



# PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3/21/1905

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## **REVELATION 13, THE ‘MARK OF THE BEAST,’ AND THE ‘ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION’ MADE SIMPLE**

by Jim Buller

### Revelation 13

1. Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.
2. 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.

The symbolism in these verses is very similar to the symbolism of the dream in Daniel chapter 7. So, let’s comparing scripture with scripture —as we have been counseled to do in Isaiah 28:10 and 13.

### Daniel chapter 7

1. In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.
2. Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.
3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.
4. The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.
5. And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’

6. After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

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

In the interpretation of this dream in this chapter, we are told what these symbols represent. Verse 17 says, "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth." Like the other prophetic dreams and visions in the book of Daniel, this prophecy describes the flow of the 'superpowers' through the ages, ending with God's eternal kingdom.

For example, in the prophetic dream in chapter 2, there is a great 'metal man' with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thigh of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay, which is destroyed by a rock that becomes a huge mountain. In the interpretation of this dream, the ancient Babylonian Empire is named as being represented by the 'head of gold,' (see Daniel 2:37-38). The interpretation also goes on to state that after Babylon, there would be a succession of superpower nations until God sets up His eternal kingdom, (see Daniel 2:39-44).

The prophecy in chapter 8 describes these same superpower nations as a ram, and then a goat, and then there are interesting things that happen to the goat's horns, symbolizing powers that would rise out of the goat nation. The ram in this vision is named as representing the Persian Empire, (see Daniel 8:20) —for by the time this vision was given, Babylon was already beginning to pass off the scene. The goat is also named as representing Greece, (see Daniel 8:21).

So, the first three superpowers in these prophetic sequences are the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Empires. The fourth superpower, represented by the 'legs of iron' in chapter 2, the 'dreadful beast' in chapter 7, the 'little horn' in chapter 8, and the 'king of the north' in the vision of chapters 10-12, is not named in the book of Daniel. However from history, as well as from the New Testament, it is easy to determine that the fourth superpower is the Roman Empire.

As noted earlier, all of the prophecies in the book of Daniel follow essentially the same pattern, describing the flow of superpowers through the ages, ending with God's eternal kingdom. God chose to describe these superpowers in the prophecies because, among other reasons, they are the most 'visible' nation of their time. For example, we may, or may not know what is going on in a small country in some obscure place around the world, but everybody knows what's happening with the superpower. Please study the book of Daniel to become more familiar with these prophecies, as time and space simply don't allow us to go into more detail here.

Although it may seem insignificant at first, it is worth noting that the order in which the beasts are listed in Revelation 13 is just reversed from the order they are listed in Daniel 7. This is because Daniel was living at the time of the Babylonian Empire and during the early days of the Persian Empire. So for him, this flow of superpower nations was for the most part yet future. On the other hand, John was living at the time of the Roman Empire. So he was looking back into the past. Understanding

John's view of the past superpowers up until his time, establishes that the fourth superpower is the Roman Empire, and therefore the 'beast' in Revelation 13:1-2, [which we read at the beginning of this study], is Rome. This view provides the historical context for what John is going to be shown in the rest of chapter 13. It is also worth noting at this point, that the Roman Empire, as described here in Revelation 13, is made up of various elements of the empires which came before it, which was indeed the case.

However, the question begs to be asked, 'If the prophecies in Daniel, (which are referenced here in Revelation), describe the flow of the superpowers through the ages until God's eternal kingdom, why do they end with Rome? Why don't they go on to include the other superpowers such as the Arabian Empire, the Chinese Empire, the Spanish Empire, and the British Empire? —some of which took in even more people and territory than the Roman Empire? The answer to this question is found in noting three things: (1) Daniel 7:7 states that this "fourth beast ... was *different* from all the beasts that were before it." (2) Ever since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., 'Rome,' in one form or another, has continued to be a major player on the global political scene. First it was the Roman Republic, which morphed into the Roman Empire, which in time split into the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, and then the Western Empire morphed into the Papacy. (3) So we *do* still have one form of 'Rome' that is still involved in and strongly influences global politics today! For example, if we were to mention 'Rome' in the context of global politics, everyone would immediately recognize that we are talking about the Papacy. Please study the prophecies in Daniel noting the characteristics of the "beast" in Daniel 7, the "little horn" in Daniel 8, and the "king of the north" in Daniel 10-12, and how these characteristics also point directly to the Papacy.

But, if you are familiar with history, you might think: Yes, the Papacy was quite involved in international politics up until the late 1700's. However, since then there was well over a hundred years where the Papacy was essentially in the background. It has only been relatively recently that the Papacy has again become significant in the area of global politics. So, we need to read on in Revelation 13.

3. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

Up until 1798, the Papacy was a major force in international politics. However in that year, Napoleon's general Berthier took the pope captive, and sent him into exile. Many thought that would be the end of the Papacy. However, this prophecy is proving true. The Papacy has been steadily regaining its power, and today "all the world" is indeed 'marveling' and 'following' it.

4. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5. And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

6. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.
8. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
- 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.
10. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Notice what happens next! In the context of the Papacy receiving its “deadly wound” and this “deadly wound” being “healed,” another superpower nation comes on the scene.

11. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

If you remember, back in verse 1, as well as in Daniel 7, all the other beasts “came up from the sea,” as a result of the “four winds of heaven ... stirring up the Great Sea.” The significance of the “Great Sea” is found in Revelation 17:15, which say, “the waters which you saw, ... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” Therefore, the “sea” or the “peoples” being ‘stirred up’ would obviously represent wars. Historically this has indeed been the case. Babylon became the superpower by a successful war against the Assyrian Empire—which was the superpower before it. Babylon also carried out a successful campaign against Egypt, another ancient superpower. Later, the Persians under Cyrus, conquered the Babylonians to become the next superpower. And in time, Alexander the Great lead the Greeks against the Persians to establish the Greek Empire. Later yet in history, Rome became the superpower as it gradually conquered the various sections of the Greek Empire as well as by conquering Gaul, Carthage and other additional areas.

However, it is important to note that this new beast/superpower comes up from the “earth”— instead of coming up from the “sea” being ‘stirred up.’ Now, various Bible expositors have suggested different interpretations of this, but the one thing that is obvious here, is that this new superpower nation did *not* become a superpower the same way the other “beasts” did—that is, by conquering the previous superpower.

With careful reading and a basic understanding of history, this prophecy, like the other prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, is fairly easy to understand. There is really only one nation which has come on the scene about the same time that the Papacy received its “deadly wound” in 1798, that has become the superpower during the time the “deadly wound” was being healed, and that did not become the superpower as a result of conquering the prior superpower. The only nation that fits this description is the United States of America.

As of this writing, much of what we have studied so far is already history. However the rest of this prophecy, deals with the present and what is yet future. So let’s read on in Revelation 13.

12. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

15. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

16. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

17. and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Here we find that the United States will be instrumental in enforcing the 'mark of the beast!' So let's examine this subject. It has already been established that the 'beast,' at this point in time, is the Papacy. So, what is the 'mark' of the beast. Notice what the following quotations from Roman Catholic sources say about the 'mark' of their authority. There are many other similar statements that can easily be found on the internet, but for the sake of time and space we will only look at two of them.

Sunday is our mark or authority...the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact. (Catholic Record of London, Ontario, September 1, 1923.)

Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change [Saturday Sabbath to Sunday] was her act...And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things. (H.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons.)

Please note that Sunday observance has been around for centuries, and it has also been recognized as the 'mark' of Papal authority for a long time. But according to this prophecy, it does not become the 'mark of the beast,' until it is *enforced* by the U.S.A. Therefore, we can expect that the United States will pass a national law enforcing Sunday observance. And as of this writing, it is very interesting to note that for various reasons different U.S. politicians, as well as the Pope, and even some environmentalists have already been calling for this exact type of legislation.

Keep in mind that according to the wording of God's seventh-day Sabbath Commandment we are only required to "rest" and not work in order to "keep it holy."

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor you

manservant, nor you maidservant, nor you cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8-11.)

Therefore, Sunday legislation may initially be introduced only as a 'no work Sunday.' However as we have seen from this prophecy, the penalty connected with this law will increase to 'economic sanctions' —not being able to buy or sell— and eventually there will be a death sentence connected with it. (See Revelation 13:15-17 again.)

The seriousness of this issue is outlined in the next chapter of Revelation, chapter 14. Here three warning messages, depicted by three angels with loud voices flying through the sky, are given just before Jesus' second coming. The third angel states,

If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. (Revelation 14:9-10.)

Note that the "wine of the wrath of God," mentioned here is a direct reference to the Seven Last Plagues, as the first verse of the next chapter, Revelation 15, says,

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. (Revelation 15:1.)

So, the Seven Last Plagues will be poured out on those who receive the 'Mark of the Beast.' These plagues are described in the following chapter, Revelation 16. And it must also be noted that those whom the plagues are poured out on, do "not repent," (see Revelation 16:9 and 11). Therefore, receiving the 'mark of the beast,' is essentially the equivalent of committing the unpardonable sin and condemning one's self to the devastating Seven Last Plagues.

At this point, we need to look at Jesus' end-time prophecy in Matthew 24. In verses 15 and 21, He said,

Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, ... then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Some versions of the Bible call the "abomination of desolation," the "abomination that *causes* desolation." This particular wording is also reflected in the prophecies of Daniel where this term is mentioned. So it is the "abomination," that brings on, or "causes," the "desolation." In other words, when the "abomination" happens, things are so 'abominably' bad, that they have to be destroyed/'desolated.' It is interesting to note that we have several examples of this happening in Biblical history. The flood in Noah's

time, and Sodom and Gomorrah are classic examples, and in Jesus' end-time prophecy, He refers us to both of these events to illustrate what will happen again in the end-times, (see Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-29).

So let's put this together with what we have just been studying. As the Seven Last Plagues are poured out, the sea and streams of water becomes like blood, the earth is scorched by the sun, there is an earthquake that is worse than any quake that has ever happened before, and there is a storm with huge hailstones. As a result of the plagues, the earth is indeed destroyed and left desolate, (see Revelation chapter 16). And what is it that brings on these plagues —the 'Mark of the Beast!' So the 'Mark of the Beast' is the 'Abomination' that causes the 'Desolation' of the Seven Last Plagues. It is easy to see why Jesus said that "when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' ... then there will be great tribulation." So, the enforcement of the 'Mark of the Beast,' or a national Sunday law in the U.S.A., will mark the beginning of the "great tribulation" or "time of trouble," to use the wording of Daniel 12:1. This "great tribulation" or "time of trouble" ends with a cosmic event, just before Jesus' comes, (see Matthew 24:29-31).

But why is a law enforcing Sunday observance so abominable? —let's 'dig' a little deeper. In a 'flash forward' describing the saints in heaven after Jesus comes, Revelation 15:2 makes an interesting statement. It says,

And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

It is understandable why the saints would need to gain the victory over the "beast," as, "it was granted to him to make war with the saints." (Revelation 13:7.) Similarly, it is also understandable why the saints would need to gain the victory over the "image" of the beast and over the "mark." But why would they need to have the victory over "the number of his name?"

First, we need to find out what "the number of his name" is. In Latin, the Roman language, the official title of the pope is 'Vicarius Filii Dei,' which is usually translated, 'Vicar of the Son of God.' However, the word 'vicar' literally means 'in the place of.' So, 'Vicarius Filii Dei' then literally means 'In the place of the Son of God' —and it is no secret that the pope claims to take the place of God's Son on earth. If we use Roman Numerals, which was the Roman/Latin number system, to attach number values to the letters of this title, and then add up these number values, we get 666, (see box), which gives further confirmation that the beast in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation represents the papal system.

V	5	F	--	D	500
I	1	I	1	E	--
C	100	L	50	I	<u>1</u>
A	--	I	1		501
R	--	I	<u>1</u>		
I	1		53		112
U	5				53
S	<u>--</u>				<u>501</u>
	112				666

But, let's look at this a little more personally, and ask, Who has the right to sit on the 'throne' of our lives? —only Jesus. We are His, both by creation and redemption. So, whenever we take control of *our own* lives instead of submitting to His leading, we have essentially put ourselves in His rightful place —and therefore deserve to have the '666' 'written on our foreheads.'

This was the same issue that caused Lucifer to fall, (see Isaiah 14:12-15, and Ezekiel 28:11-19), and the temptation he used at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also centered on this issue. Remember, he told Eve,

For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:5.)

In other words, 'You don't need God to tell you what to do. If you eat this magical fruit you will 'know' for yourself —and you can run your own life.' And it should be no surprise that we see this same idea expressed almost everywhere yet today! "Do your own thing." "Follow your heart." "I'll do it my way." "No right, no wrong, no rules for me. I'm free!" They even sing songs about it! Putting ourselves in Jesus' rightful place, and taking the controls into our own hands is the essence of Satan's system.

However, as appealing as the idea of doing what *we* want to do is to us, it simply does not work.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12.)

The problem is that it would only be a matter of time before what *I* want gets in the way of what *you* want, and then we would have a conflict. Quarrels among individuals and wars among nations are the inevitable result. Unfulfilled needs and all types of suffering can be the only outcome. We only have to look around us to see what happens when things operate on this principle.

The only way to keep this from happening, and the only solution to all the problems here on earth is for everyone, and everything to submit to their loving Creator, and to follow His instructions and directions. That is the only way everything will work together, and everyone will have what they need. Yes, we do need to gain the victory over the 'I'll do it my own way' principle embodied in "the number of his name."

Although many do not realize it, there is no Scriptural basis for changing the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, to Sunday. Therefore, even though there are many who sincerely seek to honor God by doing so, Sunday observance is purely a human/satanic invention. Once the issues we have studied here are understood however, the observance of Sunday in the place of God's seventh-day Sabbath is essentially telling God, 'We'll do it our own way.' When a law *enforcing* Sunday observance is passed, a definite line will have been crossed. Supporting this law either actively or passively, would be an indication that a person has aligned him/herself with Satan's rebellion. Therefore, at that point it becomes the 'Mark of the Beast.'

Dear reader, it is my hope that as we have studied these prophecies you have recognized that God does indeed know the end from the beginning, and that He *is* in control of the destiny of this world. It is also hoped that you will recognize that even though we have all been born with a sinful selfish human nature, and all have the desire to take charge of our own lives, that it is foolish to operate by this principle. It is ultimately hoped that you will recognize that our only hope is to surrender to our loving

Creator, and allowing Him to cleanse us of our selfishness and give us the victory through His love and power, that we may all soon stand on the “sea of glass.”

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