Catholic church to be the beast it must manifest all 10 characteristics, so that there can be no doubt in our minds who this beast represents.

Characteristic #3: “and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (verse 2).

We have already identified the “dragon” symbol from Revelation 12:9 “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world”. And we have shown that while primarily it represents Satan, in a secondary sense it represents the Roman Empire in its pagan form or imperial status. But how exactly did the Roman Empire give the Roman Catholic Church power and authority and why?

The chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and his people during the first centuries of the Christian era, was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Satan through pagan Rome wanted to kill Jesus at his birth but failed. After Jesus Christ ascended to heaven Satan persecuted the church of God at first through pagan Rome but failed to extinguish them. He saw that paganism was losing converts to Christianity and so Satan came up with a plan to infiltrate the church of God. Emperor Constantine was nominally converted and in AD 313 he issued the Edict of Milan which tolerated Christians and persecution ceased. In the year 325 AD Emperor Constantine urged on by the bishop of Rome issued a decree that all Christian churches should convene at the city of Nicene and form a human creed, which was a combination of paganism and Christianity. And in the year 330 AD Emperor Constantine moved his capital to the city of Constantinople and left Rome with the bishop of Rome, thus fulfilling the prophecy that says “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority”

And furthermore Emperor Theodosius 1 in AD 380 as stated earlier made the church of Rome (Nicene Christianity) with its doctrines the religion of the Roman Empire with the bishop of Rome as the leader and making it illegal to practise any other form of Christianity. But Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit saying that the coming again of Jesus Christ will not happen until there is first apostasy in the church with the development of the papacy: "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4).

Characteristic #4: This beast has parts of 3 different beasts within it "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion..." (Verse 2)

So far we have learned that this kingdom arises out of a densely populated area of the then known world and is supported by 10 different kingly powers. And from characteristic #3 it has features of a "leopard" kingdom, a "lion" kingdom and "bear" kingdom. For more information on the identity of the 3 kingdoms whose features are incorporated by this beast, we go to the book of Daniel. In a night vision Daniel was shown 4 beasts or kingdoms coming out of the sea one after the other: (1) Lion, (2) Bear, (3) Leopard and a (4) 10 horned beast (Daniel 7: 1-7).

The meaning of this vision was explained to Daniel as being 4 kingdoms or empires that shall rule the world (Daniel 7:17). From the scripture text given below it will be seen that these four empires are the same that were shown in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar emperor of Babylon as symbolised by a great image made of 4 metals, i.e. (1) head of gold, (2) breast and arms of silver, (3) belly and thighs of brass and (4) legs of iron and his feet part of iron and part of clay. God gave Daniel the interpretation of the dream and he in turn gave it to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:1-40). The 4 world empires are as follows:

(1) Babylon= Head of Gold = Lion. Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar when explaining the dream "Thou art this head of gold." Daniel 2:38. Since the first beast in Daniel's vision is a lion therefore Babylon is also represented by the Lion.

(2) Medo-Persia = Breasts and arms of silver = Bear. Daniel continuing with the interpretation says "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee". Daniel 2:39. During the reign of Belshazzar grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the angel when explaining another vision that Daniel had been given of a ram and a he goat, said "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia" which was "pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him" Daniel 8:20,4. Belshazzar's reign came to an end during the night of feasting when "that very night Belshazzar king of the Babylonians was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom" Daniel 5:31. So Medo-Persia also represented by the breast and arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the Bear in Daniel's first vision is the second kingdom.

(3) Greece = Belly and thighs of brass = Leopard. Still explaining the first vision to Daniel, the angel said "And the rough goat is the king of Greece" which "smote the ram, and broke his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him," "And the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." This first king was Alexander the Great of Greece, making it the third kingdom. After his death, four of his principal generals divided his empire into four parts, Persia in the east, Egypt in the south, Macedon and the Grecian Isles in the west, and the Syrian in the north just as prophecy had predicted that the; "great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven" Daniel 8:8 "his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those." Daniel 11:4. These 4 were rivals and made war against each other and even though not united it was still the remains of the Greek Empire which is also represented by the belly and thighs of brass in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and by a Leopard in Daniel's first vision.

(4) Rome = Legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay = 10 horned beast. "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." Daniel 8:9. Out of one of the 4 horns of the Greek kingdoms of North, East, South and West came forth the 4th world

Empire. It is said to come out of one of the 4 horns because just as prophecy predicted, Rome first conquered the Western horn kingdom of Macedon and the Grecian islands and then he “waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land (Judea which was part of the northern kingdom of Syria)”. The Roman Empire is also symbolized by the legs of iron with feet part iron and part clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and also by the 10 horned beast in Daniel’s first vision. From history we know that Roman Empire was later divided into exactly 10 different nations. This was the pagan phase of the empire for as we shall see later the state religion would change and Rome would enter into its second phase.

After he was shown the beast with 10 horns, the vision of Daniel 7 continues: “I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things... I beheld, the same horn made war with the saints, and prevails against them..... And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time”(Daniel 7:8, 21, 24, 25)

It is a historical fact that the power that ruled the world after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 475 AD is the Roman Catholic Church which was clothed with both religious and civil authority. This is the papal phase of the Roman Empire since Catholicism was made the state religion. However three of the 10 nations that came out of the Roman Empire did not agree to be ruled by the Roman Catholic Church i.e. the Heruli, Ostrogoths and the Vandals and had to be defeated before the Roman Church could fully establish her spiritual supremacy and authority. These were known as the Gothic wars.

Also note that the little horn power of Daniel 7 has these main characteristics i.e.

- a) It comes up among the 10 horns (verse 24)
- b) It commits blasphemy against God (verse 25)
- c) It makes war with the saints and prevails against them (verse 25)
- d) It rules for a “time and times and the dividing of time” (verse 25). This time period will be shown later on in our study to be the same as the 42 months of the rule of the beast of Revelation 13

And since all the main characteristics of this little horn power are all included in the first beast of Revelation 13 then it means the two are the same thing i.e. the Roman Catholic Church.

Continuing on with **Characteristic #4** of Revelation 13, which says “And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion...” (Verse 2). We have now identified the leopard, bear and lion kingdoms as Greece, Medo-Persia and Babylon respectively. Then the question is, does the Roman Catholic religion have features of these 3 kingdoms. We will look at just a few of these:-

Babylon: Babylonians worshipped their pagan god called Marduk. “The name *Marduk* was pronounced *Marutuk*. The etymology of the name *Marduk* is conjectured as derived from *amar-Utu* ("immortal son of Utu" or "bull calf of the sun god *Utu*")” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marduk>. They also named each day after one of the seven planets which they thought were gods i.e. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Moon. Since Marduk was the “immortal son ofthe Sun god” therefore Sunday the day of the Sun was his special day and special to his followers.

We find its counterpart in the Catholic Church as we read from their own encyclopaedia: " The (Catholic) Church, on the other hand, after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, to the first, made the Third Commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord's Day." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04153a.htm>).

Please note, God commands us to “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy....the seventh day is the Sabbath” Exodus 20:8,10 i.e. Saturday, but the Roman Catholic Church in direct opposition to the word of God, says **no** the first day of the week “Sunday” a normal working day is the “day to be kept holy”

So we see clearly the aspects of Babylon are indeed in the Roman Catholic Church. There are many more pagan doctrines that the Catholic Church borrowed from pagan kingdoms of the past such as christmas, festivals, death, afterlife, hell, the priesthood, etc.

Medo-Persia: The law of Medo-Persia was such that when the king issued a decree, that decree or law could not be changed or even amended it was final. We find this example in Daniel 6:6-17. In summary: Darius King of Medo-Persia, has elevated Daniel to the highest office in the kingdom, exciting the jealousy of the leading men of the kingdom. Knowing of Daniel’s devotion to his God, his enemies trick Darius into issuing a decree ordering that anyone who, during the next thirty days, prays to any god or human being except to the King shall be thrown into the lion’s den.

Daniel however continues to pray to his God and so King Darius is forced by his own decree to throw Daniel into the lion’s den but God delivers His faithful servant by shutting the mouths of the lions. In these verses we see that when the king of Medo-Persia spoke law, he was considered to be infallible. Once given, it was not possible to change the law. This finds its counterpart in the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope which again has no Biblical backing (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_infallibility). So aspects of Medo-Persia are indeed within the Roman Catholic Church.

Greece: The Greeks are famous without doubt for their philosophers such as Plato and Socrates and Aristotle. For instance; Plato believed in the natural immortality of the soul and his consciousness in death. In his understanding, when heroes and notable persons died they went immediately to mansions and places of reward, while the common people went down to the infernal regions to receive punishment for sinful pollutions until they had been cleansed.

Here we see the Roman Catholic belief of the elevation of the saints to heaven at death, and also the doctrine of purgatory both of which has no Biblical backing. Plato also believed in the concept of separating the body from the soul. He believed this was achieved by afflicting the body, by depravation, and by separation from society. Thus was laid the groundwork for the later emergence of the Catholic belief for monasticism and penances, again this has no Biblical support. So these pagan aspects of Greece – are indeed within the Roman Catholic Church. It is a combination of paganism and Christianity.

Characteristic #5: “and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (verse 5).

Since each month in the Bible is exactly 30 days (see Genesis 7:11 & 8:4 where the flood waters were upon the earth for 5 months, and in Genesis 7:24 for 150 days--so $150/5 = 30$ days/month), then 42 months would be $42 \times 30 = 1260$ days. Also since each prophetic day represents 1 year of literal time (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), then this kingdom is prophesied to rule over the world for 1260 literal years.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, the Catholic church sought to step into Rome’s place and rule over Western Europe. But as we have stated that 3 of these nations i.e. the Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths refused to yield to the Catholic religion and authority. Therefore the Catholic church made war against these 3 nations. The last of these nations i.e. the Ostrogoths were defeated in March 538 and forced to leave Rome. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Rome_\(537–538\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Rome_(537–538)))

Therefore March 538 marks the beginning of the years of papal supremacy.

And the end of this period is February 10, 1798 when the French general Louis Berthier under directions from Napoleon Bonaparte entered the city of Rome, took pope Pius VI prisoner and exiled him to France. Thus the year of February 10, 1798 marked the end of the years of papal supremacy exactly 1260 years later as prophecy had predicted!! (March 538 to February 1798 equals 1260 years).

And where was God's true Church during these "dark ages" when the Roman Catholic Church ruled supreme and persecuted all who disagreed with her doctrines?

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Revelation 12:6. So God's true church was in the "wilderness" i.e. in obscurity for 1260 years exactly the number of years of the "dark ages" or of papal supremacy.

Elsewhere this time period is mentioned in the verse: "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." (Revelation 12:14). In other words 1260 years. Please note that the little horn power of Daniel 7:25 also rules for exactly this time period i.e. for a "**time, times and the dividing of time**". This shows that indeed the little horn power and this beast of Revelation 13 are the same thing as stated earlier. Praise the Lord for His Word!!!

"The suppression of the Scriptures under the dominion of Rome, the terrible results of that suppression, and the final exaltation of the word of God, are vividly portrayed by the prophetic pencil. To John the exile on lonely Patmos was given a view of the 1260 years during which the papal power was permitted to trample upon God's word and oppress his people. Said the angel of the Lord: "The holy city [the true church] shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." Rev. 11:2,3. "The periods here mentioned are the same, alike representing the time in which God's faithful witnesses remained in a state of obscurity.

"The two witnesses represent the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy...

"The papal power sought to hide from the people the word of truth, and set before them false witnesses to contradict its testimony. When the Bible was proscribed by religious and secular authority; when its testimony was perverted, and every effort made that men and demons could invent to turn the minds of the people from it; when those who dared proclaim its sacred truths were hunted, betrayed, tortured, buried in dungeon cells, martyred for their faith, or compelled to flee to mountain fastnesses and to dens and caves of the earth,--then indeed did the faithful witnesses prophesy in sackcloth." E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1884, pages 188-189

So although the Roman Catholic church persecuted God's followers, she could not completely wipe them from the face of the earth. And the time period of 42 months is fulfilled by the Roman Catholic church.

Characteristic #6: This beast receives a deadly wound "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed" (verse 3)

As mentioned earlier this deadly wound was inflicted upon the papacy and prophecy was fulfilled in 1798 when the French general Louis Berthier under directions from Napoleon Bonaparte entered the city of Rome, took pope Pius VI prisoner and exiled him to France, and proclaimed there would be no more popes elected.

But according to prophecy the wound becomes healed over time "and his deadly wound was healed". This was fulfilled in 1929 when Cardinal Gasparri and Benito Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty between Italy and the Vatican. It was signed by Benito Mussolini for the Italian government and by cardinal secretary of state Pietro Gasparri for the papacy. Upon ratification of the Lateran Treaty, the papacy recognized the state of Italy, with Rome as its capital. Italy in return recognized papal sovereignty over the Vatican City and restored temporal powers to the papacy.

Characteristic #7: This beast is both a political as well as a religious power "...and all the world wondered after the beast....and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (verses 3, 7-8)

As a demonstration of the power (that) was given him over all nations, we have before us the history of Pope Gregory VII and his treatment of Emperor Henry IV of Germany. "For presuming to disregard the pope's authority,

this monarch was declared to be excommunicated and dethroned. Terrified by the desertion and threats of his own princes, who were encouraged in rebellion against him by the papal mandate, Henry felt the necessity of making his peace with Rome.

“In company with his wife and a faithful servant, he crossed the Alps in midwinter, that he might humble himself before the pope. Upon reaching the castle whither Gregory had withdrawn, he was conducted, without his guards, into an outer court, and there, in the severe cold of winter, with uncovered head and naked feet, and in a miserable dress, he awaited the pope’s permission to come into his presence. Not until he had continued three days fasting and making confession, did the pontiff condescend to grant him pardon. Even then it was only upon condition that the emperor should await the sanction of the pope before resuming the insignia or exercising the power of royalty. And Gregory, elated with his triumph, boasted that it was his duty “to pull down the pride of kings.” Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* 1888, p.57-58

Characteristic #8: “and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.....And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” (Revelation 13: 1,5,6).

The “heads” now have no crowns, that is they are not kings as is the case in Revelation 12 when they represented Rome in its Imperial stage, the Caesars. But instead they have the name of blasphemy written on their “heads”, and blasphemy had to do with religion, therefore the “heads” are religious leaders

What is blasphemy against God?

The Jews wanted to stone Jesus for blasphemy because He told them that He is God, and indeed He is God when He said “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30) and then the spiritually blind Jews “answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”(John 10:33). So if one claims to be God when he is not then that is blasphemy. This gives further evidence that Rome was in its papal stage.

So does the pope claim to be God?

“It is one of the leading doctrines of Romanism that the pope is the visible head of the universal church of Christ, invested with supreme authority over bishops and pastors in all parts of the world. More than this, the pope had arrogated the very titles of Deity. He styles himself "Lord God the Pope," assumes infallibility, and demands that all men pay him homage.” (E.G White *The Great Controversy*, 1884, page 53)

What else is considered blasphemy in the Bible?

After Jesus had healed a paralytic and declared to him that his sins are forgiven again the spiritually blind Jews murmured and said “Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark 2:7).

Does the Roman Catholic Church claim to be able to forgive sins?

“The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened. Faith was transferred from Christ, the true foundation, to the pope of Rome. Instead of trusting in the Son of God for forgiveness of sins and for eternal salvation, the people looked to the pope, and the priests and prelates to whom he delegated authority. They were taught that the pope was their mediator, and that none could approach God except through him, and, further, that he stood in the place of God to them, and was therefore to be implicitly obeyed.” (E.G White, *The Great Controversy*, 1884, page 58)

So quiet clearly the Roman Catholic church is committing blasphemy against God and therefore manifests this characteristic of the beast of Revelation 13.

Characteristic #9: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (verse 7). Did the Roman Catholic church make war with and persecute the followers of God?

"In the thirteenth century was established that most terrible of all the engines of the papacy,--the Inquisition. The prince of darkness wrought with the leaders of the papal hierarchy. In their secret councils, Satan and his angels presided, while unseen in the midst stood an angel of God, taking the fearful record of their iniquitous decrees, and writing the history of deeds too horrible to appear to human eyes. "Babylon the great " was "drunken with the blood of the saints." The mangled forms of millions of martyrs cried to God for vengeance upon that apostate power." E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1884, page 64.

"The establishment of the Holy Office, or the Inquisition, as the persecuting arm of the Roman Church against all heretics. This effort accounted for the slaughter of 50 million martyrs over a period of about 300 years" *The Other End of the World*, p 127, by Roger Rusk, Plantation House, 1988.

Therefore history tells us that this characteristic has been fulfilled as well.

Characteristic #10: This beast has the number 666 "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." (Verse 18)

According to this verse the number 666 is the number of a man and the man at the head of the Roman Catholic Church is the pope. Therefore this number will be connected to the pope's title. What is the pope's title? We will let the Catholic answer "The title given to the Pope is 'Vicarius Filii Dei.'" *Sacrosancta concilia ad regitionem exacta*, by Philippe Labbe, SJ., vol. I, p 1534: Paris, 1671.

And again we read "The title of the Pope of Rome is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. This is inscribed on his mitre". Our Sunday Visitor, (Catholic Weekly), November 14, 1915, under "Bureau of Information," p 3.

As *Vicarius Filii Dei* is the official name for the pope, then how does one count the number of this name? Before the use of numbers, letters of the alphabet were given numerical significance. Most are familiar with Roman numerals. The numbering system used in ancient Rome is as follows: the letters:

I=1 V or U= 5 X=10 L=50 C=100 D=500

Since Latin was the official language of ancient Rome, and the pope's official name is in Latin, then let us apply this Roman numbering system to the pope's name and see what numerical total we get from "Vicarius Filii Dei":

V=5 I=1 C=100 A=0 R=0 I=1 U=5 S=0 F= 0 I=1 L=50 I=1 I=1 D=500 E=0 I=1.

And the total is 666 and this means the Roman Catholic Church manifests all 10 characteristics of the first beast of Revelation 13.

In warning us about the Roman Catholic Church and the rest of Babylon and evil that they intend to do, God wants us to be saved and not share in their punishment which is the plagues and the lake of fire. But God will not force anyone to receive salvation in Jesus Christ. The decision rests with the individual. And that decision must be made before God's judgements start to fall upon the earth or before the sleep of death.

The second beast

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb" Revelation 13:11.

Which world power is this?

“At this point another symbol is introduced. Says the prophet, “I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb.” [Revelation 13:11.] Both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols. The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when the “four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” [Daniel 7:2.] In Revelation 17, an angel explained that waters represent “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” [Revelation 17:15.] Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea, represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.

“But the beast with lamb-like horns was seen “coming up out of the earth.” Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied, and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World,—that turbulent sea of “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” It must be sought in the Western Continent.

“What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America.” E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 1888, page 439-440

The United States is the second beast of Revelation 13 with its two fundamental principles of governance i.e. *Republicanism*: the freedom from the despotic and arbitrary rule of kings and emperors of Europe, by allowing all its citizens to control their own government. *Protestantism*: the freedom to follow what you believe to be true in any religious matter, without threat, intimidation or persecution by the Roman Catholic Church or any other denominational or civil power..

The USA constitution states that "First Amendment : Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

The image of the beast

But the stern tracings of the prophetic pencil reveal a change in this peaceful scene. The beast with lamb-like horns speaks with the voice of a dragon, and "exercises all the power of the first beast before him." The spirit of persecution manifested by paganism and the papacy is again to be revealed. Prophecy declares that this power will cause “the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast” and say "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast" Rev. 13,14”

And what is the image of the beast and how is it formed?

The image of the beast is all the churches that are united upon common points of faith such that they will speak with one voice to influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions. Most of the churches have united under the World Council of Churches families (WCC) which has other ecumenical bodies under it such as the Christian World Communion (CWC), National Council of Churches (NCC), etc. And since they don't pay taxes, they are in effect being sustained by the State. The only thing that is left is for the State to enforce her decrees then it will become a persecuting power as was the Roman Catholic church against dissenters in former years, in other words an image of the beast. And like the Catholic religion which is a combination of paganism and Christianity, the image of the beast church (WCC) also believes in pagan doctrines such as Sunday sacredness and the immortality of the soul. And belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels is felt in the WCC churches.

Members of the CWC are: The Roman Catholic Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Orthodox Church, Pentecostal, Baptist, Evangelical, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist churches, etc. <https://www.oikoumene.org/church-families>

The WCC will do exactly what the Roman Catholic Church was doing in the past before she received her deadly wound i.e. using the state to enforce her decrees and persecute God's true people.

And what will the decree be?

“that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causes 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.

So the United States of America will in partnership with the Catholic Church and the WCC issue a decree to enforce the mark of the Roman Catholic church and persecute all those that do not comply.

The mark of the beast

And what is the mark of the beast or the mark of Roman Catholic church?

Since we have already learned that the pope has blasphemed God in claiming to forgive sins and claiming to be God on earth, then his mark or sign of authority will be when he exalts his laws above God’s laws. In Daniel 7:25 we read that the pope “will think to change times and laws” and also that in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, he “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

In God’s law the 4th commandments says: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11

This commandment has 3 elements that constitute a seal or mark: (1) The Author of the law is Jehovah. (2) His position is that of Creator. (3) His dominion is heaven and earth and the sea. Therefore the Sabbath law is God’s seal or mark.

So in order for the Roman Catholic church to be able to exalt herself above God’s laws she has to have a counterfeit sabbath.

The Roman Catholic church says: “The Ten Commandments....Written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, this Divine code was received from the Almighty by Moses amid the thunders of Mount Sinai..... Christ resumed these CommandmentsHe proclaimed them as binding ...**The Church (Roman Catholic), on the other hand, after changing the day of rest from the seventh day of the week, to the first, madeSunday as the day to be kept holy.**” The Catholic Encyclopaedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04153a.htm>.

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act... and the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters." Letter from H.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons.

"Protestants...accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change...In observing the Sunday, they are accepting the **authority** of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." Our Sunday Visitor, February 5, 1950.

From the quotations above and in many other official writings the Roman Catholic church proudly boasts of attempting to change God's law and thereby making a counterfeit sabbath.

What does it mean to receive the mark "in their right hand, or in their foreheads"?

"The forehead" is evidently used as a figure, to denote the intellect or mind, as "the heart" is used to denote the disposition or affections. To mark or seal in the forehead is the same as to "write in the mind." Hebrews 10:16. Receiving this mark in our forehead would signify mental acceptance of the mark i.e. you actually believe the Catholic Church has the authority to change God's Sabbath day from the 7th day to the 1st days i.e. from Saturday to Sunday. As the "forehead" represents the intellect, the "hand" represents power, as Psalm 89:48, "Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?", see also Genesis 16:6. So to receive the mark in the "hand" means power or force is used to make you obey and you reluctantly submit to the powers that be in order to escape punishment.

As we have seen all denominations have united to form one global church or Babylon which is the WCC. Babylon is derived from the word "babel" meaning confusion (Gen. 11:9). The churches that make up Babylon or the image of the beast have conflicting creeds and false doctrines. This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 4:1 which reads:

"And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."

The number seven here symbolises fullness or completeness or all. And a woman symbolises the church (2 Corinthians 11:2) therefore the one man that the seven women want to be called by is Christ. Bread is a symbol of the word of God (John 6:51, 63; Jeremiah 15:16.). And apparel or clothes is a symbol of righteousness/unrighteousness (Zechariah 3:3,4).

So without the symbols, the prophecy in Isaiah 4:1 reads:

"And in that day all churches shall take hold of Christ, saying, we will teach our own doctrines, and put on our own righteousness: only let us be called by your name (Christ), to take away our reproach"

The prophecy of Isaiah 4:1 tells us that all denominational churches of today without exception are teaching their own doctrines, in other words Satan and not Christ is the leader of these churches. That is why they have become the "habitation of devils" and are ready to be destroyed by the seven last plagues sent by God. The final call is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Revelation 18: 4,5

Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind

The Saviour Jesus Christ when announcing His mission on earth said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath set me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" Luke 4:18. Jesus Christ offers freedom of escape to those trapped in Babylon. And we can be set free if we repent of our sins and put on the righteousness of Christ by faith and be freed from the bondage of Satan. Not only has He promised to forgive our sins if we accept Him (1 John 1:9) but He has also promised to give us power to become the sons of God, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" John 1:12. Amen.

Andrei Lesiapeto

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