

The Mark of the Beast - What Is It?

God says a BEAST, having two horns like a lamb, yet speaking as a “dragon,” will “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 13:11-16). No man refusing that MARK will be able to buy or sell. God says the horrible LAST PLAGUES are going to fall upon those who have the Mark of the BEAST. What is it? Do you have it? Could it be forced upon you? Could the Mark of the Beast be somehow secretly placed upon you, tattooed, implanted under your skin in the form of a microchip, or secretly put into your wallet or purse in the form of some plastic credit card or identification card? You need to KNOW what is the MARK OF THE BEAST!

Millions are deeply concerned. Millions have heard about the dreaded “Mark of the Beast,” and its number, 666. There are many theories. Some allege that the number 666 is on the papal crown. Some allege the number will be put inside your skin, inserted by means of a microchip on your forehead. Many believe it has something to do with a new form of money, or the coming “cashless society,” wherein debit and credit cards (which some allege will contain the number 666) will replace cash.

The Bible contains stern warnings about those who receive the mysterious Mark of the Beast. It was the apostle John who received the visions from Christ about the Mark of the Beast. He wrote, “And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

“[T]here fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image” (Revelation 16:1, 2).

Notice it is not only those who receive the MARK of the Beast, but also those who “worship his image” who will come under God’s wrath.

What IS the “image of the Beast”? How can you recognize it? What IS the Mark of the Beast? How can you insure you do not receive it, that you do not come under God’s wrath?

Religious Deception and Babylonish Confusion

Weird, ridiculous theories about the meaning of the Mark of the Beast are legion. To some, this mysterious mark involves major department store credit cards. Religious publications cite various “proofs” involving the presence of the number 666 found in credit cards issued by some of the large chain stores. To them, this credit card represents the Mark of the Beast.

To others, their social security number is a means of the government to keep track of them; it seems to be the harbinger of the Mark of the Beast, and many have begun wondering if it is not the first step toward a national identity card, by which a “big brother” nationalistic government can spy on all of us - keep track of everything we do, where we go, what we buy, to which church we belong, and know everything about our individual, private lives. This paranoid fear of surveillance convinces many that various forms of personal identification, such as drivers licenses, social security cards, credit cards and the like are the Mark of the Beast.

I have seen articles alleging the black stripes that appear on practically any item you purchase are the Mark of the Beast. Many have been convinced that these striations on their packages are threatening to them. Actually, each bar represents a letter or a number, like a code. The laser scanner instantly reads the code and displays it on a small screen attached to the electronic cash register. The purchaser may then watch an electronic display as each item, such as a can of string beans, accompanied by the price, appears. A computer is automatically reducing the inventory in the store by one can of beans, thus saving the old-fashioned method of painstakingly counting all the cans remaining on the shelf, and at the same time computing the sales for the day. Such modern methods have greatly reduced man-hours of labor, helped us get through the check stands much faster, and are far more accurate than human fingers on a cash register.

This modern, much simpler and faster development in computer-age technology is in no way threatening to anyone. Yet some people who tend toward paranoia are fair game for religious hucksters who like to play upon people’s fears. It is time you swept away all this Babylon of confusion and looked directly into the Word of God to see what really IS the mysterious Mark of the Beast, and what it is NOT!

Who, What, Is the BEAST?

Obviously, before one can understand what is the Mark of the Beast, one must understand who or what is the Beast!

Bible scholars are virtually one hundred percent agreed that the symbolism of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2) represents the four world-ruling empires from the time of ancient Babylon to Persia, Greco/Macedonia, and finally Rome.

Most biblical commentaries expound this view; even a well-known layman's Bible handbook, Halley's, reconfirms it (see Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 342). The head of gold represented ancient Babylon, the breast and arms of silver represented Persia, and the belly and thighs of brass represented Alexander's Greco/Macedonian kingdom. The legs of iron and feet and toes "part of iron and part of miry clay" represented the Roman Empire throughout its duration, including a yet future, end-time 10-nation combine that will coalesce in the same region and will fight Christ at His coming (cf. Revelation 17:12-14).

Notice especially verse 44 of Daniel 2: "And in the days of these kings [the kings represented by the ten toes] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

In the vision, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone seemingly dislodged miraculously, without the intervention of workman's tools or human hands. Like a plunging meteorite, it seemed to hurtle down from heaven and smash the towering image of gold, silver, brass, iron, and miry clay on the feet! In the dream the entire image toppled to the ground and seemed to become "like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away ..." (Daniel 2:35).

Then the stone, which had smote the image on the ten toes, (representing the end-time ten governments that are to arise within the confines of the ancient Roman Empire) seemed to become a great mountain that filled the whole earth!

Thus, in this one brief chapter, we see a prophecy that predicts the entire span of human history, from Nebuchadnezzar until the Second Coming of Christ!

The Bible uses the expression "beast" advisedly, since the Gentile leaders of the

world-ruling governments were possessed of minds like wild, predatory animals. Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of insanity (Daniel 4) is symbolic of the insane bestiality of such human leaders as those of the four successive world-ruling kingdoms and, in our time, such men as Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, and others.

It is very clear that the first beast of Revelation 13 is the same kingdom as the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Notice it: "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" (Revelation 13:1, 2).

The Beast is a symbol of a great super government. That the Beast rose up out of the sea indicates it derived its power from masses of people. The seven heads are seven revivals or stages of this Beast power, and the ten horns are symbols of individual governments, each presided over by a king, or absolute ruler, symbolized by the "crowns." That the label on each of these seven successive governments was the "name of blasphemy" indicates its amalgamation with a spiritual power, which is called, in Revelation 17, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

That the Beast was "like unto a leopard," meaning that the main part of its body appeared to be like a leopard, is symbolic of the empire of Alexander the Great, as proved by the historical fulfillment of both the second and the seventh chapters of Daniel, which detail the four successive world-ruling empires of history. The feet, "as of a bear," indicate the ancient Persian Empire under Cyrus.

The mouth, "as the mouth of a lion," indicates the ancient Roman Empire. The "dragon" is an obvious reference to Satan the devil. Notice: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ..." (Revelation 12:9).

Therefore, this end-time BEAST POWER is the final end-time resurrection of the same old system that was to reemerge many times down through history, until its final emergence just before the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the Day of the Lord, and the Second Coming of Christ.

Notice it is Satan who gives power to the Beast (Revelation 13:4). The Beast sometimes refers to the human leader, the super-dictator who will rule over ten kings: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:19, 20). Sometimes the term "Beast" refers to the entire ten-nation combine, together with its human leaders.

Now, we know that the "Beast" is a ten-nation combine that will form together prior to the Second Coming of Christ, and will be the greatest economic and military power the world has ever seen up to that time. This ten-nation combine is the final "resurrection" of the Roman Empire, this time armed with chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons - a huge military power that will actually attempt to FIGHT CHRIST at His coming!

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:12-14). The Beast is a ten-nation POLITICAL power, but it is "ridden" or ruled over by a great ECCLESIASTICAL power!

This great political, military, and ecclesiastical power will have a SIGN - an identifying label, a MARK, which it will seek to impose on all who will submit to its will. It will not be a "secret" sign or mark, but an obvious, outward, easily recognized sign, which the whole system wears like a LABEL! The "little horn" of Daniel 7:8, which "has a mouth speaking great things" and "think to change TIMES and LAWS," is a symbol of the spokesmen of this evil mystery religion, who, down through the centuries, have done just that! They have CHANGED God's laws and abolished His divinely-appointed Sabbaths and annual holy days.

This great false church has adopted the labels associated with SUN worship; it has CHANGED God's weekly Sabbaths for SUNDAY, the day of the sun, and

foisted upon millions of unsuspecting believers the PAGAN holidays of Ishtar (Easter) and the “Saturnalia” (Christmas). For centuries, countless THOUSANDS were brutally martyred - tortured, burnt alive, killed in the most horrifying ways - for REFUSING to accept the Mark of the Beast, and clinging, instead, to God’s holy Sabbath and His annual holy days.

For many centuries, those who continued to observe God’s Passover on the fourteenth of Abib, or Nisan, the first month of the sacred year, were labeled “fourteenthers” or “quartodecimans” and relentlessly hunted down and slain! This had to do with TIMES and LAWS! The TIME for observing “communion,” or the Lord’s Supper as it came to be called (I Corinthians 11:20), was on the annual commemoration of Christ’s own last supper! It was to be observed on the 14th day of the first month according to the Jewish Sacred Calendar. But the apostate church issued a decree that Christians should not be found “Judaizing” by keeping God’s holy Passover exactly as Jesus had, but should substitute pagan EASTER (spelled “Ishtar” with a silent “h”) instead! Easter is celebrated amid symbols of sex and fertility (rabbits and eggs) and is known to be of wholly PAGAN ORIGINS!

Thus, by DECREE, backed up by force of arms, the now paganized, apostate church ENFORCED the changing of “times and laws” on those who, fearful of their very lives, would submit! The Bible shows the identifying SIGN of the Beast and the Image of the Beast is something that has been around for MANY CENTURIES! It is something that has already caused the death of countless THOUSANDS who refused to accept it! It is NOT, therefore, something that is of modern invention, such as computer chips or credit cards!

What Is the Image of the Beast?

Remember, it is not only those who receive the Mark of the Beast who will suffer God’s wrath in the Day of the Lord, but also those who “worship his image.” Notice the proof: “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” So it is not only those who refuse the Mark of the Beast, it is also those who refuse to worship its ‘image,’ or its ecclesiastical counterpart! Let’s continue: “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, OR the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

“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 13:15-18). Therefore, it is NOT ONLY those who refuse to receive the MARK of the Beast who will be martyred, but also those who refuse to worship the IMAGE of the Beast, those who refuse to receive the NAME of the Beast, and those who refuse to receive the NUMBER OF HIS NAME, which is 666.

Six is the number of man. Three is a number connoting ultimate finality. Thus 666, or three 6s, connotes utter carnality - that which is of MAN and not of God. Seven is God’s number, which means completion, perfection. Therefore, God designed the weekly cycle around SEVEN days, not six or eight or thirteen. The weekly cycle is not observable by any astronomical phenomena. We can observe the day and night by the rotation of the earth, the month by the moon, and the year by the journey of the earth with its moon around the sun. But the Sabbath day, the seventh day of creation, has always been handed down from generation to generation from, God’s righteous patriarchs to the prophets, to the apostles, to God’s people from age to age. There is significance in God’s use of certain numbers.

Now, just what IS the “image of the Beast”? As we read in Revelation 13, it has two horns “like a lamb” yet “speaks as a dragon,” influenced by Satan himself. Therefore, this Beast masquerades as if it is of Christ, yet is of Satan! Your Bible plainly warns against counterfeits! Jesus Himself said: “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ; and shall deceive MANY ... And MANY false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:4-12).

Paul wrote: “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.

“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

The first of the famed “four horsemen of the Apocalypse” represents false Christs and false prophets. John wrote, “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:1, 2).

Never is Christ depicted as carrying a bow. Some have made the mistake of falsely assuming the first horseman is picturing Christ because of the white horse. But the sequence of events depicted by the four horsemen of Revelation 6 is unmistakable when compared to Christ’s prophecy of Matthew 24.

This second beast of Revelation 13, which has two horns “like a Lamb” and yet speaks “as a dragon,” (with the forked tongue of Satan), is nothing more than a great false religious system, called “Babylon the great,” under the power of the false prophet of biblical prophecy.

Obviously this second beast is able to CAUSE WORSHIP! It is therefore a political and religious system! It encourages state worship! It points to the great economic, industrial, and MILITARY power of the first beast! It urges loyalty, servitude, cooperation, and worship upon all of its followers toward this great ten-nation combine.

The false prophet is imbued with satanic power so that “he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men,

“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; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword [reference to the collapse of Rome in 476, until its restoration under General Belisarius in 554] and did live.

“And he [this great false prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:11-15). Hideous chapters of history detail the murder of countless millions down through centuries as the Babylonish “mystery” religion was IMPOSED upon many nations

by sword and spear. Millions were burnt, skinned alive, impaled, placed on the rack, and tortured to death because they refused to “recant” their religion and embrace the growing power of the image of the beast - to accept its decrees about “times,” which were called “sacred,” no matter what the Bible said.

The great false church has been constructed based upon the same old politico-military system of the ancient Roman Empire! It includes the old Roman collegia, found in the “College of Cardinals,” and rules over greater and lesser “dioceses,” the Roman term applied to political regions under Roman rulers.

Just how filthy, how abominable, this growing politico-religious system became is partially illustrated by the life of only one of the many corrupt popes - Leo X, who reigned when Luther began the Reformation. Leo was made an Archbishop at age 8! He was appointed a Cardinal at age 13 and was appointed to 27 different church offices.

Halley’s Bible Handbook says his appointment to these many offices “meant vast income before he was 13. Was taught to regard ecclesiastical office purely as a source of revenue [this sounds painfully familiar to me, for I have known many who have been imbued with the same covetous spirit]. Bargained for the papal chair. Sold church honors. All ecclesiastical offices were for sale, and many new ones were created. He appointed Cardinals as young as seven. He was in endless negotiations with kings and princes, jockeying for secular power, utterly indifferent to the religious welfare of the church. He maintained the most luxurious and licentious court in Europe. His cardinals vied with kings and princes in gorgeous palaces and voluptuous entertainment, attended by trains of servants. Yet, this voluptuary reaffirmed the Unam Sanctam, in which it is declared that every human being must be subject to the Roman Pontiff for salvation. [Where have you heard that theory before?] He issued indulgences for stipulated fees; and declared Burning of Heretics a Divine Appointment.” (ibid. p. 780).

No wonder God describes such a system thus: “for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Revelation 18:23, 24).

Thus, God’s Word shows that a great ecclesiastical GOVERNMENT would

emerge, which would hold sway over kings and emperors; it would be a STATE, just like any other state, sending ambassadors to all nations, and receiving ambassadors from them. It would be a politico-religious system which would be patterned exactly like ancient Imperial Rome; thus, an IMAGE of the Beast!

This monstrous system is depicted by the famed “little horn” of Daniel 7:8, which “had a mouth speaking great things” and would “think to change times and laws.” The heads of this great church have done exactly that! They have decreed that, unless one wholly submits to ONE HUMAN LEADER, who takes the blasphemous title of “holy father,” one cannot be saved!

But God’s people know the TRUTH about the church - that the CHURCH CANNOT SAVE YOU! That the church is a group of “called-out ones” who are an instrument in God’s hands for accomplishing His Work. They know that we are to call NO MAN “Father” in a religious sense, and that the CHURCH is not an object of worship! They know that NO MAN can have power over their salvation!

But the “image of the beast,” or the great false church that rules over many nations, claims the power to not only “excommunicate” any individual member, thus allegedly consigning them to burn forever in their version of hell fire, but also claims the power of “interdiction,” whereby the head of that ecclesiastical government can place an entire nation outside of the “universal church,” thus claiming that ALL citizens of the whole nation are going to burn in hell fire!

One can imagine the power wielded by such a system. If, for instance, a king or president were to anger the ecclesiastical head, he could place the entire offending nation under interdiction. It would be only a short time until, desperately fearful of burning in hell, the entire population rose up and deposed their king or president in order to get back in the good graces of the ecclesiastical ruler!

How the Universal Church Helped to Bring Europe Together

The ultimate emergence of the Beast power in Europe will absolutely STUN the world! It will truly become the greatest global super-power the world has ever seen! It will be so great, so powerful, so economically viable, so productive and successful that it will evoke WORSHIP from the masses under its sway, as well as

adoration, adjuration, and worship from nations all over the world!

The coming super-state in Europe will be mostly of ONE RELIGION! And what is the majority religion of Europe? In most cases, it is ROMAN CATHOLIC.

Hitler brought about STATE WORSHIP! With his constant emphasis on the “super race”; his carefully orchestrated nighttime torchlight parades; his foam-flecked, shouting, mesmerizing speeches, Hitler caused the German people to utterly subject their personal will to his will. In the infamous Nuremburg Nazi rally just before World War II, Rudolf Hess shouted to the frenzied crowds: “Hitler IST Deutschland! Deutschland IST Hitler!” which means: “Hitler IS Germany! Germany IS Hitler!” Thus, the adoration of the man and the state became one. This is utter pagan idolatry, and it will happen again!

The coming “beast,” the dictator of a United States of Europe, will be hailed as a “deliverer”; he will be worshiped! History proves that many women fainted at the sight of Adolf Hitler during one of his parades! The adoration of the masses toward Hitler was a kind of pagan idolatry! But the Bible says BOTH the Beast and the False Prophet will be worshiped.

Already there are countless MILLIONS of people in dozens of nations who WORSHIP THE POPE! They adore, revere, and WORSHIP a human being who takes the very titles of God Himself! The present-day pope is no doubt worshiped by more people than any pope in all history! Waiting in the wings, soon to emerge, will be a super-dictator – a new “savior of Europe” – a major POLITICAL figure, who will weld the ten nations together into the greatest power the world has ever seen. He, also, will command adulation, adoration, and WORSHIP from his followers. Remember, the Bible says the nations will WORSHIP THE BEAST, just as millions worshiped Adolf Hitler! There will emerge TWO individuals who will command WORSHIP from the nations – the Beast, or the political/military leader, AND the “false prophet,” or the ecclesiastical leader.

Time magazine pointed out that the pope is one of the greatest men of the century; he is WORSHIPED by millions!

One of the reasons for that adulation, especially among the millions of Catholics in Eastern Europe, is because he was instrumental in helping to form what will emerge as the BEAST!

When Cardinal Wojtila, a Pole, was elected pope, I said before many large audiences it was tremendously significant, for the pope in Rome was now POLISH! I knew this would prove catalytic in helping lessen the hold of the Soviet Union on Poland and through such a move, lessen the iron grip of Russia on other nations in Eastern and Central Europe as well.

For years I have repeatedly stated in my sermons, and radio and television broadcasts that, “a ‘United States of Europe’ will be formed, consisting of TEN NATIONS, FROM THE URALS TO THE ATLANTIC, possessing nuclear weapons.”

The pope, during a visit in West Germany, called for a “United Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic!” Have you looked at a map of Europe lately? The Urals are a mountain chain deep inside Russia - EAST OF MOSCOW! The reason I used that expression for so many years is because it was used by the geopoliticians, men such as Makinder and Haushofer, who believed the major power in the world lay in the heartland of Europe! The heartland of Europe, Central Europe, was the core of the many revivals of the “Holy Roman Empire,” ruled over by many, many popes in Rome. In most instances, it was a GERMANIC kingdom!

Bible prophecy says the strength of IRON will be in this final resurrection of the Beast, but also the weakness of clay. Which nation is IRON? Which nation had the “Iron Chancellor”? Germany, in the person of Bismark! Which nation decorates its soldiers with the IRON cross? Germany! Yet as any metal-worker knows, clay, if it finds its way into a mold where iron is being poured, will weaken, perhaps ruin the thing being formed. In like fashion, even though the coming ten-nation combine will be formed together by the unifying agent of RELIGION, under the great Universal Church at the behest of the POPE, it will not STAY together for long! Read carefully the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, and see how the BEAST will eventually “hate the whore” and make her desolate!

The false prophet will bring about STATE WORSHIP for a time - but it will really be SATAN they will be worshiping!

Notice! “And they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ...

“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” (Revelation 13:4-8).

Now that you know who, and what, is the BEAST, and you can clearly identify his IMAGE, you can look for his MARK!

A Conscious Choice

Most of the paranoia associated with false concepts about “the Mark of the Beast” comes from an underlying false assumption. That assumption is that the Mark of the Beast is something that may be imposed upon you unsuspectingly, secretly, by subterfuge. Many people seem to believe that, though they wish to live good Christian lives, want to obey God, and do not want to come under the Mark of the Beast, that some insidious plotters in Europe, or in the Pentagon, or elsewhere, may be able to secretly impose this hated and mysterious Mark of the Beast upon them by causing them to comply with certain laws or requirements involving registration for a social security number, the issuance of a national identity card, or perhaps submitting to the implantation of a microchip, or an invisible tattoo!

But notice this scripture, and think deeply about what you will read! “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls [Greek: psuche, meaning “lives”] of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years!” (Revelation 20:4).

No one WORSHIPS computer-generated labels on food packages, or identity cards, or computer chips!

Notice carefully! The refusal of these individuals to worship the Beast or his image, or to receive his mark, and who are clearly pictured as being in the Kingdom of God - now exalted as co-RULERS with Jesus Christ - literally cost them their lives! BUT it assured their continued possession of eternal life!

Do you see? Here a conscious choice is to be made! Notice they refused to WORSHIP the Beast, or his image. That tells us they KNEW WHAT IT WAS! They made a reasoned, conscious choice! Just as happened during the infamous

“inquisition,” when hundreds of thousands were put to death for refusing to give up their Bible-based faith, so the Beast and the False Prophet will be attempting to FORCE Christians to bow down to them in worship. They will refuse, choosing to OBEY GOD rather than man (Acts 4:10, 19; 5:32), and they will be martyred because of that choice! Actually, there were countless hundreds of thousands who were martyred during the Middle Ages for the very same reasons!

Halley says, “[T]he inquisition was the main agency in the Papacy’s effort to crush the Reformation. It is stated that in the 30 years between 1540 and 1570 no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the pope’s war for the extermination of the Waldenses.

“Think of monks and priests, in holy garments [sic], directing, with heartless cruelty and inhuman brutality, the work of torturing and burning alive innocent men and women, and doing it in the name of Christ, by the direct order of the ‘Vicar of Christ.’” (Halley’s Bible Handbook, p. 777).

These people were put to death for refusing to worship the Beast, his IMAGE (the great false church and ecclesiastical STATE, formed like a GOVERNMENT and patterned after the ancient Roman civil government), or to receive his identifying MARK.

Notice Revelation 6:9-10, where you see the picture of those who were slain for the Word of God and who cry out, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” These dead saints, pictured as crying out from their graves, were murdered MANY CENTURIES ago. It becomes obvious then that the Beast, the image of the Beast, and the MARK of the Beast have been around for a long, long time!

Do you see? It is impossible for you to lose salvation “by accident!” It is utterly impossible for some power to so interfere in your life that it imposes upon you a symbol, identifying sign, some “mark” of some kind that causes you to LOSE OUT on salvation!

Notice! “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor POWERS, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39)!

Your Bible absolutely promises that NOTHING - the sword (armed force), principalities, powers - can separate you from the love of God, from salvation in and through Jesus Christ!

Read Revelation 20:4 again! Here resurrected saints are seen as inheriting the thrones promised them by Jesus Christ (cf. Revelation 2:26; 3:21)! They are resurrected because they were martyred. WHY were they martyred? Because they adamantly REFUSED to receive the Mark of the Beast.

That should give you the positive reassurance that, even though some brutal men should forcibly hold you down, implant some kind of an identifying microchip under your skin, or soldiers would literally hold your arms, hands, and legs and tattoo the numbers 666 right across your forehead in great black ink, two inches high, it STILL COULD NOT DEPRIVE YOU OF SALVATION! Therefore, such things ARE NOT the Mark of the Beast!

However, make no mistake! The Mark of the Beast is definitely something that will be ENFORCED - will become a matter of law, and people will be ordered to obey it! They will have to make a final, ultimate choice! That choice will be to either submit, to give in and cooperate with the coming socioeconomic, military/spiritual system called BABYLON THE GREAT, which is to emerge as a world SUPER POWER, or under pain of DEATH to refuse to cooperate - to refuse the Mark of the Beast!

As we have seen, a mark is a stamp, a sign, a symbol, an identifying label! Anciently, Almighty God designated a great SIGN that would always identify His people! That sign was created at the end of the creation week! Here is what God said about His special SIGN between God and His people: “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.

“Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

“Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

“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 31:13-17). The CREATOR who pronounced these words was none other than the Person of the divine Elohim - the Godhead - who became Jesus Christ! Notice the proof: “In the beginning was the Word [Greek: Logos, meaning Spokesman] , and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

“The same was in the beginning with God [Greek: Theos, the exact equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Elohim,’ meaning MORE than one Person. See Genesis 1:26].

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4). John opens his gospel with this profound statement about the divine pre-human origins of Jesus Christ! He continued, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

“He came unto his own [the Jews], and his own received him not.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [Greek: skenoo “tabernacled”] among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:10-14).

The knowledge of the pre-human existence of Christ is obvious, incontrovertible, PLAIN to anyone who honestly reads these passages and accepts them as the divinely-revealed Word of God! Yet tens of thousands of professing Christian

ministers and millions of their followers adamantly REFUSE to accept them!

Do you realize the CONSEQUENCES to the accepted doctrines of the great false church and her protesting daughters? It means that the God of the Old Testament – the One who WROTE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS with His own finger – IS the One who became Jesus Christ! He does not change!

Paul wrote, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever!” (Hebrews 13:8).

The One who became Christ is the Creator of the Sabbath; He is the member of the divine Godhead who designated the Sabbath day as a perpetual SIGN between Himself and His people!

The Great Tribulation

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was also the greatest prophet who ever lived. It is He who described the impending GREAT TRIBULATION in His famous Olivet prophecy found in Mark 13, Luke 21, and Matthew 24. Notice that one of the outstanding features of the Great Tribulation is a martyrdom of saints. Jesus said, “Then [during the Great Tribulation] shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

“And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one other” (Matthew 24:9, 10).

The Satan-inspired false prophet, the great spiritual leader who will appropriate the very titles of God Himself, will use civil power to persecute true Christians! Study carefully the progressive unveiling of the first five seals of the seven seals of the scroll of Revelation. The first five are found in the sixth chapter.

Notice the first seal opened to John’s vision is a horseman riding on a white horse, seen as carrying a bow, who goes out to conquer. Even as Jesus said, the very first thing Christians should watch for is “false Christs and false prophets.” So it is obvious that the meaning of the white horse is that of a great wave of religious fervor, the gradual emergence to global prominence of a great FALSE PROPHET, who will eventually fulfill the prophecy of II Thessalonians 2, claiming blasphemous titles and, according to Jesus’ prediction, having the power to perform such mighty miracles that he would deceive, “if it were possible,” the

very elect!

The next horse is red and symbolizes war. Compare this carefully with the next statement Jesus made in Matthew 24 about “wars and rumors of wars.”

The third seal reveals a black horse, an obvious reference to extreme scarcity of food and the sustenance of life. The very next thing Jesus said would follow would be famine! The black horse symbolizes global famine - a time into which we are even now entering!

The fourth seal is opened and John sees a “pale horse” whose name is “Death, and Hell [Greek: hades, meaning the grave] followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:8).

And what immediately follows false Christs, wars, and famines, according to Jesus’ prophecy? Christ said “PESTILENCES!” As is always the case, the ravages of warfare, including nuclear fallout and radiation; massive loss of life; the destruction of the infrastructure of cities such as communications, water and electric services, sewage disposal, and the like, brings about fearsome injury; terrible pollution of air, water, and land; and outbreaks of terrible diseases of all kinds. Notice that each of these overlap each other.

As the fifth seal is opened, John sees the figurative lives of martyrs who are crying out, in the same way God told Cain, “Your brother’s blood cries to me from the ground.”

Metaphorically, John sees in vision countless tens of thousands of human individuals who were “SLAIN for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9).

They cry out, saying, “How LONG, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

“And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed AS THEY WERE, should be fulfilled” (Revelation 6:10, 11). Anciently these Christians were killed because they refused to worship the Beast or his image, or to receive his mark!

Here you see in metaphor, the lost lives of countless Christians crying out to God! Remember what you read about the brutal murder of nearly a million Waldenses during the “inquisition”? It is people like these, and countless others who were likewise put to death down through history, who staunchly refused to submit to the Babylonish mystery religion and the power of the states over which it ruled! They loved not their lives unto death but were true to Jesus Christ’s promises that any Christian who “endured unto the end” would be saved!

Notice that they are told they must “wait until their fellow servants also should be killed.”

And WHEN are their fellow servants to be killed? Why, during the GREAT TRIBULATION of the future - the next great MARTYRDOM OF SAINTS, which is prophesied to occur just before the intervention of Almighty God by the heavenly signs!

Notice we are dealing with two separate events. First, there was a protracted period of time in history when countless tens of thousands of God’s true servants were MARTYRED for their faith! They are pictured as crying out, “How long O Eternal,” waiting until He avenges their blood upon the heads of their tormentor.

The second great martyrdom of saints is depicted as occurring in the future, at the time of the opening of the fifth seal, which is called the “Great Tribulation” by Jesus Christ (see Matthew 24:21, 22)! They are to “love not their lives unto death” for the SAME REASON that their fellow servants were killed centuries before - for refusing to worship the Beast, or his image, or receive his mark!

What Is a Mark?

The “Mark” of the Beast is merely its symbol, its identifying sign, or its label. It is a counterfeit for the “mark” or the identifying SIGN between God and His people.

As we have seen, Almighty God established a SIGN, an identifying symbol, for His chosen people!

The identifying SIGN God placed upon His people Israel was that of His weekly and annual Sabbaths! A complete list of all of God’s Sabbaths, both weekly and annual, is found in Leviticus 23.

Remember, the Sabbath was made when man was made, at creation! "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

"And on the seventh day God [Elohim: the One who became Jesus Christ: John 1; Hebrews 1] ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:1-3).

Your Bible plainly tells you that the God of the Old Testament - the One who created the universe, the solar system, the earth and all that is in it; the God who spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who spoke to Moses, and wrote the Ten Commandments (including the FOURTH commandment to KEEP THE Sabbath HOLY) - is the member of the divine Family who became Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary!

Notice further proof: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS;

"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ..." (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The One of the God family, Elohim, who MADE THE Sabbath DAY, is none other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth - so SAYS YOUR BIBLE!

God says, "For I AM THE Lord [the Ever-Living Eternal!], I CHANGE NOT; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

God is consistent. He does not CHANGE His holy laws to suit human rebellion. God does not conveniently alter His precepts to conform to the changing codes and mores of society, to accommodate the whims of carnal, lusting, sinning mankind!

It was the member of the Godhead who became CHRIST who created the Sabbath! No wonder then, that Jesus proclaimed, "The Sabbath was MADE FOR

MAN, and not man for the Sabbath:

“Therefore the Son of man is LORD also OF THE Sabbath” (Mark 2:27, 28).

Which day, then, is “the Lord’s Day”? Why, the Sabbath day, of course! There are only seven places in the entirety of the New Testament where the term “first day of the week” is used. For a thorough understanding of each, and PROOF that the Bible does NOT AUTHORIZE SUNDAY WORSHIP, I strongly urge any serious student of the Bible to read Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi’s book *From Sabbath to Sunday*, which represents perhaps the most thoroughly documented work on the history of the CHANGE by the Roman Catholic Church from God’s Sabbath day to the observance of the DAY OF THE SUN - named after the SUN god, instead of the Son of God! It was printed by the Pontifical Gregorian University Press in Rome, 1977. The dozens of sources quoted, the scope and breadth of the research, the painstaking system and thoroughness with which the book is presented are positively conclusive.

In its introduction, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi’s book *From Sabbath to Sunday* says: “The investigation shows that the adoption of Sunday in place of the Sabbath did not occur in the primitive church of Jerusalem by virtue of apostolic authority, but approximately a century later in the Church in Rome. An interplay of Jewish, pagan and Christian factors contributed to the abandonment of the Sabbath and adoption of Sunday observance instead.” It is demonstrated, for example, that it was the policy of Emperor Hadrian to prohibit the Jews to practice their religion, particularly their two characteristic customs: the Sabbath and circumcision.

Hadrian’s persecutions were catalytic to the gradual rejection by the apostate church of all that was considered “Jewish,” most especially the weekly Sabbath and the Passover.

Bacchiocchi writes: “The fact that as a result of Hadrian’s edict Judeo-Christian members and bishops were replaced by gentile ones, indicates that a clear distinction was made at that time between the two. We would assume that the distinction was limited not only to the racial factor, but that it included also a new theological orientation in particular toward characteristic festivals such as Passover and the Sabbath. This hypothesis is supported by the testimony of Epiphanius who in his lengthy report about the controversy over date of the celebration of Passover states: ‘The controversy arose [literally, was stirred up]

after the exodus of the bishops of the circumcision [A.D. 135] and it has continued until our time.' The bishop makes special reference to the fifteen Judeo-Christian bishops who administered the Church of Jerusalem up to A.D. 135 and who up to that time had practiced the quartodeciman Passover [the Passover on the 14th of Nisan!] since they base themselves on a document known as the apostolic constitutions - where the following rule is given: 'You shall not change the calculation of time, but you shall celebrate it at the same time as your brethren who came out of the circumcision. With them observe the Passover'" (From Sabbath to Sunday, p. 161).

Where the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) laid the groundwork for the ultimate expunging of all traces of "Jewishness" from the doctrines and customs of the church, the Council of Laodicea (whose date is a subject of some controversy) positively confirmed it.

Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea said: "Christians should not Judaize and should not be idle on the Sabbath, but should work on that day; they should, however, particularly reverence the Lord's day [Sunday] and, if possible, not work on it, because they are Christians."

For some period of time, because of the growing confusion in the apostate church, both the Sabbath and Sunday were being observed. Two contemporary ancient historians, Sozomen (who lived about A.D. 440) and Socrates (who lived about A.D. 439) documented this dual observance.

Socrates wrote: "Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Eucharist] on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this" (From Sabbath to Sunday, p. 196).

Notice! These historians, writing more than four centuries after the time of the resurrection of Christ, more than twice the length of time the United States has existed as a nation, admit that "almost all churches throughout the world celebrate ... the Sabbath ..."

Sozomen also wrote, "[T]he people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath as well as on the first day of the week ..." (ibid. p. 197).

Any serious student of ecclesiastical history MUST read Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi's book *From Sabbath to Sunday*. The absolute documentation of how Easter was substituted for the Passover, how Sunday was substituted for the Sabbath is totally conclusive!

Remember, God established His Sabbath day as the great IDENTIFYING SIGN, like a stamp, symbol, label, or MARK between Himself and His people! But wait! He said SabbathS, PLURAL! Naturally He would have! For God also gave His people Israel a series of seven annual Sabbaths, holy days, which progressively, as the seasonal changes unfolded, opened up and revealed God's marvelous plan for humankind, the very plan of salvation!

Christ said, "The Sabbath was made for man ..." (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath is something that was MADE. It was created time, made HOLY by the Eternal Creator. God injected His very presence into that day, resting from His creation, giving this span of time to mankind for a great blessing. It's a day of complete REST from labors, a day of rejuvenation, rehabilitation; a day to contemplate creation and God's handiwork; a day to pray, study, fellowship with brethren of like mind; a day of worship toward God.

The Sabbath was made during creation week; it was made when man was made. It was made for MANKIND, not "for the Jews!" No one called a "Jew" (from "Yehudi" or "Judah," the eponymous ancestor of all Jews) was ever in existence until the children of Jacob (Israel) were born! Yet the Sabbath had been in force and effect for thousands of years! The Sabbath LONG predates the codification of the law at Sinai.

God established the Sabbath as a SIGN - like a symbol, or an identifying label - a "mark" of IDENTITY between Himself and His people! He knew if they continually remembered His Sabbath day, it was pivotal to remembering Him as CREATOR - the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Though the Jews rejected Christ, they have clung tenaciously to the Old Testament scriptures, to the weekly Sabbath, and to the annual Sabbaths.

The Jewish people have never lost sight of the Sabbath day! The weekly cycle is nowhere observable in nature. There is no movement of the planets, sun, moon, stars or earth that indicates the day of the week. The Sabbath was established at creation by the One who became Christ, given again to Israel in the Decalogue,

and has never been lost.

When Israel obeyed God, keeping His Sabbaths, they were blessed. When they broke His Sabbaths and turned to idolatry (usually SUN worship in some form) they were cursed, plagued, overcome by warring neighbors.

Throughout the history of the northern ten tribes, the House of Israel, God pled with them to return to Him, to forsake their idols, lest they suffer unbelievable penalties - the curses that come as a natural result of breaking God's laws - plus invasion by foreign armies, captivity, being reduced to slaves once again! But they would not listen.

Eventually, in successive waves of invasion, the Assyrian armies under Shalmanezar took the Israelites into captivity!

"Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only!" (II Kings 17:6-18).

The nation of Israel was removed for Sabbath breaking - for abandoning God's weekly and annual Sabbaths, which would have kept them in the knowledge of God's plan, His PURPOSE for human life. By rejecting the identifying SIGN between them and their God they lost sight of the fact that He is CREATOR of all things, and they turned to idolatry, to sun worship.

Having rejected the identifying SIGN God had placed upon them, they became quite literally LOST from history! Millions suppose Americans are "Gomer," of gentile stock! Only a small minority understand the true identity of Britain, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, and portions of France and Switzerland, as well as members of the Commonwealth!

By the time of Christ, ten-tribed Israel had disappeared from history. Only a tiny handful of peoples from a couple of the tribes are ever mentioned: Anna, who was of Asher, and Paul, who said he was from Benjamin, who originally shared common borders with Judah.

But the Jews never became lost to history, because, even though they also went into idolatry, even though they suffered seventy year's captivity in Babylon for their great national sin, they never abandoned the weekly Sabbath, or the annual Sabbaths! They retained the SIGN God had placed upon His people!

Every time there was a restoration of truth - national repentance because of the decree of a righteous king, like Josiah - the people got back to God's Sabbaths, to His Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, to the annual Sabbaths, which keep us in mind of God's PLAN.

Now, let's understand! The Mark of the Beast is not something that can be surreptitiously placed upon you.

You Can Refuse the Mark!

In vision, John was projected forward in time, forward into our century and beyond - into the time of the Great Tribulation, the Heavenly Signs, and the Day of the Lord.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Revelation, John records his visions of the salvation of the saints of God, and the outpouring of God's wrath on sinning mankind during the seven last plagues.

Notice the description of the saints: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:2-3).

Who are these? Why, they are the resurrected saints! They are the "firstfruits" of the earth, the last living generation of Christians, together with all those who had died previously, and are resurrected at Christ's coming! (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). They represent ALL TRUE, GOD-FEARING, BIBLE-BELIEVING CHRISTIANS. This vision is not portraying just a small PART of the saints of God, but is showing ALL the saints!

Christ will RETURN TO THIS EARTH soon - very, very likely in YOUR LIFETIME! At the time of this great event, millions of saints will be resurrected; countless others will be instantaneously CHANGED. John's vision shows them standing on a "sea of glass," or translucent, crystal-like material before God's throne. Standing upon it was a vast multitude of resurrected, spirit-born saints, now risen from the

dead or instantaneously CHANGED from flesh to spirit, at the precise moment of the Second Coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:50-52).

This represents all the church, the TOTALITY of the firstfruits of the earth, the great FIRST RESURRECTION! This is not some isolated, small group who had some special mission to accomplish, some special problem to overcome. No, it is the great FIRST RESURRECTION; it is all the saints, who are pictured standing before the throne of God, singing the exultant Song of Moses!

And what is their description? They are those who have gotten the victory over the BEAST, and over his IMAGE, and over his MARK, and over the NUMBER OF HIS NAME!

Question: If you do not know who or what this Beast really IS, if you are ignorant of what is his IMAGE, if you do not know what is his MARK, then HOW CAN YOU GET THE VICTORY OVER IT?

It is obvious that the image and the Mark of the Beast are of ancient origin, yet continue right up until the Second Coming of Christ!

Are YOU one who is conscious of the daily struggle against the Mark of the Beast, against his image, against his name, and the number of his name? If you are a Sabbath-keeping wage-earner, striving to feed and clothe a family in a SUNDAY-OBSERVING world, you are VERY aware of such a struggle!

Countless thousands have had to forsake jobs that required them to work on the Sabbath, which is the BUSIEST SHOPPING DAY OF THE WEEK! In a Sunday-observing world, it is sometimes virtually impossible to “buy or sell,” or to maintain a job or a business if you decide to OBEY GOD and keep His Sabbaths! Countless numbers of school children, whose parents ask that they be excused from school to observe God’s holy days, have been shamed and humiliated, have had their grades lowered, and have been penalized for unexcused absences.

Thousands have approached their employers, asking if they would be able to work on Sundays, or on holidays, but have their Sabbaths off from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and have been refused! It is THEN that one knows what it means to RESIST THE MARK OF THE BEAST! His stamp, his identifying label of the day of the SUN, is everywhere in western professing Christian societies.

Millions are deceived! Many believe the Mark of the Beast is yet some future development, a national identity card, or an invisible tattoo, or a microchip implanted beneath the skin, or a plastic credit card. All of this is nonsense! Those who believe such things know nothing of the Bible, of history, or of prophecy! The Mark of the Beast is something that a Christian may consciously refuse, even under pain of martyrdom! No civil power can forcibly take salvation from you, cause you to be a recipient of God's wrath - the outpouring of the seven last plagues! It is only those who refuse to OBEY GOD and who choose, instead, to go along with the ways of this present world, who will come under God's great WRATH and be exposed to the great PLAGUES He will send on this earth.

How do you feel when a loved one is angry with you? When a husband, wife, son or daughter, close family member, or someone on the job is wrathful toward you? Naturally, you're upset, uneasy, perhaps depressed, fearful. But what if you knew ALMIGHTY GOD IN HEAVEN ABOVE IS FILLED WITH WRATH TOWARD YOU?

He is WRATHFUL against all who revere the Beast, who worship his image, and who receive his mark, or the number of his name!

How many Christians do you know who are truly AWARE in a daily, workaday sense, of just WHAT IS THE BEAST, who or what is his image, what is his mark, or the number of his name?

As shocking as it may seem, there are MILLIONS of professing, church-going "Christians," who believe they have salvation but who are actually PART OF THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST, who joyously receive his MARK as part of their very life's fabric but who are completely deceived, who do not KNOW they are locked into a Babylonish MYSTERY religion!

How the Image of the Beast Was Formed

The BEAST of prophecy will soon loom up in Europe! It is to comprise TEN NATIONS (Revelation 17:3, 12), most likely a reunified Germany, at the head of a "United States of Europe" possessing its own nuclear arsenal, along with chemical and biological weapons, and the means to deliver them anywhere in the world. Like a Frankenstein MONSTER, which will STAGGER its own builders, a new, ultra-right Germany will eventually emerge and, in close cooperation with many other Central European nations, form a ten-nation political union.

Notice that the world WORSHIPS this supranational, powerful economic, political, military union: “ [A]nd all the world wondered after the beast.

“And they worshiped the dragon [SATAN! Revelation 12:9] 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?” (Revelation 13:3, 4).

The beast John saw was a counterfeit Christ-like creation. It APPEARED like Christ! Yet it spoke like SATAN! (v. 11) Let’s continue: “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast [Rome! And the successive revivals of the so-called “Holy Roman Empire” down through history], whose deadly wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12).

The “deadly wound” was received when Rome fell, A.D. 476. It was “healed” when Emperor Justinian sent General Belisarius to Carthage, and later to Rome, to overthrow the Ostrogothic king, A.D. 543. The “little horn” (Daniel 7:8, 20) that had “plucked up three horns by the roots,” was the growing universal church in the person of Justinian, as well as successive “holy” Roman emperors. Three lesser rulers were ejected from Rome over a long period - the Vandals, the Ostrogoths (by Justinian and Belisarius), and the Heruli.

Now notice: “And he [this “lamb-like” beast, which spoke as a dragon: Satan] doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

“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; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. [Rome!]

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:13-15).

From the beginning, the Roman Catholic Church was organized along the pattern of the Roman Empire! It was an hierarchy, which, at the absolute pinnacle of power, was worshiped as if divine. The ancient Roman emperors proclaimed themselves “gods” and were commonly addressed as “divinity,” a

BLASPHEMOUS assertion attached to some of the most obscenely depraved, demented, degenerate, cruel human beings who have ever lived!

The Roman Catholic Church developed over centuries and was never a cohesive, unified church under one pope until the time of Constantine, A.D. 325. There were periods in history where there were two or more popes, each excommunicating each other! Malachi Martin has documented a great deal concerning the Roman Catholic Church not commonly known. (Books written by Malachi Martin include: Rich Church, Poor Church: The Catholic Church and Its Money; The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church; The Final Conclave.) Another author has documented the incredible chicanery, power politics, and strife that has characterized the succession of prelates of the Roman Catholic Church. One book, In God's Name: An Investigation into the Murder of Pope John Paul I, by David A. Yallop, alleges that Pope John Paul I was assassinated. It includes much documentation and thirty-two pages of photographs to substantiate its claim.

History proves the church that emerges from the dark shroud of the second century (during which there is comparatively little written information available) is in most respects TOTALLY DIFFERENT from the church of the apostles.

Remember, the church Jesus Christ said He would build (Matthew 16:18) would be the "assembly" (Greek: ekklesia) of the early apostles, including Paul, who described himself as "one begotten out of due season," Barnabas and others, besides the original eleven, together with Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot. They continued to observe the WEEKLY Sabbath, for which there is absolute, incontrovertible PROOF in the New Testament Scriptures. They continued to observe the ANNUAL SabbathS, such as Pentecost (the "birthday" of the New Testament Church - Acts 2), the Days of Unleavened Bread (I Corinthians 5), and the Passover (I Corinthians 11). Luke mentions the "fast" (Day of Atonement - Acts 27:9) about A.D. 55-56, long after the Ascension of Christ.

They observed the Passover exactly as did Christ on the 14th of Nisan, or Abib, the first month of the sacred calendar. But thousands of gentiles were coming into the ranks of the church over the centuries. They were attracted to a church that was increasingly "accommodating," and that easily adapted to various gentile customs and practices.

The story of Simon Magus (the "Magus," from "Magi," Acts 8) and his rival

movement is a subject for a complete book and cannot be treated here. However, there was a “Simon the Pethor” or the “Pater” (Latin: “father”) in Rome who was NOT Simon Peter! There is no connection whatsoever between “Peter” (Greek: Petros, a pebble, or rock) and “Pater.”

Study the book of Romans carefully! Paul addresses the large church at Rome in the 50s. Yet Peter is never mentioned in the book! Peter is not mentioned in the salutation, or in the body of the text, or in the many personal salutations at the close, which include references to more than twenty-seven persons by name! WHY? Because Peter was in Babylon, where there was a colony of Jews. Peter was the apostle to the “circumcision,” while Paul was the apostle to the gentiles! (See I Peter 5:13.)

By the time the curtain raises over church history in the beginning of the second century, a completely different church begins to emerge. Paul spoke of what was happening to the Thessalonians. He said, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

Simon Magus was called “that great power of God” and had the power to produce miracles! It is likely Paul had him in mind when he spoke of a man of sin, a “son of perdition” who exalted himself above “all that is called God, or that is worshiped.” Yet Paul was writing a prophecy for our time, something that is to occur in the final years prior to Christ’s return!

Paul said he was “withholding” (verses 6-11) the emergence of this insidious power within the church. He called it “THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY” [meaning sin or lawlessness] and said that it “doth already work: only he who restrains it [true meaning] will continue to restrain it, until it arise in the midst.” This meant that the man of sin, the individual espousing the MYSTERY religion, would “become evident for who he was” or would “arise in the midst.”

Remember, God had warned through Paul: “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

By the time of Constantine, there were many struggling, disagreeing factions within the growing universal church. The office of bishop had evolved to "metropolitan" in the case of the major cities, like Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome. There were large numbers who insisted the weekly Sabbath should still be kept, that Christ kept it, as did the apostles. Many insisted that the Passover should be observed on the 14th of Nisan. Later they were called "quartodecimans," a Latin term for "the fourteenth," meaning those who insisted the Passover should be observed as it had always been, exactly as God had commanded, on the fourteenth of Nisan. But many new factions had emerged who wished to accommodate the growing numbers of the heathen who were being baptized and who worshiped the symbols of Baal, Isis, and Osiris, of Chemosh and Milcom - symbols of the sun, and moon, and the seasons.

The famous Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) was called by Constantine to settle many of the factional differences that were causing confusion in the universal church. It lasted forty days and was attended by three hundred and seventeen bishops, several metropolitans, as well as by Constantine himself. It went down in history as the first attempted ecumenical council, dealing, as it did, with Arianism, Donatism, and other schisms that were causing dissension in the growing universal church.

At a later council, this one in Laodicea, many of the steps taken in Nicaea were broadened. More stringent edicts were issued concerning the weekly Sabbath and the annual holy days, particularly the Passover! Important among its canons were those concerning the observance of Easter - the proscriptions against those who "Judaized" by observing the Passover on the fourteenth, as had Christ Himself, the early apostles, and the Christian church of the first century.

By this time, the observance of the "first day of the week" as "the Lord's Day" was becoming more and more the accepted standard of the church. Though there were thousands scattered throughout the Roman Empire who continued to observe the holy Sabbath day and who continued to observe God's annual Sabbaths - like the quartodecimans - the growing might of the Roman church gradually overwhelmed them. Most disappeared from history. Through the centuries, we find only fragmentary information concerning those who continued to resist the spread of the Babylonish mystery system of religion: the Bogomils, the Petrobrusians, the Arnoldists, the Waldensians, the Vaudois; there were groups in numerous European nations who clung to the earliest truths expounded by the

apostles, refusing to accept Sunday-worship, "Ishtar" (pronounced "Easter"), and the pagan "Saturnalia" celebrated on December 25th, with its symbols of Nimrod and Semiramus - the little tree, the yule log, the holly wreath, mistletoe, round orbs and bulbs symbolizing sex and fecundity.

But the majority went the way of least resistance. Those who were fearful of martyrdom readily "recanted" any further observance of God's Sabbaths and holy days, and accepted the Church-sanctioned customs of Sunday, Christmas, and Easter. The masses of heretofore "unconverted" coming into the mystery religion were pagan. It was but a small step for these heathen sun-worshipping peoples to embrace the mysteries of the Catholic religion, for the trappings of the religion bore strong resemblance to the paganism from whence these new adherents had only so recently emerged.

An outstanding example of this is in Mexico City, where the national museum contains an ancient "baptismal" font (a contradiction in terms, since "baptizo" means "to immerse"), which features as its pedestal, a huge serpent wound around and around to form the entire stone font. The serpent is in the form of "Quetzalcoatl" (Indian for "winged, flying serpent"), which was the god of the Aztecs and many other Mexican, Central and South American savages. For these illiterate savages to approach a "priest" who would sprinkle them with "holy water" from a font that looked exactly like their serpent god was no major step for them - especially when armed soldiers insisted upon it.

This was nothing more than an adaptation of the same tactics used by the ancient Roman Empire: "In a word, the Roman government was not only wonderfully organized ... everyone was required to join in the worship of the emperor because he stood for the majesty and glory of the dominion ... all were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the state, as a god" (Medieval and Modern Times, ch.1, p.7).

Eventually an "image" of the Beast had been created! Now, a great universal CHURCH was emerging. It had the Roman Curia, the "College of Cardinals," like the old Roman "Collegia," and it ruled according to the principal of the ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF ONE MAN - a hierarchy ruled from the top down, with NO checks and balances. History is replete with the gross abuses of many such leaders, a subject so vast it could fill a whole set of encyclopedias. This "image" of the old Roman Empire appeared to ignorant, uninformed people

“Christ-like,” like a lamb. But its message was satanic, the voice of the dragon! In place of God’s Sabbath day, it substituted the day of the sun god, Sunday. In place of God’s Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread came “Lent” (mentioned nowhere in the Bible) and “Easter.” In place of the Feast of Trumpets – the official “New Year’s Day” of the Israelites, since it fell on the first day of the seventh month, the beginning of the civil year – came “New Year’s Day,” in the middle of a dead winter. “Hallowe’en” (the evening before “All Saints Day”) was adopted, and with it the symbols of Satan’s hell: goblins, witches, black cats, Jack-o’-lanterns, bonfires, orgiastic feasts, carousing; the colors of death and darkness; and belief that “Samhain” the “Lord of the Dead” (a Druidic belief) reassigned the “souls” of the dead on that fateful evening. Gradually the world’s so-called “Christian” populaces began celebrating wholly pagan festivals, as does the great universal church and her protesting daughters today (Revelation 17:5).

God’s Sabbaths were forgotten by the massive majority. Those who kept it could easily be IDENTIFIED, for their entire life was filled with difficulties and persecution as a result. Children in school, wage earners searching for jobs – all were (and are) rendered extremely difficult for Sabbath-keepers in a Sunday-observing world.

The Sign of God’s People

What is a “mark,” but a sign, a symbol, an identifying label? Those who worship the Beast and his image, who willingly give their “right hand” to it (symbolizing a handshake: willingness, agreement), who cooperate with it, naturally wear its brand – its label!

But those who have gotten the victory over the Beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name “sing the Song of Moses!” Notice again, as we read in Revelation 14, verses 9 and 10, that those who receive the Mark of the Beast, who worship his image, will suffer the WRATH OF GOD in the seven last plagues! But notice, in context, only two short verses later, the contrasting group: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they THAT KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

The Song of Moses extols God’s Ten Commandments! Moses was the intermediary who gave the LAW. The resurrected saints, who have gotten VICTORY over the Beast, his image, and his mark are those who have clung fast

to God's Ten Commandments!

Jesus said, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments!" (Matthew 19:17). Christ inspired John to write, "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3, 4).

The end-time saints are described as "the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17).

The commandments of God include the FOURTH one, which says, "REMEMBER the Sabbath day, to KEEP it holy.

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work [this commandment has to do with your business, your labor - buying and selling - earning your food!],

"But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ..." (Exodus 20:8-10).

God established the Sabbath as the great TEST commandment! It is a test of obedience! When rebellious Israelites were refusing to keep the Sabbath - this, before the giving of the Decalogue - God said, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Exodus 16:28).

As a separate covenant, an everlasting covenant, God established the Sabbath as a great SIGN between Himself and His people! The One who became Jesus Christ and died on the stake for your sins and mine, thundered to His creation: "Verily MY SabbathS YE SHALL KEEP: for it is a sign [label, identifying badge, symbol, mark] between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know I am the Lord that doth sanctify [set apart, make holy, different, unique!] you.

"Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. ...

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL FOR EVER" (Exodus 31:13-18).

From the time of Pentecost, this great sign applies to ALL people of whatever national or ethnic background, for "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).

Notice again the symbolism of the hand and the forehead. The hand is given in a “handshake,” as a form of greeting or agreement. How many deals have been consummated when men have said, “Let’s shake on it”? The vast majority of mankind are right-handed. The “right hand of fellowship,” a sign of cooperation, willingness, brotherly love and esteem, is commonly known. Christ sits at the “right hand” of the Father in heaven, showing that He is in fullest agreement, cooperation, that They two are ONE in everything! Now, notice!

Concerning the original Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread - two of God’s annual Sabbaths - God, the One who became Christ, said: “And it shall be for a SIGN unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes [on your forehead!], that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth [on your mind]” (Exodus 13:9).

“And you shall bind them [God’s commandments] for a SIGN upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes [on your forehead!]” (Deuteronomy 6:8).

Notice further: “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a SIGN upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 11:18).

The forehead, the area “between the eyes” of we human beings, contains the “frontal lobes” of the brain. It is here, in the frontal lobes of the brain, that our will resides—our power to choose, our volition, our free moral agency. Other parts of the brain control our motor facility, our memory, our ability to walk, sit, eat, cough, sleep. But in the portion behind the forehead is where character resides!

The number seven is God’s number signifying perfection, completion, as seen in the Sabbath day as the final day of creation, the day of rest. Six is man’s number, the number of the days given to mankind for his own work, for his own purposes. The number three is used time and again in the Word of God for “finality.” Three sixes symbolize “final carnality” or “totally human,” as opposed to divine, or spiritual.

The Mysterious Number—666

The number 666 has been attached to a great diversity of persons, places, and things - from the Titans of ancient Greek mythology to U.S. President Ronald

Reagan, from Nero to the pope, from the “secret symbol” of the ancient “mysteries” to the intricate circuitry of some modern “super computer.”

Conspiracy theorists try to link 666 with the “New Age Movement.” In her book *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, Constance Cumbey alleges the infamous number is a “distinguishing characteristic of the New Age Movement.” New Agers, she insists, “consider the 666 a sacred number.” However intriguing, Cumbey’s imaginative attempts at seeing triple six formations in pictures in New Age publications – along with an obvious lack of genuine evidence supportive of her theories – do little for the credibility of her book.

In his book *There’s A New World Coming*, well-known author Hal Lindsey states, “Since the number 6 in the Bible stands for humanity, I believe the meaning of 666 is man trying to imitate the Trinity of God (three sixes in one person.)” While this fairly popular view is shared by numerous commentators, it begins with a commonly held false assumption – that God is a Trinity.

One school of prophetic interpretation tags Nero Caesar with the number of the Beast. But the believability of this argument diminishes as the facts emerge. Notice what Mounce has to say:

“The solution most commonly accepted today is that 666 is the numerical equivalent of Nero Caesar. It is held to be supported by the variant reading 616, which also yields the name of Nero when the Latinized spelling is followed. What is not generally stressed is that this solution asks us to calculate a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, and that with a defective spelling” (Robert H. Mounce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Book of Revelation*, p. 264).

According to some sources, both the Hebrew and Greek names of Romulus, the legendary founder and first king of Rome, add up to 666. This, to some, indicates that everyone called “Roman” has the “name” of the man for whom Rome was named.

The Greek word for Romulus is *Lateinos*, which signifies “Roman,” and yields a numerical value of 666. Interestingly, “*Lateinos*” is mentioned by second century theologian Irenaeus (in his work *Against Heresies*) as one of several possible solutions to the numerical riddle.

But the problems of transliteration and the fact that we don't know for sure whether a man named Romulus ever even existed - not to mention the fact that literally thousands of names, titles, and words can be made up to add up to 666 - leaves the argument standing on a quavering foundation.

Romulus and Nero are not the only Romans branded with triple sixes. Adventists claim that the letters of the Pope's Latin title - Vicarius Filii Dei - add up to 666. However, we must realize that the more titles an individual has, and the more ways there are of "counting," the more likely it is that at least one of his titles will yield the numerical value of 666 - and the pope is not short of titles; nor are the interpreters of prophecy short of ways with which to count. Moreover, Vicarius Filii Dei is apparently not an officially acknowledged title.

But what does the Bible say about the "number of the Beast"? What is the purpose of the number? Is "666" the number of a computer, a church, a religious leader?

Turn to and read Revelation 13:15-17, and notice these important points:

- (1) The number of the Beast is the "number of HIS NAME"!
- (2) The number is the "number of a MAN"!
- (3) No one can buy or sell unless he has the mark or name of the Beast, or the number of his name.
- (4) The number can be "counted" by those with wisdom and understanding.
- (5) The number is "six hundred threescore and six" - 666.

The number of the Beast is the number of a man and the number of his name - NOT the number of a computer, or the number of "the New Age," or former President Regan, or the number on the label of a can of soup.

The BEAST is both the revived ROMAN EMPIRE and the MAN who presides over the revived military and political system. The "image" of the Beast is the great universal ecclesiastical system patterned after the ancient Roman Empire, which was, under its Catholic leaders, called "Holy."

Nero Caesar, Mussolini, and other historical figures may have been types of the

end-time Beast, but did not fulfill the prophecies concerning him.

When he appears, those who have wisdom and understanding will recognize him, and will find that his name (or epithet) will, by some numerical system, yield the figure 666!

It is interesting, but perhaps not prophetically significant, that the monetary standard of Germany is called the MARK, not the dollar (from "Thaler," a valley in Germany), or the Pound Sterling. It is interesting that the French monetary standard is also a Mark, called a Franc in the French language. A "franked" envelope is one that has been stamped with postage in advance. Hitler adopted the "crooked cross," the sign of the SWASTIKA for his "Third Reich." Perhaps the coming Beast power will have any number of different names, emblems, or signs; perhaps it will utilize some monetary standard that will be recognizable to those who are truly "watching" world developments as Christ commanded His people to do.

And just because national identity cards or computer chips forcibly inserted beneath the skin are NOT the "Mark of the Beast," does not mean the Beast power will not resort to some form of checking up on all its citizens! The fact that "no man may buy or sell" who does not receive the Mark of the Beast is definitely significant.

When the Beast appears, those who understand the prophecies concerning him are likely to recognize him before they ever attempt to count the numerical value of his name. The "666" then, is not the sole means of identifying the Beast and is not even the first clue of his identity. Rather, it is only one, perhaps the last, of many factors that point to the identity of the end-time Beast.

Many have speculated that the present pope, like a counterfeit of "John the Baptist," is "preparing the way for the one to follow," who will be a counterfeit of Christ. Some note that there have been five popes with the title "Sixtus" and have naturally wondered whether another, final pope will take the title "Sixtus, the Sixth." Whether or not this occurs, and it may be idle speculation, one thing is sure: The "woman" which mounts and rides the Beast is none other than the Roman Catholic Church! She is the great "Lady of the Kingdoms" (read Isaiah 47), "the mother of harlots [her protesting daughters, which came out of her] and abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5).

Her signs are those of the cross, Sunday, Easter, Christmas, and Halloween! She has thought “to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25) and will eventually put to death the saints of God for refusing to receive and accept her mark, to worship the Beast and the image of the Beast (the papacy), and to receive the number of the name of the Beast! She has protesting daughters, who, though rejecting her leadership, cling to many of her most important dogmas and doctrines. They include the millions who recite the “Apostles’ Creed” (absolutely unbiblical!), recite and sing the “doxology,” believe in the immortality of the soul and the Trinity, and who worship on the day of the sun and on the days of ancient pagans, such as the “Saturnalia” (Christmas) and the festival devoted to “Ishtar” (Easter).

God warns, “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).

The Beast that is to arise is probably going to be called “the United States of Europe.” It is represented by the ten toes of the image Daniel interpreted (in Daniel’s second chapter) as the end-time kings who will be destroyed by Christ at His coming! These same ten kings are mentioned in Revelation 17:7-14, where they are on the seventh head of the successive revivals of the “Holy Roman Empire,” and these ten nations “shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and Kings of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

Remember! The saints of God are those who have gotten the victory over the Beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name. Those who willingly receive it in their minds (foreheads), who cooperate with it (with their right hand), will suffer the WRATH OF GOD and the SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

Those who resist it, who overcome it - who refuse to worship the Beast and his image - may be martyred for their beliefs! Yet they inherit eternal life, they receive SALVATION as a result! God commands you and me, “COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE.”

May God give you the grace, strength, and courage to come out of modern Babylon and her “mystery” religion, and the wisdom to recognize the Mark of the Beast, the image of the Beast, and the number of his name.

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