

The Everlasting GOSPEL



THE FUTURE WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

In recent years the world witnessed one disaster after another. Droughts, floods, devastating cyclones and earthquakes have followed each other in steady succession. Thousands lost their lives by dreadful accidents on land, sea and in the air; while millions more are starving to death, many nations are bankrupt, unable to repay their debts. Wars, national uprisings, population explosion and the continual destruction of nature causes mankind to look fearfully into the future.

Many of these events are clearly prophesied in the Bible (Matt 24:4-31; Luke 21:25-28; Rev 6:12-17; 16; 17; 18). God has always warned the world of coming judgments, which were the results of their ungodliness (Isa 24:5-20; 46:9-10; Am 3:7; Rev 1:1).



LESSONS FROM THE PAST

For example, God told Noah of the coming flood, Abraham and Lot of the future destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Moses of the plagues of Egypt. These events were recorded for us today as a warning to help us understand clearly that all prophecies recorded in the Bible have met their fulfillment and will come to pass in the future. (1Cor 10:6-12; 2Pet 2:5-9; Heb 4:11).

Therefore, we find God's urgent warning message to the last generation, represented by the Three Angel's Messages, which we find in Revelation, chapter 14, written by John the Revelator. This is the last call which God is making to all people before the second coming of Jesus Christ as King and Judge. It contains the most serious warning of coming judgments to be found in scripture:

THE MESSAGE OF THE THREE ANGELS



1. „Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.“
2. „Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication“.
3. „If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.“ Rev 14: 6-11.

This warning is of vital importance to every person! But how can we avoid worshipping the Beast or receiving its Mark if we don't know who or what the Beast and its Image is? The lack of knowledge in this area has fatal consequences. „My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.“ (Hos 4:6, compare Isa 29: 13-14).

However, God has promised understanding to the upright (Prov 2:1-7; Dan 12:4,10; Matt 7: 7-8). „As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn

ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?“ Eze 33:11 (compare 2Pet 3:10-11; Mal 3:18; 4:1,2).

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THAT BEAST WITH THAT UNIQUE MARK?

Before we discuss the Beast itself we must understand the historical background preceding the Beast. The best place to begin is in the book of Daniel, which deals greatly with prophecy, from the 6th century B.C. down to the end of time.

The interpretation of the symbols used in Bible prophecy has not been left to human guesswork. Prophecy is history written in advance. The Bible itself gives us the key of understanding (2Pet 1:20). A beast in prophecy can symbolize a king or a kingdom. This is clearly taught in Dan 7:17,23: „These great beasts are four kings... The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth...“

In Dan 7:3 is written: „And four great beasts came up from the sea...“ „Sea“ or „Water“ represents „peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.“ Rev 17:15 (compare Isa 8:7). In chapter 7 of Daniel the prophet sees the coming world empires represented as beasts. A parallel description we find in Dan 2:27-45 where individual parts of a statue are symbolizing, in an accurate manner, the future course mankind will take.



The Lion



„The first was like a lion...“ Dan 7:4 (compare Dan 2:37,38). This refers to the Babylonian world empire (608-538 BC), which reigned supreme during Daniel's time. In the Pergamon Museum of Berlin you can still admire the winged lion as a historical witness of that period of time.

The Bear

„And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.“ Dan 7:5. This beast has the same meaning as the breast and arms of silver in Dan 2:32,39. It represents the power of the two empires of Media and Persia, who replaced the Babylonian empire (538-331 BC). It was a dual monarchy with the Medes ruling first, then later the Persians. The two legs and the bear raising itself up on one side emphasizes this aspect of prophecy. The one part would be stronger than the other. The three ribs represented the nations of Babylon, Lydia and Egypt that were conquered by Medo-Persia.



The Leopard



„After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.“ Dan 7:6. This beast also finds its counterpart in Dan 2:32,39. It was the Grecian empire (331-168 BC), Alexander the Great which overthrew the Persians, and when he died his kingdom was divided into four parts, as symbolized by the four heads. (Macedonia, Thrace, Syria and Egypt).

The Fourth Beast

„After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it;



and it had ten horns.“ Dan 7:7. Again we find this beast in Dan 2:33,40,41. The fourth empire that followed the Grecian empire was the Roman empire (168 BC-476 AD). It was so very different from all the other beasts that Daniel saw in vision that he was unable to describe it. The ten horns in Dan 7:24 represent „ten kings that shall arise out of this kingdom“. It is a historical fact that the Roman empire fell in 476 AD, and in its place 10 new kingdoms came up which are the ten germanic tribes that make up today's European states. Parallel to Dan 7:7 we find that in Dan 2:42-44 these were symbolized by the ten toes. These were the following tribes: 1. Alemanni (Germany), 2. Franks (France), 3. Anglo-Saxons (Great Britain), 4. Burgundians (Switzerland), 5. Visigoths (Spain), 6. Suevi (Portugal), 7. Lombards (Italy), 8. Heruli, 9. Vandals, 10. Ostrogoths.

THE LITTLE HORN

„I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.“ Dan 7:8.



The Various Identification Marks of the Little Horn:

1. It came up „among“ the 10 horns (kingdoms), and three of the original 10 horns were uprooted in its rise to power.
2. In Dan 7:24 it is reported: The little horn shall rise after the 10 horns. There is only ONE power in all history that fits this description. In Rome itself in the very center of the fractured empire the papacy arose after 476 A.D., the one-man government of the Catholic Church. In its rise to power three of the Gothic tribes, (the Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths), „were plucked up“. By the decree of the east Roman emperor Justinian (Codex Justinianus) in 533 A.D. the Roman bishop was installed as the head of all Christian churches. When the last of the three Arian tribes (the Ostrogoths) resisted this decree in 538 A.D. they were conquered and chased out of Rome by the imperial general Belisarius. This was also the time that papal Rome fully established its political power for a prophesied period. (See later explanation).

3. In Dan 7: 25 it says that he „will wear out the saints of the most High“, which is referring to the great persecution of the Christians. No reader of history can deny that this prediction, too, found its fulfillment in the papacy. The dreadful persecutions of the Dark Ages (the inquisition, the burning of heretics, the crusades) are well known and have indeed blackened the pages of history.



4. Further, it states: „he will think to change times and laws...“ The papal system actually changed the law of God, the 10 commandments: It removed the second commandment from the catechism, which prohibits the worship of images. It also changed the fourth commandment, the keeping of the Sabbath (the only commandment dealing with „time“), by moving God's day of rest from the seventh day to the first day of the week. (compare 2Thess 2:3-4; Ps 94:20).

He changed the „time“ of worship. A false day of worship was set up. Instead of the original, unchangeable Sabbath of the 7th day (see Ex 20:8-11; 31:13,16,17; Eze 20:12; Isa 56:2,3,6,7; Ps 89:35; Heb 4:1-11; Jas 2:10), which was kept by Christ and the apostles (Luke 4:16; Matt

24:20; Acts 13:42; Heb 4:10-11), the first day of the week (the pagan „day of the sun“) was set up, which God never commanded to be kept holy. He had warned his people not to accept this day of worship (Rev 14:9-11;16:2;19:20; see Eze 8:16-18).

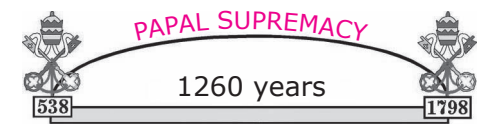
5. „And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.“ Rev 13:5-6 (compare Dan 7:8,25; 11:36; 2Thes 2:3-4).

How does the Bible define blasphemy? During a plot against Jesus he was accused of blasphemy „...because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God“ John 10:33. Another type of blasphemy we find in Luke 5:21: „Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?“ Both forms of the mentioned blasphemies fit the papacy. („On this earth we are holding the place of Almighty God“ Encyc. Pope Leo XIII, 6-20-1894). Frequently the pope is called „Holy Father“, even though Jesus forbade this form of address towards any man (Matt 23:9), because it is reserved exclusively for the Father in Heaven (John 17:11).

6. In Dan 7:25; 12:7 and Rev 12:14, even the period of the papal supremacy is being prophesied as three and a half times in Rev 11:2, as 42 months in Rev 13:5, and as 1260 days in Rev 11:3 and 12:6 respectively. The biblical measurement for prophetic time counts a day for a year (Ez 4:6 and Num 14:34) make it plain that in all these references it is referring to the same period of time of 1260 actual years. One „time“ by their understanding was meant to mean one year. In those days they calculated in lunar years of 360 days per year.

One lunar month consisted of 30 days (see time of flood in Gen 7:11,24; 8:4 - here are 150 days 5 months). Accordingly we find that 3 1/2 times (3 1/2 years) multiplied by twelve months equals 42 months, and 42 months multiplied by 30 days equals 1260 days, or 1260 actual years in history.

We find that this prophetic time period found its actual fulfillment in the history of the papacy. The final destruction of the Ostrogoths around 538 AD, (which was the last power, or „Horn“, that withstood Rome), is generally being understood as the beginning of the papal era of political dominance.



When we start counting 1260 years from this period of history we arrive at the year 1798 AD. Exactly in this year Pope Pius VI was made captive under the leadership of the French general Berthier in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Pope Pius VI died in prison.

The following prediction was fulfilled: „He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.“ Rev 13:10 (Concordance N.T.). Never again to this date had the papacy such clear supremacy and influence. A democratic constitution was established, and Rome became a republic, and the political power of Rome came to an end - exactly after 1260 years, as prophecy had foretold it. In Rev 13:1-10, the history of the papal power is briefly recorded as it arose out of the pagan Roman empire, as it reigned for 1260 years, and in the end received a deadly wound.

7. In Rev 13:3 it says: „And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.“ This shows clearly that this power will exist until the return of Christ. (Compare Dan 7:21-22).

8. During the time of the deadly wound and the regaining of its power, another beast comes to view: „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. 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.“ Rev 13:11-12.

WHICH POWER IS BEING DESCRIBED?

The Symbols:	The Meaning:
1. Arises out of the earth. Rev 13:11	1. Arises in some new or sparsely populated land.
2. Arises about the time the sea beast is falling. (1798 AD, Rev 13:1,3,10)	2. Grows into a nation about the time of Papal overthrow (1763-1800)
3. Has two lamb-like horns (Rev 13:11)	3. Two Christ-like principles give it strength (civil and religious liberty)
4. Has no crowns on the horns (Rev 13:11)	4. Not a monarchy - some form of republic
5. Exercises power equal to the first beast (Rev 13:12)	5. Becomes a formidable, if not supreme, world power.

Only one power in history meets these five prophetic specifications, namely the United States of America, which united during the years of 1763-1800. We see from Rev 13:11-18, that it began with a humble nature, but it will grow to be a dominating world power at the time of the end. It is foretold that America will make an „Image to the Beast“, that will force mankind to „worship“ the Beast whose wound was healed. This Image is an exact copy of what the papacy was during its 1260 year rule. This described worship shows clearly that it is referring to a religious - political power.



In Dan 3:5,10,14,18,28 it is clearly taught that religious reverence of human images and power symbols are equal to idolatry and are in contradiction to the second commandment. (Ex 20:4-6). Sunday worship is a sign of power, a sign of the papal authority, to substitute their own laws (See below under catholic authority from their own sources!).

Prophecy reveals that America will enforce Sunday observance („Mark of the Beast“) by setting up an „Image“. This Image is nothing else but apostate Protestantism, an ecumenical union of churches, which will unite with the Government, to enforce religious laws. The whole world will obey the law of Sunday sacredness. (See the book „The National Sunday Law“.) It is the pride of the papacy to think that it can change the 10 commandments, the law of God. It will be the deciding question of the future, a decision between life and death (Rev 13:14-15): to obey God or the commandments of man. (Mal 3:18; 4:1; Rev 16:2).

Please note that at this time America will do „great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men...“ (Think of the Atomic bomb in 1945 over Hiroshima, the air strikes in Iraq, or the increasing false spiritual fire of the charismatic movement starting out from America.) „...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, (compare Matt 24:24), saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, (the papacy) which had the wound by a sword, and did live.“ (Rev 13:13-14)



The papacy claims the change of the Sabbath to the first day of the week was her act and is the „Mark“ of her authority in religious matters (compare Dan 7:25):

„The Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claim for sacredness can be defended only on Catholic authority...In Holy Scripture from the beginning to the end we find not one single text which justifies the transfer of the weekly public worship service from the last to the first day of the week.“ (Catholic Press, Sidney, 8-25-1900).

„We celebrate Sunday instead of Saturday, because the Catholic Church has transferred the sacredness from Saturday to Sunday at the council of Laodicea in the year of 364 AD.“ („The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine“ from P. Geiermann, the work of Pope Pius X, on 1-25-1910 who received the apostolic blessing).

„Of course the Catholic Church claims the change [from Sabbath to Sunday] to be her deed ... And this act is the mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious affairs.“ (H. F. Thomas, chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons, 10-2-1895)
 „The seventh-day Sabbath was kept by Christ and the apostles and was celebrated by the first Christians and acknowledged as such until it was abolished by the Laodicean Council. This council first settled the question about the Lord's day and forbade the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath under the issue of an Anathema (Curse).“ (William Prynne, a famous English Theologian, from his work „Dissertation on Lord's Day“, page 32)

„The Sabbath, the best known day of the law, was changed into the Lord's day. These and others have not ceased because of instructions received from Christ, (because he himself says, I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it), but because due to the authority of the church they have been changed.“ (Archbishop of Rheggio, Sermon on 1-18-1562, Mansi XXIII, p 526)

„It was the holy Catholic Church who transferred the rest day from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week... Which Church does the whole civilized world obey? The Protestants... acknowledge great reverence towards the Bible, and yet by celebrating the Sunday they acknowledge the authority of the Catholic Church. The Bible says „Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy“, but the Catholic Church says: „No, keep the first day of the week holy! - and the entire world obeys her!“ (Pater Enright on 12-15-1889)

9. In Rev 13:18 we find another sign, the number of the Beast: „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.“ One of the official titles of the pope is: „Vicarius Filii Dei“, which is translated, „Representative of the Son of God“.

In reply to questions from readers, the Catholic newspaper „Our Sunday Visitor“ of 4-18-1915 said: „The engraved letters on the popes Mitre (or better, Tiara) are as follows: „Vicarius Filii Dei“. - This designation (which by itself is blasphemy, as it places itself above the Holy Spirit [John 16:12-15; 14:26; Rom 8:26], the true representative of Christ on earth) is the name of the Beast (Verse

VICARIUS FILII DEI (LATIN) (VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD?)					
V	5	F	0	D	500
I	1	I	1	E	0
C	100	L	50	I	1
A	0				501
R	0	I	1		
U	0				53
S	0				
					112

17). According to the information found in Verses 17 and 18 we find the number of his name, 666. Since in Latin certain letters have numerical values, we only need to add them up. This is the prophecy which points out the Antichrist. (Compare 2Thess 2:3-12; 1John 4:3; 2John 7; Rom 8:3). The Greek word „Antichrist“ means someone „that places himself in the position of the Lord's Anointed, (from anti - instead, and crio - anointing)“ (Konkordantes NT, p 371).

In other words, the Antichrist is the alleged representative of Christ - exactly what the pope claims to be! If the pope would have to introduce himself in the language of the New Testament he would have to say: „I am the Antichrist“.

Jesus Christ is the only, and true High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary after his ascension, „a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man“. Heb 8:1-2. Here Jesus procures for us, daily, the way to the mercy seat of His Father through His blood (John 14:6,13,14; Rom 8:34), whom we can approach any time by prayer without the intervention of man, only by faith and trust in the atoning blood of Christ (Heb 4:14; 5:10; 7:25; Matt 6:6-15).



The teaching of an added mediation by man or „departed saints“ represents a „blasphemy of the beast“ against God and „His tabernacle“ of reconciliation in heaven according to Rev 13:6 (compare Dan 8:11-14 and 12:11 - there this condition is described as a „transgression towards the sanctuary“ or as „the abomination of desolation“).

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

It is not an outward symbol which is being forced upon every man against his will. If you could not refuse to accept the Mark, then God's warning to not accept it would be meaningless. Those who refuse to accept the Mark of the Beast



(the sign of authority or affiliation) are described as: "... they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus". Rev 14:12. They are those that have received the seal of God (Rev 7:3,4; 14:1), and they are victorious over the Mark of the Beast (Rev 15:2; compare Dan 3). The Mark of the Beast includes the transgression of God's law (compare Jas 2:10), because the Seal of God, his sign of authority, is found in the 10 commandments (See below).

The Mark of the Beast will be received on the forehead or in the hand (see Rev 13:17; 14:9). The forehead symbolizes awareness (belief, knowledge). The hand symbolizes man's actions, (keeping or not keeping the commandments). This is also shown in Deut 11:8,18 (compare Deut 13:1-6) where it talks about the keeping of all 10 commandments.

Whosoever understands the requirements and the institution of the fourth commandment, of which God states that this is the sign of his authority, and yet rejects it, and instead honours what Rome has established as its sign of authority, the same accepts the sign of affiliation with Rome, the Mark of the Beast. Not until the establishment of a national Sunday law, when man will have to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, will those that continue in transgression receive the Mark of the Beast. For the sincere Sunday keeper applies the following: "the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30)

THE SEAL OF GOD

A sign or seal is used with the same meaning in the Bible. (Rom 4:11).

An official seal must show three things:

1. The name of the lawgiver - (Abraham Lincoln)
2. His official position - (President)
3. The territory - (United States of America)

The Seal of God is connected with His law and is found in the fourth commandment (Ex 20:8-11): "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Compare Ex 31:13,17,18).



Even though all commandments are of equal importance in the sight of God (Jas 2:10), we find the mark of the Seal of God only in the fourth commandment:

1. The name of God: "The Lord, thy God"
2. The title: "Creator"
3. The domain: "Heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is".

The Bible speaks of the Sabbath as the everlasting sign of God: "... Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a (eternal) sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Ex 31:13 (Compare Verses 16 and 17; Eze 20:12,20).

Jesus says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matt 5:17,18.

There was someone who came to Jesus and asked him: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus answered:

red: "... if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments ...thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness..." Matt 19:16-19.

The seventh-day Sabbath is an integral part of God's law, a weekly reminder of Christ as our Creator and Redeemer.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by him... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth". John 1:1-3,14).

Similar to the promised rest of Israel at their entrance into the land of Canaan, the Sabbath is a reminder of the promised "Sabbath rest" at the entrance into the heavenly Canaan, (2 Pet 3:13; Heb 11:10,39,40; Rev 21:2), which will take place at the return of Christ, (Heb 3:10-19; 4:1-11; compare Deut 4:1-2; 1 Cor 10:11-13), after the wandering of 6000 years in the "wilder-ness of human history" since the fall of man in Paradise.

If you go through the trouble of adding the time span for each mentioned generation recorded in the Bible starting from Adam, you will come up with a total of about 4000 years arriving at the time of Christ. (See Atlas of World History, 1990 by K. Thienemanns Press, Stuttgart-Vienna). Herewith we can also see clearly that we are in the completion of the 6th millennium of the history of mankind as has been foretold by God. Regarding the second coming of Christ, the Bible says: "... one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet 3:8)

Do you realize now "...that it is near, even at the doors"? (Matt 24:33)

In the New Testament, God's people are called the spiritual Israel, which by faith has received a spiritual circumcision of the heart. (Compare Col 2:11-12; Rom 2:28-29; Gal 3:6-9,28,29; 5:6; 6:15; Rom 11:25; 1Pet 2:9-10). The new covenant with Christ causes in each person a new creation through His creative power. By the prophet Jeremiah this very fact was foretold: "... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jer 31:31-33.

Consequently God's people will always uphold His law: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev 12:17 The pure woman in prophecy symbolizes a pure church, a harlot a fallen church (Compare 2Cor 11:2; Eze 16; Rev 17:18).

Now we understand what is meant by the three angel's messages of Revelation 14:

1. They tell us that the judgment, the decision regarding our eternal life, now is taking place in heaven. (Verses 6-7)
2. They tell us that Protestantism also has fallen (Verse 8), and according to Rev 18:1-5 "...is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." To every upright Christian (his people) the angel appeals: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues..." Rev 18:4.
3. A very serious and loving warning from God to the entire world: All that will worship the papacy or his image, when they submit to the pressure to keep Sunday holy against their better judgment, will receive the Mark of the Beast and suffer eternal death in consequence (Rev 14:9-11).
4. Verse 12 shows us the group of people that do not receive the Mark of the Beast. They keep all commandments of God (including the Sabbath commandment of the seventh day; compare Acts 7:38) and the faith of Jesus.

WILL YOU STAND IN THE JUDGMENT?

The first angel speaks of God's judgment which will take place in heaven before the return of Christ, (compare Dan 7:9-12; 2Cor 5:10), because it must be decided before his appearing who shall be raised from the dead to eternal life, and who of the living will be translated at his appearing. (1 Thess 4:15-17; John 5:27-29; Rev 20:5-6).

In addition, the Bible speaks about a judgment taking place in heaven during the 1000 years after the return of Christ in which all faithful will take part in sentencing the unbelieving dead and

the fallen angels. (Dan 7:22; 1Cor 6:2-3; Rev 20:4). This sentence will be announced and executed after the 1000 years at the resurrection of the unbelievers (John 5:29; Rev 20:7-15).



The 10 commandments are the unchangeable standard in God's judgment day. (Rev 11:19; Ps 89:34; Matt 7:21). The same is reflected by the exemplary attitude of Jesus (Phil 2:5; Rom 15:5), of which it says: "I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps 40:8. (Compare John 6:38; 4:34; Ps 40:7-9; Heb 10:9; Luke 22:42).

We pray in the Lord's prayer: "Thy will be done", but does the will of God become a reality in our sinful lifestyle? The Bible says: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1John 3:4), and "The wages of sin is death". (Rom 6:23).

Then, when we hear out of the mouth of the prophet: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil", (Jer 13:23; compare Rom 7:24), when we consider our own lives, we must realize that there is no possibility that we, from ourselves, can escape the judgment of God and the consequent eternal death.

God, however, has made a way of escape for all those that have been under the slavery of Satan. This path, which the love of God has created, is called "Jesus Christ":

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever, believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Golgatha stands as a memorial of this incomprehensible sacrifice, which was necessary to atone for the transgressions of God's law.

Therefore, we cannot look at sin as something harmless (Rom 6:15). God's offer

of mercy is not a cheap offer. It requires your consent and complete submission to God. Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. In His life, Jesus has shown us the way to His Father, and the way to eternal life.



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HOW DO WE RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH CHRIST?

Jesus' answer today is the same as in the past: „Keep the commandments ...and follow me!“ Matt 19:17,21; compare 1Pet 2:21-25; Rev 14:4. Discipleship for us today means that we study the life of Christ recorded in Holy Scripture (John 5:39; 8:31,32), and that we obey his word (John 3:36; Heb 5:8,9; 11:8 etc; Jas 4:7; Rom 16:26). The Holy Spirit will cause the same reaction in us as in the days of pentecost, when people confessed their sins and cried: „What must we do?“ Peter's answer was: „Repent!“ Acts 2:37-38. At another occasion he said: „Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out“. Acts 3:19.



The law of God, just like a mirror, shows us our defilement and sins (Rom 4:15; 3:20; 7:7), which Jesus wants to wash away with his atoning blood. This is the birth of the human love response to God.

Jesus, speaking about the woman that was a sinner, said: „Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much...“ Luke 7:47. „We love him, because he first loved us. ... For this is the love of God (our response), that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.“ 1 John 4:19; 5:3. In our love to Christ we receive from God the power to overcome sin in our lives. „If ye love me, keep my commandments. And... the Father will give you another Comforter,... the Spirit of truth.“ John 14:15-17.

The love and the strength of the Holy Spirit given to us enables us to overcome sin the same way as Jesus overcame. (John 15:10; 1John 5:4-5; Rev 3:21).

Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Phil 2:5-8; John 16:28), we can be sure that God knows what kind of power He needs to give us to enable us to fulfill the requirements of God's law and to withstand the temptations of our weakened fleshly nature. „Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage...“

Invitation!

We cordially invite you to the weekly Sabbath worship services of Christians who are preparing for the soon return of Jesus.

There you can join with them in studying the word of God (first part of the worship service), and you can personally experience receiving the special blessing of the proclamation of the true Word of God (second part of the worship service).

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Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.“ Heb 2:14-18.

We can receive this power, which overcomes sin, only as we believe (John 6:28,29) in Jesus' exemplary righteousness (a sinless life in a fallen nature. Compare Rom 8:3; Heb 4:15), and as we personally accept in faith his substitutionary sacrifice (John 3:16; 1:29).



Jesus did not die for His own sins. We read: „For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.“ 2Cor 5:21 (Compare 1John 3:5; John 8:46). This will mean that we repent of our unrighteousness, acknowledge it, and turn from sin (the transgression of God's law) and obey Him. (Prov 28:13; 1John 1:6-10; 2:4; 3:3-10; 1Pet 2:21; Matt 10:34-39).

Faith and repentance are gifts of God for those who seek them with an upright heart. God will work out both of it by his Holy Spirit whenever we give Him the opportunity. Faith is the result of the proclamation and the study of the word of God (Rom 10:17). Jesus said: „Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.“ (John 5:39; compare Luke 24:25-27; John 2:22; Rom 16:26; Acts 17:11,12).

The study of accurately fulfilled divine prophecy, (concerning world history foretold and the appearance of His Son), will strengthen our faith in the divine plan of redemption through Jesus Christ and form a secure foundation for our faith also concerning future events. (2Pet 1:19-21).



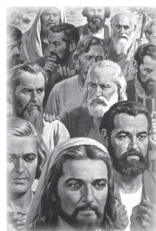
For a sincere study of the word of God, we are promised an unseen divine Teacher: „But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you ...he will guide you into all truth ...thy word is truth.“ John 14:26; 16:13; 17:17.

Whosoever rejects God's offer of mercy and knowingly refuses to hear, read, and test the word of truth, may not receive the saving power of faith from God, and could put himself at risk. (Jer 6:17-19; 9:12-15; Hos 4:6).

„If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him“. James 1:5. Jesus tells us: „Ask, and it shall be given you... If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?“ Matt 7:7,11. So let us ask, as did David: „Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.“ Ps 51:10 (Compare Ps 139:23-24).

Whosoever will sincerely believe and pray will realize the experience: „I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.“ Phil 4:13.

Only as we follow Jesus with a sincere heart, and as we trust Him as our living Redeemer, can we develop a character like His, and thereby be prepared for His return. „This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.“ Heb 10:16. (Compare Jer 31:33).



Do you remember that the obedience of man was tested by a fruit in the garden of Eden (the tree of knowledge of good and evil - Gen 2:16-17)? Again, in the last days will the obedience of man be tested with a special commandment of God (Jas 2:10). Then the deceptive serpent asked: „Did God really say...?“ What catastrophic consequences did mankind reap from this disobedience?! (Gen 3) Doubt towards a plain command of God is again being sown into the hearts of mankind in this age by the arch enemy of God suggesting: „Is God really taking it that seriously with the seventh-day Sabbath?“

When it will be discovered that Sunday observance is nothing other than a man made commandment, we must be reminded of the words of Jesus: „Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites: ...Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men... Ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.“ Mark 7:6-9.

Through his prophet Ezekiel God admonishes his people: „Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments (traditions), nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them. And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.“ Eze 20:18-20; Jer 9:12,13.

The commandments of men and their traditions do not free us from the Christian principle: „We ought to obey God rather than men.“ Acts 5:29; 4:19. What will your decision be - the Sabbath of the Lord or the papal Sunday? (Jer 10:2; 1Kings 18:21; 1Sam 15:22,23).

The Holy Spirit admonishes us: „... Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts... For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that (sabbath-) rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.“ Heb 4:7,10-11.

Only those will be redeemed and saved of which the Bible says: „Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.“ Rev 14:12.

Terrible plagues and judgments will soon fall upon mankind who have received the Mark, the name, or the number of the Beast, or who will worship the Beast and his Image (who submit to an antichristian, religious-political authority), and who, by that act, have taken a position against the clear will and warning of God (Rev 13:16-18; 14:9-11; 16:2; 18; 19:19-21).

This judgment hour message may cause fear in some. But in reality, it is a message of salvation - a message from a loving God, „not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.“ (2Pet 3:9)

Every sincere individual will experience that: „The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.“ Prov 1:7 (Compare Luke 12:4,5; Ex 20:20). Fear is created only by sin. (See Gen 3:10,11). However, after we have accepted forgiveness through the love of God in Jesus Christ we will experience, that „There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear... He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.“ 1John 4:18-19.

The feeling of being lost is changed into an assurance of salvation, and the fear of God into respect and love. The hopelessness is changed into a singleness of purpose, and general fear into a joyful expectation of the fulfillment of a divine promise. God's offer, the time for repentance and conversion, will last only for a little while. Use this time to seriously examine your own condition and to turn around as the time of probation will soon end before the second coming of Christ. The signs of the times tell us that we are in the very last hour of this earth's history!

„But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up... be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.“ 2Pet 3:10,14. (Compare Isa 55:6-9; Mal 3:17,18; 4:1,2).

„Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.“ Eccl 12:13-14.

