

Mark of the Beast Crisis

Introduction

The issue of Sunday legislation was a lifelong concern of Ellen G. White. Most of her writings on this were clustered in the 1888–1902 window.

- During that period a real crisis in this country did develop over Sunday worship. A brilliant Adventist Pioneer, Alonzo Jones, appeared before Congress, representing Adventists and all Sabbath keepers.

His testimony and work of obtaining 50,000 signatures to block the “National Sunday Law” bill, sponsored by Senator H. W. Blair, was very successful.

Sabbath keepers’ challenge now is to ***understand from the Bible*** that, once again, oppressive laws will come to this country over a worship day. ***It will become a national crisis, the mark of the beast crisis!***

Beginning the Study Journey

The last part of Revelation 12 actually merges with chapter 13! We are oriented to these crisis thoughts:

“And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

“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” (Revelation 13:7).

Revelation 13 details that war. There are two things that ***define this time of conflict***, which, we will see, begin shortly. It occurs the last three and a half years of earth’s history:

1. Satan hates God’s remnant people, who make up the last-day, faithful, pure church. He will war against them – persecuting them.
2. Those saints are characterized as keeping God’s commandments and having the testimony of Jesus (14:12).

That same war will later be called Armageddon (Revelation 16), where the false trinity will successfully deceive the world!

This war was prophesied in Daniel:

1. “*wear out the saints of the most high*” (Daniel 7:25).
2. “*These who are wise among the people will teach the masses. However, they will fall by the sword and by the flame, and they will be imprisoned and plundered for some time*” (Daniel 11:33 – NET).
3. “*It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed*” (Daniel 12:7 – NIV).

“The condition of the world previous to the first appearing of Christ is a picture of the condition of the world just previous to His second advent.... **Satan will work with miraculous presentations** to confirm men in the belief that he is what he claims to be, – the prince of this world, and that victory is his. **He will turn his forces against those who are loyal to God**, but though he may cause pain, distress, and human agony, **he cannot defile the soul.**”¹

“Satan hopes to involve the remnant **people of God** in the **general ruin** that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be **more determined** and **decisive in his efforts to overthrow them.**”² This will occur when Satan realizes his time is running out (Revelation 12:12) during the last three and a half years (13:5).

It is **in this setting** that our study begins. It will focus on the **dragon** (Satan), a **dragon-powered beast** (which Revelation 17:3, 12 had previously noted as Papal Rome) and that **war**. Then comes a second beast, later called a **false prophet** (representing a demon-driven United States).

The Beast the World will Honor

“The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name” (Revelation 13:1 – NIV). (KJV not accurate.)

¹ 4BC, p. 1153 (Letter 43, 1895) (emphasis added).

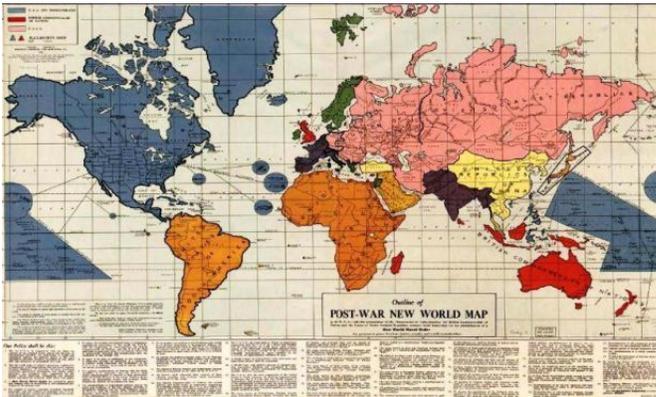
² Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 295 (emphasis added).

This sea beast is notably different in one key aspect from the same beast in Revelation 17:3, 12. Its horns (kings/kingdoms) now have crowns. Those kings **now rule** over ten world empires or regions!

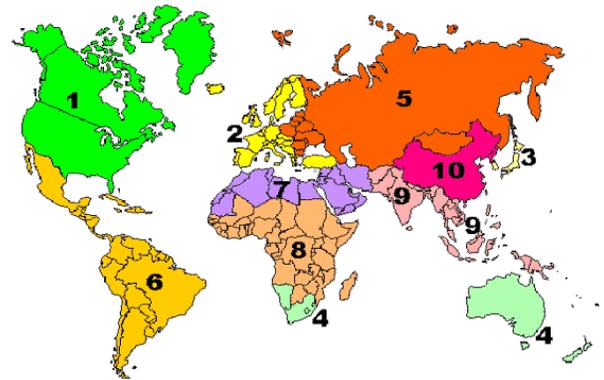
- In chapter 17, those ten horns *gave power* to the beast before they had these crowns (17:12-13) – “*They have no kingdom as yet*” (Revelation 17:12).
- A **major transition** in history occurs with these crowns. Literally, a new world order has begun! They now represent ten dominions or unique world regions. Shortly, we will be informed that this world is enamored by this beast.

The dragon waits on the shore for the beast with its ten kingdom powers to emerge out of the sea. That watery symbol (the sea) represents slime and evil (Isaiah 57:20-21).

- As it arises, it represents an end-time unified ten-kingdom world power. The Greek word for these crown means “royal” leaders of nations or kingdoms.
- Plans for such global divisions were begun by the United States State Department and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In 1942 they published a ten-regional map of the world. It was refined in 1973 by the Club of Rome.



1942



1973

Because this sea beast will take on the characteristics of Satan himself,³ it too will hate God’s people! It is Satan’s key last-day “moral” agent in the mark of the beast crisis.

³ Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 488.

- On each of his seven heads is written the name of “*blasphemy*.”
- He will claim the powers of deity. He is the antichrist. He will be an imposter of Christ, and **he will demand worship in place of God**. He will claim the prerogatives of God.⁴

The Greek word for “*beast*” in this chapter is *therion*, meaning a **savage creature!** It is depicted as a geopolitical power – with a nation-like symbol. For this discussion, it refers to the **Holy See** – papal Rome (made up of the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican City State). The antichrist will be fierce, savage-like, toward God’s people!

This echoes the time of Daniel 11:36: “*And the king [the antichrist] shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation [God’s wrath] be accomplished: for that that is determined [decreed] shall be done.*”

“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” (Revelation 13:2 – NKJV).

John personally saw the dragon on the sandy seashore, calling “up” this beast. Now he describes it, clearly relating it to three of the four Daniel 7 beasts.

- The main imagery is that of a **leopard**, with the characteristics of speed, force and savagery.
- Satan gives it **power** – which is clearly beyond what the ten horns gave the beast in 17:12. And – he gives it a **throne** to rule the world with **global authority**.⁵
- The whole world will be enamored by this power (13:3).

Later, in Daniel 8, the **symbol for Greece** became a **rough he-goat**, which, in ancient Hebrew, symbolized **Satan**. Everything related to this beast in Revelation 13 is demonic.

- ***This illustrates the intimate association between Satan and the antichrist.***

⁴ Stefanovic, Ranko; *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, MI; 2002), p. 403 (emphasis added).

⁵ Kistemaker, Simon J.; *Revelation* (Baker Academic; Grand Rapids, MI), p. pp. 378-379.

World Power

The dragon authorizes this fiendish sea-beast “empire” to act with **his** power!⁶ Though a prophetic beast relates to a kingdom, nation or empire, many scholars see the activities of Revelation 13’s sea beast as being **directed** by an individual leader!⁷

How broad will this ruling power be? Revelation 17 reveals this to be a church and state power (the harlot and the beast). Then it explains: “*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore [another symbol for the antichrist] that sitteth upon many waters*” (Revelation 17:1).

- “*Harlot*” = apostate church, called Babylon.
- “*Sitting*” = ruling over
- “*Waters*” = the people of the **whole world** (17:15)!

Satan guarantees that this earthly agent has world power, rules over the world and eventually wields life and death authority related to its “*mark*.”

This has been described:

“Prophecy foretells a restoration of her power [papacy–sea beast of Revelation 13].”⁸

“She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to **regain control of the world**, to **re-establish persecution**, and to undo all that Protestantism has done.”⁹

United Nations (U.N.) Roman Catholic Secretary-General Antonio Guterres observed that the coronavirus pandemic should have brought a greater sense of unity to the world powers. But it has left the world with greater fragility.

⁶ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

⁷ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 495 (emphasis added).

⁸ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 329.

⁹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 565-566 (emphasis added).

- Then he remarked that there is a need for a **centralized global government** with **enforcement powers to bring the world together.**¹⁰

Ponder: That is exactly what Revelation 17:12-13 and 13:3-9 predict will occur!

That “solution,” he continued, must have “an instrument of global governance that has teeth” (tyranny and dictatorial power) which sidelines “national interest!”¹¹

- “We are a world in turmoil.” He concluded, “our assumptions and approaches **have to change.**” Joe Biden’s slogan: “Build Back Better” – i.e., reset the world.
- Guterres was Secretary-General of the Portuguese Socialist Party from 1992 to 2002.¹² His sympathy for Marxist thinking is strong. “Central control” is the way to keep things unified and orderly. That is the New World Order (NWO) philosophy.

His friend, Pope Francis, observed: “Christians must reject sovereignty and embrace globalism to make the world a better place.” Many of Francis’ “declarations” have promoted Marxist ideals, which fit well into this type of an idealized world agenda.¹³

Francis recently made a strong push for globalism by calling for a **supranational**, legally constituted **body** to **enforce** the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to implement “climate change” policies (exactly what the U.N. Secretary General wants). This is all now called “The Great Reset.”

- That “body” would be above the United Nations.
- That “body” would have international legal power to **enforce** the U.N. mandates – the “teeth” U.N. Secretary-General Guterres wants.

The Holy See has had for decades a passion to head such an organization! Francis claims that his ideals will bring in a peaceful “**new humanism.**”¹⁴ With cautious apprehension, we reflect on what the late Jesuit priest Malachi Martin

¹⁰ <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/05/31/sidelined-and-ignored-u-n-laments-its-inability-to-achieve-anything-on-world-stage/> (emphasis added)

¹¹ <https://www.newsbreak.com/news/0PRI8pDG/un-chief-guterres-calls-for-one-supreme-body-of-global-governance>

¹² <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/07/02/u-n-chief-guterres-renews-call-for-more-global-governance-bureaucratic-regulation/>

¹³ <https://www.pinterest.at/pin/16184879898083340/>

¹⁴ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pope-francis-global-education-pact> (emphasis added)

said: “What captures the unwavering attention of the secular leaders of the world in this remarkable network of the Roman Catholic Church is precisely the fact that it places at the personal disposal of the Pope a **supranational, supracontinental, supra-trade-block structure** that is so built and oriented that if tomorrow or next week, by a sudden miracle, a **one-world government** were established, the Church would not have to undergo any essential structural change in order to retain its dominant position and to further its global aims.... a **farewell to a nation system.**”¹⁵

- The sinister drive to control the world is within Rome’s infatuation for unlimited global power.
- The Scriptures make it clear **that it will be given** such authority (Revelation 17:13).

In 2019 Pope Francis made a strong push for globalization to reach “sustainable goals.” However, he said that they **cannot be achieved without “force,”** which is also what he meant when he said that we need “hard laws.”¹⁶

“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3 – NIV).

Here, in a parenthetic statement, one of the seven **heads** was wounded – but healed. In verses 12 and 14, the **beast** is wounded. Historically, it can be shown that the **sixth head** of Revelation 17:10, Pope John Paul II, was the one that seemed to be “wounded to death” but lived. On May 13, 1981, an attempt by a Turkish assailant to assassinate him led to his hospitalization, surgery and a life-threatening infection. This helps to rivet the understanding of the beast to Rome, the Vatican City State and a pope head.

- It notes in that context that the **whole world** was filled with wonder at and followed the beast.¹⁷
- Intriguingly, that pope, John Paul II, was seen by more people than any human being in history. People were often transfixed when he appeared to individuals and groups.

¹⁵ Martin, Malachi; *The Keys of This Blood* (A Touchstone book, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1991), pp. 142-143, 479 (emphasis added).

¹⁶ <http://www.fulcrum7.com/news/2020/3/4/vatican-moves-global-pact-on-education-event-to-october?rq=global%20pact> (emphasis added)

¹⁷ Thomas, Robert L.; *Revelation 8–22 – An Exegetical Commentary* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1995), p. 158.

From Wonder to Worship

“People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, ‘Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?’” (Revelation 13:4 – NIV)

This introduces a major timing clue. This antichrist worship begins before the last 42 months (13:5). Both the dragon and the beast are accepting the role of God.

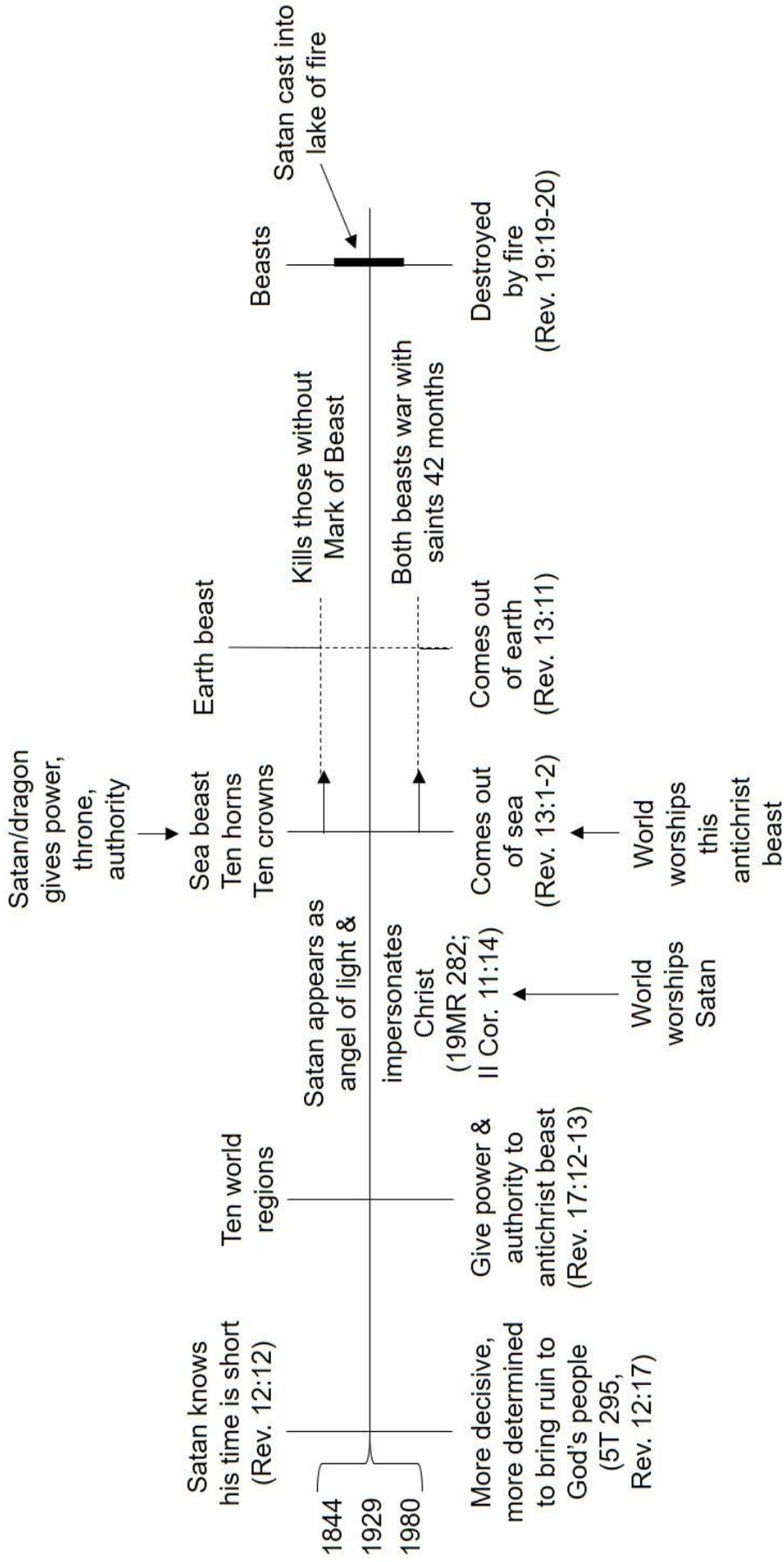
That power, authority and rulership that the beast receives from Satan leads to a wondering of, or an “amazed” world toward, that beast. The word for “wondered”/ “amazed” (*masthe* – G) means that the world has the same reaction that people had in Christ’s day to His authority and miracles (Matthew 8:27, 9:33, 15:31; Mark 5:20). This end-time amazement leads the world to:

- Follow that beast.
 - Worship that beast – and
 - Worship the dragon
- } Revelation 13:4¹⁸

Fascinating is E. G. White’s observation regarding this prophecy: ***“In the last days Satan will appear as an angel of light, with great power and heavenly glory, and claim to be the Lord of the whole earth. He will declare that the Sabbath has been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; and as lord of the first day of the week he will present this spurious sabbath as a test of loyalty to him. Then will take place the final fulfillment of the Revelator’s prophecy.*** ‘And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 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.***’ (Rev. 13:4-5).” [Then she quotes the rest of the chapter – vss 6-18.]¹⁹

¹⁸ Aune, *op. cit.*, p. 737.

¹⁹ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 282 (emphasis added).



This suggests that **when** Satan appears as an angel of light, he will give that beast its great authority.

- It also suggests that the world will then bow in adoration and worship to both.
- It also means that this occurs **before** the last three and a half years!

What happens during this anticipated time? It is the final period for God's witnesses to understand Daniel 8–12 (Revelation 10)!

The worship by the world of both the dragon and this beast suggests that worshipping one is worshipping the other.²⁰ It also means that the world then sees them as gods or godlike!

- The heart of all idolatry is worshipping a “god” in place of Yahweh (Exodus 20:3, 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 1:16, 11:13). ***To worship the beast is to worship the satanic power behind him.***²¹
- The motivation for this worship is not moral greatness but their miraculous power.²²

“Revelation mentions worship of the beast several other times (cf. 13:8, 12; 14:9, 11; 20:4) and worship of his image several times (cf. 13:15; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20).”²³

One of earth's final gospel appeals is in Revelation 14:6-7, which **counters this worship.**

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:6-7).

- This mighty “angel” beckons the whole world (cf. Revelation 10:11) to worship the **Creator God!** This counters the invitation of the dragon and the sea beast.

²⁰ Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

²¹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

²² Mounce, Robert H.; *The Book of Revelation* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1977), p. 249.

²³ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

- ***That Creator worship is uniquely done through honoring the sacred seventh-day Sabbath.***

At this point, we can see an end-time competition between who is to be worshiped and the Sabbath issue! Is it possible that the dragon and the sea-beast “worship” relates to a “worship day”?

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:13-14 – KJV).

“With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Revelation 17:2).

- The mission of this false trinity will be successful – from miracles to false teachings. This describes Revelation 13 from another perspective.
- John later notes: *“All the world will worship”* the sea beast (Revelation 13:8), except those whose names are in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
- ***Armageddon is the same as the mark of the beast crisis.***

Each side has a mission to “convince the whole world of its distinguishing “mark.”

Each has a worldwide purpose. Each has a message. Each has an agenda to worship or be worshiped related to its “icon” or god/God.

- ***“Worship the image”*** (13:15), *“worship the dragon and beast”* (13:4) (part of false trinity)
- ***“Worship him that made heaven and earth and the sea, and the fountains of water”*** (14:7) – i.e., the Creator.

Those satanic spirits are “spewing” false or deceptive teachings that relates to a false day of worship in the above verse. Daniel’s prophecies regarding laws that God calls an abomination directly relate to an alternative Sabbath. Daniel even recorded regarding the antichrist: *“Its intention will be to change times established by law”* (Daniel 7:25 – NET).

God's mark or sign is the fourth commandment. It is a reminder of God's forever covenant with His people, that He is the God who makes them holy (Exodus 31:13, 17; cf. Ezekiel 20:13). He is **the** Creator God.

- “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).
- “**It is a sign** between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17).
- “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 20:11).
- “Sign” is from the Hebrew *oth*, meaning “mark” or “proof.”

God's people are identified by worshiping the Creator God and by being loyal to the Sabbath.

The “mark” of the beast, its “icon” or its sign, is addressed next.

Another Beast with Satanic Power

“Then I saw another beast coming up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but was speaking like a dragon” (Revelation 13:11 – NET).

John recently observed a beast **ascend** from the sea in 13:1. It echoed the four beasts in Daniel 7:3. This new beast **ascends** from the earth (it is earthly, worldly), echoing Daniel 7:17.

- This beast is later called a false prophet (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10). **It represents something religious!**
- **Immediately, John observes** this creature speaking as a dragon. **While revealing lamblike horns**, it is demonic, a minion of Satan!

The “*lamb-like horns*” means that it is deceptively seen as Christlike – the “*Lamb of God*.”

Expositor White identifies those two horns as Republicanism and Protestantism,²⁴ with the beast representing the United States. Contextually,

²⁴ *Signs of the Times*, November 11, 1899.

something has already happened to change it, **as** the beast enters prophetic history here!

“It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed” (Revelation 13:12 – NIV).

The dragon gave his authority to the first beast (13:2b); that beast contextually gives, according to scholars, “*all authority*” to the second beast. To many expositors, it is a complete transfer of satanic power!²⁵

- Its ***immediate mission*** is to make the world, its inhabitants, ***worship the sea beast!***
- The crisis is related to a worship issue.

This beast, as a false prophet, is making a “religious” command. In the Old Testament a false prophet always arises ***within the covenant community*** (the Christian community!) (cf. Matthew 7:15).²⁶

“The statement that the beast with two horns ‘causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast’ indicates that the authority of this nation will be exercised by ***enforcing some worship observance***, which shall be seen as an act of homage to the papacy.”²⁷

The lethal beast wound (not head) that was healed can only reference the Italian government takeover of all papal lands by 1870. The church–state healing of that occurred in 1929, when the Vatican City State was given to the Roman Church.

“And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people” (Revelation 13:13).

Christ warned that counterfeit signs would be used by false christs (Matthew 24:24-25). These will parody the true ones that will accompany God’s people. Here, the false prophet is in focus. That is part of Satan’s plan to deceive.

- “*For they are the spirits of devils, **working miracles**, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14).*

²⁵ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 708.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 707-708.

²⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 442 (emphasis added).

- “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan **with all power and signs and lying wonders**” (II Thessalonians 2:9).²⁸

Of this supernatural power, we are told: “Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. **Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers** [cf. Hebrews 2:4, Revelation 11:5]. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. **Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.**”²⁹

- Satan’s purpose? To deceive.
- Over what? His authority and a doctrine that **redirects worship** due God alone to the sea beast.³⁰

Will this mission be successful?

“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast” (Revelation 13:14a).

- Intriguing is the last phrase in verse 13 (NIV): “*in full view of the people.*” It is a demonic public relations phenomenon.³¹
- In view of the world’s inhabitants – they will be deceived.

*“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie**” (II Thessalonians 2:10-11).*

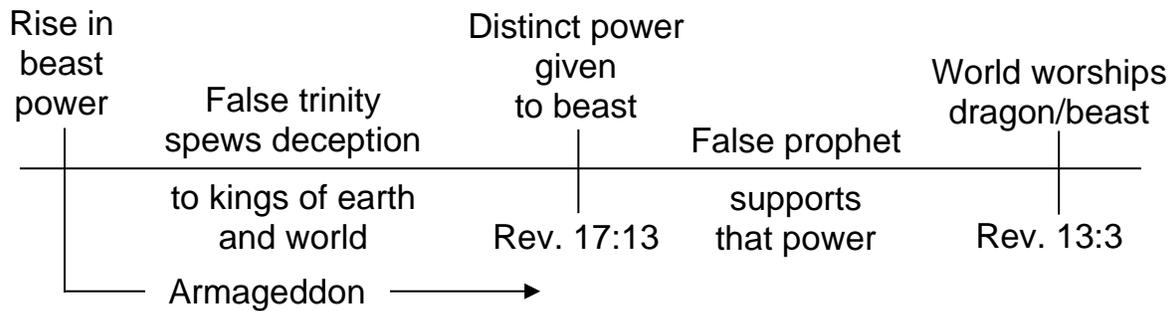
This is a continuing picture of the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-14).

²⁸ Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 175 (emphasis added).

²⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 612 (emphasis added).

³⁰ Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

³¹ Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 514.



“... he deceived those who live on the earth. He told those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had been wounded by the sword, but still lived” (Revelation 13:14b – NET).

The earth beast is personified. ***It is “religiously deceiving” the world as a false prophet.*** The image is a symbol of what gives the sea beast unique power!

The inhabitants of the earth (the whole world³²) are enamored of the earth beast’s supernatural “*signs*” and messages. The earth beast is an eschatological right hand for the dragon and the sea beast.³³ We reflect on the warning of Paul:

- “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*” (II Corinthians 11:13-14 – NIV).
- ***Why is the earth beast being so successful?*** Satan has already appeared as an angel of light. These two beasts act as “agents” of the dragon’s wishes.

This, now, leads to a crucial issue.

“The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed” (Revelation 13:15 – NIV).

Because they are enamored, even entranced, by those miracles, the world is ready to acquiesce to a command of this false prophet “*to make an image to the beast*”!

- What is he promoting that symbolizes the sea beast’s power and authority?

³² Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

³³ Aune, *op. cit.*, p. 760.

- It must be something that can be worshiped.
- It is “alive” – dynamic, can “speak” – make statements.

This is an idolatrous command. We were recently told that “*all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him*” (Revelation 13:8a).³⁴ ***Here, the thing representing him is to be worshiped.*** The issue is worshiping God or now something (some “icon”) representing the Holy See – the antichrist.

Satan could not get Christ to bow down and worship him (Luke 4:7). He now successfully gets the world to bow and worship his “icon”!

The image of the beast ***contextually suggests the opposite of God’s mark or sign.***

There is something that is enticing that leads the whole world to do and/or think like the sea beast. Giving breath or life to this “image,” “agenda” or “purpose” is to make it a requirement or law – under a death penalty.

- Again, both the sea beast (*theron* – G) and the earth beast (*theron* – G) are cruel, violent, oppressive and murderous (13:4-8, 17:1-14).
- Persecution is now anticipated regarding this image worship!

“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” (Revelation 13:16).

The earth beast now has global power. It makes everyone identify with the antichrist through its “*mark.*” No person, believer or unbeliever, is excluded from this requirement.

Daniel said that the antichrist little horn would think/attempt to change times and laws.

The Greek word for “*mark*” signifies an imprinted or engraved mark. “*On the forehead*” suggests that the individual has ***fully submitted to this image.*** The “*seal of God*” is also placed on the forehead of His people (Revelation 7:1-4), connoting such loyalty.³⁵

³⁴ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 710.

³⁵ Stefanovic, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-415.

One can see that those who have the mark of the beast are rebelling against God. The mark on the hand suggests that the loyalties for the sea beast are by what they do, but a deep conviction may not be present.

From a biblical viewpoint, it is assumed that the “*mark of the beast*” is a false sabbath.

1. ***We have made an assumption*** that the “mark” of the beast is a parallel counterfeit of God’s “sign” or “seal.
2. We have assumed that the worship of the Creator God, which relates to the Sabbath, must be a false worship on Sunday because the beasts are worshiped.

“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 13:17).

Additional Clues

Revelation 13:18:

- KJV: “*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.*” This is a problem translation.
- NET: “*This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast’s number, for it is man’s number, and his number is 666.*”
- NIV: “*This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast’s number, for it is man’s number, and his number is 666.*”
- New research suggests that it is the number of mankind.

The Greek has been studied in detail. It does not refer to an individual man, as KJV, NRS or ASV suggest, but the number of mankind.

- Man was created on the sixth day.
- The implication is that the triple 6 relates to the false trinity.
- Many scholars see 6 as an imperfect number. If perfection was intimated, the number 7 would be used.³⁶

³⁶ Beale, Gregory; notes on Revelation13:18 (NET Bible), p. 724.

The mark of the beast is earthly – imperfect – representing unregenerate humanity.

If numerology is used (which the Bible does not invite), it introduces assumptions that are beyond spiritual discernment (“*wisdom*”).

The mark of the beast relates to the first table of the Decalogue, which is love to God. In Revelation 12 to 14, the special issue relates to **correct worship** and to who that God is!

Parallels Between Revelation 13 and the Decalogue	
First Table of Decalogue in Exodus 20	Attack on First Table of Decalogue in Revelation 13
(1) “You shall have no other gods before me” (20:3).	(C1) “they worshiped the dragon ... beast” (13:4, 8)
(2) “You shall not make for yourself an idol ... you shall not bow down or worship them (20:4-5)	(C2) “make an image of the beast . . . worship the image” (13:14, 15)
(3) “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the lord your God.”	(C3) “uttered blasphemies against god, to blaspheme his name” (13:1, 5-6)
(4) “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy ... the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God.” “Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day ... you shall not do any work.” “neither you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your town” (20:8-11).	(C4) The mark, the name and the number of its name (666 – the number of mankind) are the same (13:16-18). [a false sabbath]

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Note that in this Sabbath parity, the name and number parallel God’s name and His designated number of seven. The beast’s number is 666. ***The mark of the beast is punitive to God’s people; the sabbath is restorative.*** They both are universal in intent.

³⁷ MacPherson, Anthony; Andrews University, 2005.

Concern

Over many past decades, when **papal interest** has been noted regarding the value of Sunday rest or worship, Adventists have become excited. “The end is approaching. Sunday laws are imminent.”

An article in *Adventist Today* (2014) put into perspective where we are really at as we begin 2021:

Pope Francis Advocates for Sunday as a Protected Day of Rest

by Monte Sahlin. *Adventist Today News Team*, July 24, 2014

Pope Francis recently spoke out in defense of Sunday as the traditional day of rest and relaxation for Catholics. He hinted at current discussions in the European Union (EU) about laws restricting required work and commercial activity on Sundays.

“While ... poor people need jobs to have dignity,” the Associated Press (AP) summarized his comments, “opening stores and other businesses on Sundays as a way to create jobs wasn't beneficial for society. ... The abandonment of the traditionally Christian practice of not working on Sundays ... has a negative impact on families and friendships.”

The Catholic leader has emphasized the social benefits of not working on Sunday and not referenced religious reasons, according to the coverage of the news media. “Maybe it's time to ask ourselves if working on Sundays is true freedom,” AP quoted him. The story also reported that he said that not working on Sundays was an “ethical choice” for both believers and non-believers.

A number of independent ministries have reported this incident as related to “the Sunday law,” referencing the traditional Adventist interpretation of verses in Revelation 13 that a coalition of Christian leaders, including both Catholics and Protestants, will promote a law requiring Sunday observance similar to what was proposed in the United States Congress in the 1890s. Some have mentioned the 1998 Apostolic Letter, “Dies Domini,” issued by a previous pope, which asserts that “the Lord's Day” in Revelation 1:10 is a reference to Sunday.

Francis was in Molise, an agricultural region in southern Italy, when he made these statements on Saturday, July 5. It is a region with many conservative, traditional Catholics.

There has been tension between EU legislators and Catholic leaders over the traditional role of Christianity in Europe and an increasingly secular culture. It remains to be seen if there will be a focused conflict over the removal of laws requiring that businesses be closed on Sundays. Steps have been taken and proposed in that direction.

Some Adventist voices are quick to assign prophetic significance to such developments, while others insist on a more careful understanding of the Bible on this topic. A wide range of interpretations vie for the attention of Adventists while no definitive developments have yet emerged. Comments such as those reported by the media, in this case attributed to Pope Francis, cause considerable discussion in Adventist circles; a sense of anticipation for some and frustration for others.³⁸

A very insightful Catholic response to this article:

“Mary No Longer Contrary,” July 25, 2014

“I wish people would read the pope's words in context. They wouldn't be so scary. This statement about Sunday was said in a very Catholic area and most of his audience was Catholic. This is no more out-of-the-ordinary than an SDA pastor telling his audience that we are in need of time with our family, that the rat race of commercialism is killing us. It makes Adventists look cultish when some of them take to the internet every time the Pope says Sunday or the Lord's Day.”³⁹

E. G. White noted: (Adventist caution focus)

“There are calamities on sea and land: and these calamities will increase, one disaster following close upon another; and the little band of conscientious Sabbath-keepers will be pointed out as the ones who are bringing the wrath of God upon the world by their disregard of Sunday.”⁴⁰

“Satan puts his interpretation upon events, and they think, as he would have them, that the calamities which fill the land are a result of Sundaybreaking. Thinking to appease the wrath of God these influential men make laws enforcing Sunday observance. – 10MR 239 (1899).”⁴¹

³⁸ <https://atoday.org/pope-francis-advocates-for-sunday-as-a-protected-day-of-rest/> (emphasis added)

³⁹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140705_molise-mondo-del-lavoro.html

⁴⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, March 18, 1884.

⁴¹ White, Ellen G.; *Last day Events*, p. 129.

“So completely will men be deceived by him that they will declare that these calamities are the result of the desecration of the first day of the week. From the pulpits of the popular churches will be heard the statement that the world is being punished because Sunday is not honored as it should be. – RH Sept. 17, 1901.”⁴²

What is the catalyst that creates the Sunday laws? Calamities!

Who urges the passage of a worship day law?

“The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.”⁴³

“Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false sabbath, they will give life and vigor to the corrupt faith of Rome, reviving her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of His truth.”⁴⁴

“Protestants will work upon the rulers of the land to make laws to restore the lost ascendancy of the man of sin, who sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Roman Catholic principles will be taken under the care and protection of the state. This national apostasy will speedily be followed by national ruin.”⁴⁵

“As the controversy extends into new fields, and the minds of the people are called to God’s down-trodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light, lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and in this work, papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment-keepers.”⁴⁶

⁴² White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 256.

⁴³ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 588 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 179 (emphasis added).

⁴⁵ White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, June 15, 1897 (emphasis added).

⁴⁶ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 88, 607 (emphasis added).

“Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation.”⁴⁷

- Adventist understanding suggests that calamities are the catalyst that springs into action the desire for a worship day law, **and** later, it will move into an enforcement phase when the clergy (Protestant and Catholic) see the success of our evangelistic efforts.
- What should the focus now be as we anticipate a “Mark of the Beast Crisis”?

Watch the reaction of the Protestant world to the growing tumult in the United States and in the geopolitical world. **Then** – when God permits calamities to be unleashed, we will know that the “*mark of the beast*” crisis is soon to come.

The Sabbath Issue in the Old Testament

In Revelation 17:4 the harlot (apostate church) who rides (has dominion over) the beast (Vatican City State) has a golden cup full of abominations. That cup is given to the kings of the world and all its inhabitants. That fulfills the first part of Armageddon’s mission.

- However, there is a single abomination that Christ wants end-time students to study.
 - *“When ye therefore shall see the **abomination** of desolation, **spoken of by Daniel** the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”* (Matthew 24:15).
- Christ’s next few thoughts tie to the word “*flee*” (avoid the influence of that abomination). *“Come out of her my people”* (Revelation 18:4).

The orientation keys are the words “*abomination*” (*bdelugma* – G) and “*desolation*” (*eremosis* – G). These are clearly referenced in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.

- *“His [the “vile person” – the antichrist] forces will rise up and profane the fortified sanctuary, stopping the daily [sacrifice]. In its place they will **set up the abomination that causes desolation**”* (Daniel 11:31 – NET).
- *“From the time that the daily [sacrifice] is removed and the **abomination that causes desolation is set in place**, there are 1,290 days”* (Daniel 12:11 – NET).

⁴⁷ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 88, 580 (emphasis added).

In both verses, the “*daily*” (true Sabbath – special seminar) is abolished or removed and an abomination is “*set up*” or “*set in place*” instead of the daily. “*Set up*” is *rattan* in Hebrew, strongly suggesting a *legal* replacing of the “*daily*.” A false Sabbath is suggested.

Can we further clarify this abomination? Daniel 8:12-13 states that there is a “*transgression of desolation*” (*bepesha* – H). That means a rebellion against God’s authority, law and covenant, all bound to the meaning of the Sabbath, the fourth commandment.

- Authority: God is the Creator – really the owner of all things. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1).
- Law: The Sabbath is the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. It is the one that says “*Remember*.” That means no matter how far into the future, one must “remember” the Sabbath day. (It was actually set up at Creation).
- Covenant: The Decalogue written by God’s finger on two tables of stone (Exodus 31:18) was called the “*tables of the covenant*” (Hebrews 9:4). In 41 places in the Bible the furniture that housed this was called the “*Ark of the covenant*.” God called the Sabbath a “*perpetual covenant*” (Exodus 31:16).

That abomination is creating a law defying the Sabbath in Daniel 11 and 12. Gabriel (Daniel 12:4) and Christ (Daniel 12:9) state that those events are for the “*time of the end*.”

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