

These Times

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**The
Revelation
of
Jesus Christ**

SPECIAL ISSUE

The United States becomes dominated by the church

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 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, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 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. 15 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.

16 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: 17 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.

18 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.

Following his vision of the beast from the sea, John saw another animal, this one "coming up out of the earth." Later passages in the Book of Revelation describe this beast as a "false prophet," a highly successful impostor. (See Revelation 16: 13, 14; 19:20.) At least four points identify this beast.

1. *Time of rise.* The beast from the earth must arise at the end of the 1260-year rule of the beast from the sea. (Verse 12.) In addition, in its final dragonlike stage it is a contemporary with the resurrected phase of the sea beast. (Verse 14.) Thus, it must begin about 1798 and rule until Jesus' second coming. (See Revelation 19:20.)

2. *Place of rise.* The first beast of Revelation 13 and all the beasts mentioned in Daniel 7 arose from the "sea," which, according to Revelation



17:15, represents "peoples" and "nations." In obvious contrast, the second beast mentioned in Revelation 13 comes up from the *earth*—a term used in chapter 12 to indicate a sparsely populated, wilderness region. (Verse 11; compare Revelation 12:16.) The original Greek word used in verse 11 translated "coming up" indicates that John saw this power springing up like a plant.

Only one nation, or power, fits these first two specifications: the **United States of America**. It alone, of all the major world powers, emerged in the late 1700's in a wilderness area.

3. *Influence*. The animal from the earth exercises a worldwide influence. The whole world follows its example. (See verses 12, 16, 17.) Again the specification fits the **United States**.

4. *Apparent nature of*. Throughout the Book of Revelation the figure of the lamb represents Jesus Christ. The lamb is an innocent, peaceful animal—a sharp contrast to the beasts which represent the powers used by Satan. The animal from the earth, strangely, has "two horns like a lamb"—it appears on first sight to be lamblike, innocent, even Christian in appearance. Those who founded the **United States** based the nation's Constitution on two great principles, civil and religious liberty. These two principles are inseparably connected with the republican form of government, which allows the people to rule through their chosen representatives, and the Protestant understanding of the principle of religious liberty.

According to John's prophecy, the **United States** is to play a central role in Satan's final attempt to destroy God's people and so thwart His eternal purpose. To do this it must undergo a change, a remarkable change. Notice what will happen to the **United States**.

1. It will *speak as a dragon*. (Verse 11.) A country "speaks," or expresses itself, through legislative processes. This prophecy predicts that America will enact some law which will support the resurrected first beast, the Roman Catholic church-state, and in so doing it will manifest the very spirit of Satan, the dragon.

2. Through actual *persecution* it will require all men to somehow worship or pay homage to the Roman Catholic church-state. (Verse 12; compare verses 2, 5.)

3. It will *deceive* the inhabitants of the earth through *miracles*, as it tries to get them to make an "image to the beast." (Verses 13, 14; compare Revelation 16:13, 14; Matthew 24:24; 1 Timothy 4:1.) Thus **America** will become the focal point of a great counterfeit religious revival in which spiritualism is to play a prominent role.

4. It will *create an image of the beast*. (Verse 15.) Two powers combined to form the original beast: the republic of Rome and the apostate early Christian church. The first beast arose as a union of church and state. In like manner, when the apostate Protestant churches of **America** join forces to secure power in the civil sphere, the republic of the **United States** will create an "image" of the original beast.

5. It will create this image through legislation, causing all men to *worship* the beast in some way. (Verse 15.) Ultimately this oppressive legislation

will involve a *death penalty* for dissenters.

6. It will use economic pressures to force men to identify themselves with the "mark" of the beast, either by their actions ("in their right hand") or by actual mental assent ("in their foreheads").

The Book of Revelation presents several points which identify this important mark and its nature. First, it will involve worship. Those who receive it worship the beast. (Verse 8; compare Revelation 14:9.) Second, it is something upon which all apostate Christians will agree, Catholics and Protestants alike. Third, those who receive it are contrasted in Revelation 14:9-12 with those who keep the commandments of God. Thus, the mark involves an attempt to disregard God's law. Long ago, the prophet Daniel declared that the "little horn" (the same power as the beast from the sea described in Revelation 13:1-10) would "think to change times and laws." (Daniel 7:25.) In particular the apostate Roman Catholic Church has "thought" to change the fourth commandment of God's law by substituting worship on the first day of the week, Sunday, for God's appointed day of worship, the seventh-day Sabbath. Moreover, it presents this change as a *mark* of its ecclesiastical authority.

Numerous Catholic catechisms recognize this fact. For instance, Peter Geiermann's, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (1957 ed.), says,

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

"A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

The only religion which leads to God is that which comes from God. He alone is the source of truth and light and righteousness. That religion which springs forth from the mind of fallen men is *sin*. It is the very essence of the man of sin to place himself above God, to exalt the creature over the Creator, to attempt to "improve" the law of self-sacrificing love which represents the character of God. And so, the mark of the beast is a creation of man, fallen man, the man of sin.

When Sunday observance is enforced by law, then the issues will be clearly drawn between the religion of God and that which comes from man. Only then, with the issues thus clearly drawn, will Sunday observance become the mark of the beast. Those who then accept this mark will also accept the "name" or character of the beast and the "number of a man." This number, 666, is eminently man's number. Six falls short of seven, the number of completeness and perfection. While the seventh-day Sabbath is God's own sign of His completed work, the number six represents that which falls short.

Only those who accept God's mark and trust fully in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ will escape the great delusion connected with the mark of the beast.

How Satan will lead mankind to reject God