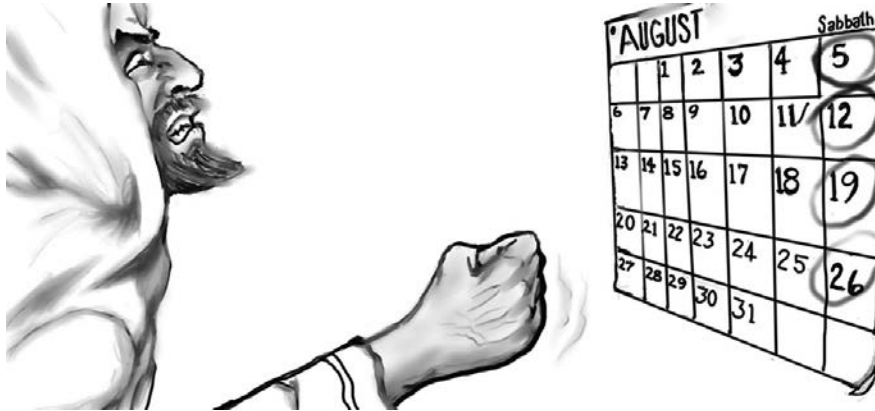


The Coming Fight



SABBATH—JUNE 8

Satan hates the Sabbath because it shows us Jesus, the One who made us.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 14:7, 9; John 16:2; Revelation 13:1, 2; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 35, 36.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Make them holy for Yourself by [with] the truth. Your Word [the Bible] is truth’ ” (John 17:17, NLV).

WHAT IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST? Some people think it is the biochip. The biochip or VeriChip is a new medical invention. It is about the size of a piece of rice. This chip can be put inside a patient. The chip holds information about the patient's medical history. A doctor can use a special machine to search for the biochip hidden under a patient's skin. The machine allows the doctor to read the patient's medical information inside the chip.

Some Christians think the mark of the beast is a bar code, the same as the ones on food cans. Other people think that the mark of the beast is a number on dollar bills that adds up to 666. Some people think the mark of the beast is about the Masons or the Illuminati, which are two secret groups. Other people think the mark of the beast is about the United Nations (UN) and black UN helicopters.

This week, we will look at the coming war over worship. Satan will attack God's law and His Sabbath. Satan hates the Sabbath because it shows us Jesus, the One who made us. Satan will use no-buy/no-sell laws to try to force us to break the Sabbath. Satan will use our fear of prison or death to break our faith in God. We don't need to fear. Jesus will help us stay strong during the terrible time that is soon to come on the whole earth.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND THE FINAL FIGHT (Revelation 14:7, 9)

The Book of Revelation is more than symbols, wild beasts, and strange word pictures. Revelation is God's end-time message to the final group of people living on the earth. The war between Jesus and Satan started in heaven over worship. The final war will be about worship, too.

Compare Revelation 14:7, 9 with Revelation 4:11. What important ideas do these verses talk about?

In the Book of Revelation, we see a connection between worship and God's work as the One who made the skies and earth in six days. These two topics can't be separated from each other. You can't understand one without the other. Revelation 14:7 invites us to worship the Lord who made everything. The Sabbath helps us remember who we are. The Sabbath tells us God made us. He is worthy of our worship. This Bible truth is one reason the devil hates the Sabbath so much.

In the final fight during the end times, how will we show our loyalty to the God who made us? Read Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 14:12 for the answer.

In the end times, we will worship one of two powers: we will worship the God who made us, or we will worship the sea beast. We have only two choices. If we worship God, we show that we reject worshipping the beast. In the final fight, God's people will stand loyal to Him. That time will be the most terrible time of suffering in human history.

"The governments of different countries will make a law that forces everyone to keep the false sabbath. This law goes against the fourth commandment. Anyone who keeps this law shows their loyalty to a power that rejects God. The ones who obey God's law will keep the true Sabbath. Their Sabbath keeping shows their loyalty to the God who made them."
—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 605, adapted.

Revelation 14:12 says that Jesus' loyal followers will have the "faith of Jesus" (KJV). The "faith of Jesus" is the same faith that Jesus had in God the Father. This faith is so deep that it helps us trust God when we can't understand what we see. Jesus gives us this gift of faith. This faith will keep us loyal to God in the final fight.



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DANGEROUS TIMES AHEAD (John 16:2)

Revelation 13 talks about the mark of the beast. Chapter 13 also tells us about the worst part of Satan's war against God. Jesus won the fight against Satan at the cross. Satan knows that he has lost. But before God destroys him in the lake of fire, the devil will try to destroy as many people as possible. The first part of Satan's plan is to get people to believe his lies. When his lies don't work, Satan forces people to do what he wants. Satan will cause leaders to make a law to kill anyone who refuses to worship the beast or accept its mark.

History shows us that God's people have suffered for their faith from the beginning of time. Cain killed Abel because he obeyed God's command. Jesus said that Christians would attack other Christians for their beliefs in the end times.

Read John 16:2; Matthew 10:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; and 1 Peter 4:12. What happened to Jesus' followers in New Testament times? How does their experience help us understand what will happen to God's end-time church?



Satan will cause leaders to make a law to kill anyone who refuses to worship the beast or accept its mark.

Many Christians were tortured for their faith during New Testament times. The Romans hurt the Christians and killed many of them, too. During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church attacked Christians who obeyed Bible truth. The mark of the beast is Satan's final blow against God's people. The mark of the beast will force everyone to believe and worship the same power.

Revelation 13 tells us that the mark of the beast will start with a no-buy/no-sell law. No one can buy or sell without the mark. Anyone who refuses to accept the mark will finally be judged guilty. Then a law will be made that will announce that everyone who refuses the mark must die (Revelation 13:15, 17).

The devil is now getting Christians ready to accept the mark of the beast when the final test comes. Satan tries to get them to disobey God. When everyone on earth looks to be following the beast (Revelation 13:3), the scene changes. Revelation 14:12 shows us a picture of God's loyal people at this time. God's people obey Him. While everyone else follows the beast, God's end-time people "follow the Lamb [Jesus] wherever he goes" (Revelation 14:4, ERV). They win the fight against evil and Satan.

WHO IS THE BEAST? PART 1 (REVELATION 13:1, 2)

Where does the beast come from? Who gives the beast control? Read Revelation 13:1, 2 for the answers.

The Book of Revelation shows us that the dragon is Satan. Revelation 12:3–5 says the dragon tried to destroy the male Child when it was born. The male Child is Jesus. Satan worked with the Kingdom of Rome to try to destroy Jesus (Matthew 2:16–18). Satan always works behind the scenes with governments and churches to do his dirty work.

What does Revelation teach us about the sea beast? “The dragon gave the beast all of its power [strength] and its throne and great [much] authority [control]” (Revelation 13:2, ERV). When did this verse happen in history? When Constantine, the King of Rome, moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople in modern Turkey. Constantine’s move left the old throne of the Kings of Rome empty. So, in this way, the Kings of Rome gave the beast (the Roman Catholic Church) its seat, or capital city.

Writer Isaac Backus said that when Constantine moved his kingdom’s capital out of Rome, he made a way for the bishop of Rome to put himself above all men and the King of heaven. Thinker Thomas Hobbes said, “the pope and his government are really part of the old Kingdom of Rome. The pope wears the crown of the old Kings of Rome.” —*Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), page 386, adapted. In this quote, the words “wears the crown” is a word picture. It shows us that the pope’s power comes from the Kingdom of Rome. When we study the sea beast in Revelation 13, we learn it is an evil religious power that comes from the Kingdom of Rome (Revelation 13:3, 4). This beast is not a person. It is a powerful church that has substituted human teachings for God’s law and Bible truth.

Read Revelation 13:1, 6. What important word is used in this verse to help us understand who the beast power is?

The beast insults God and lies about Him. In John 10:33, Jesus is accused of pretending to be God. In Luke 5:21, He is accused of forgiving sins. These words against Jesus weren’t fair because Jesus is God and can forgive sins. But the Roman Catholic Church has two teachings that insult God: (1) the church says its religious leaders can forgive sins. And (2) the pope says he is God on earth.



The sea beast is a powerful church that has substituted human teachings for God’s law and Bible truth.

WHO IS THE BEAST? PART 2 (Revelation 13:5)

Read Revelation 13:5. What does this verse tell us about the sea beast?

The beast was allowed to control both governments and religion for 42 months. In Lesson 4, we learned about the special rule God gave us for understanding time messages from the Bible. One day in a time message equals one real year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). When we use this rule for the 42 months, we also must remember that a Hebrew month has only 30 days. So, 42 Hebrew months are the same as 1,260 days or real years.

The popes were very powerful from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. Napoleon's general, Berthier, made the pope a prisoner in A.D. 1798. When that happened, the 42 months or 1,260 years ended, and the time message in Revelation 13 happened just as the Bible said: "Anyone who puts people in prison will go to prison" (Revelation 13:10, WE). When Berthier put the pope in prison, this action hurt the Catholic Church badly. Yes, the beast got a "bad cut" when the pope was made a prisoner. But Revelation 13:12 promises us that "the bad cut" (NLV) will be healed. The pope's control will be worldwide in the future.

This warning about the future is happening in front of our eyes. Today, leaders all over the earth welcome the pope to their countries. They also visit him regularly at his headquarters in the Vatican City. Everything is set for the pope to become the only religious leader on earth who can join people together. On June 6, 2012, more than 15,000 people came to Saint Peter's Square in Rome to hear Pope Benedict the 16th's sermon. The pope announced: "Sunday is the day of the Lord and of men and women. On Sunday everyone must spend time with family and with God. When we defend Sunday, we protect human freedom."—Adapted. *The Great Controversy* tells us where defending Sunday will lead: "Everyone who honors the Bible Sabbath will be named the enemies of law and peace. Sabbath keepers will be accused of breaking down the rules of good behavior. They will be blamed for God's anger that He pours on the earth. . . . They will be accused of not being loyal citizens. False pastors will tell their churches that God wants them to obey the government. Commandment keepers will be judged guilty in courts of law and in government halls."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 592, adapted.



"Everyone who honors the Bible Sabbath will be named the enemies of law and peace."

THE LAND BEAST (Revelation 13:11–18)

How is the second beast different from the first beast in Revelation 13? Read Revelation 13:11–18 for the answer.

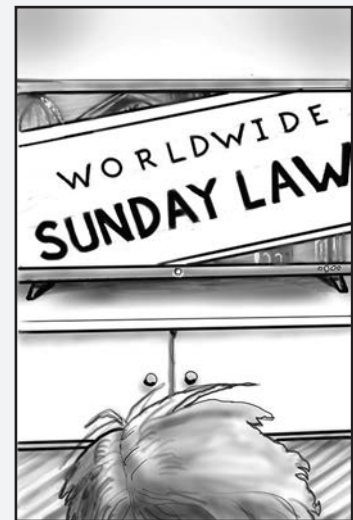
The first beast comes from the sea. The second beast comes from the earth (Revelation 13:11). The sea is a symbol for “the many peoples, the different races [people groups], nations [countries], and languages” on the earth (Revelation 17:15, ERV). The second beast becomes strong near the end of the time when the first beast is in control (Revelation 13:5). So, the second beast comes to power around A.D. 1798.

Who, then, is the second beast? The United States of America. In A.D. 1776, the United States announced its independence from Great Britain. Then in A.D. 1789, the United States adopted its basic set of laws named the Constitution. In the late 1800s, the United States was honored as one of the most powerful countries on earth.

In the Book of Revelation, John tells us more about the second beast, the United States: “He had two horns like a lamb, but he talked like a dragon” (Revelation 13:11, ERV). In the Bible’s special messages about the future, horns are a word picture for power. The first beast wore crowns on its horns. But the second beast wears no crowns. No crowns means that the second beast is not a kingdom. The two horns are symbols for American freedom. Americans have religious freedom to worship how they want. They also have laws that protect their freedoms as citizens. These two freedoms helped America succeed as a country.

What change do you see in the second beast? How does it start to talk? Read Revelation 13:11, 12 for the answer.

America begins its history the same as a gentle, peaceful lamb. But then America starts to talk the same as a dragon. America acts the same as the first beast. America “uses all the power of the first beast and stands with it” (Revelation 13:12, WE). America rejects all its laws of religious freedom. America makes “everyone living on earth worship the first beast” (Revelation 13:12, ICB). Then the United States makes a false god to the first beast. The false god is a symbol for the church and the government joining together. The United States will command everyone to **worship** this false god.



America makes “everyone living on earth worship the first beast” (Revelation 13:12, ICB).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “God never forces us to obey Him or believe in Him. But Satan always uses rough force to get control of people he can’t trick with his lies. Satan uses fear or pressure to force people to obey him and worship him. How does Satan do these things? He works with both religious leaders and government leaders to make laws. These human laws go against the law of God.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 591, adapted.

“Soon we will suffer terrible things. If we want to make it through this time, we must understand God’s plan. The Bible shows us this plan. We must honor God. But we can honor Him only if we understand His love, His government, and laws. We also must live so that we show we understand all these Bible truths. God’s people must fill their hearts and minds with Bible truth. They will be the only ones who will stand in the last fight between good and evil.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 593, adapted.

“God will have people on the earth who are loyal to Him. They will accept the Bible, and only the Bible, as the rule for all teachings and new ideas. Human ideas, scientific teachings, church decisions, or popular thinking must not be used as proof for any Bible truth. We must not let these things guide our decisions about what we believe. Before we accept any teaching or rule, we must ask people to show us how the Bible supports their idea.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 595, adapted.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① We know that Jesus is coming back soon. We also know that many bad things are going to happen first. How can we share with people the Bible truth about the future without alarming them?
- ② What does our daily life tell us about who or what we worship?
- ③ How can we help ourselves and other people not to be scared of the things that will happen at the end times? How can we encourage them to trust in God?
- ④ How does understanding end-time happenings change us or make our lives different today?

NO TO PORK, YES TO SABBATH

Sara thought about Seventh-day Adventists while she helped her mother sell pork and beer in Mozambique. Mozambique is a country in southeast Africa. Sara wondered to herself, “Why do Seventh-day Adventists go to church on Saturday?”

When Sara was a small girl, she went to the Adventist church several times with her big brother. Sara’s big brother was a Seventh-day Adventist. But then Sara’s brother moved to another town. So, Sara went back to her mother’s church.

As Sara worked with her mother, she continued to think about the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Sara also wondered about her new Seventh-day Adventist neighbors who moved in next door. Sara decided to ask them why they went to church on Saturday.

The neighbors welcomed Sara’s question. They opened the Bible to Exodus 20:8–10. Sara read, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor [get your job done] and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it [on this day] you shall do no work” (NKJV). Sara saw that Jesus worshiped on the 7th day when He lived on earth. So, she decided to keep the 7th-day Sabbath, too.

Mother was angry when Sara told her that she would no longer sell pork and beer on Saturdays. Mother refused to allow Sara to go to the Seventh-day Adventist church. Sara went anyway. She wanted to honor her mother as God commands in the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12). But Sara also understood that she should “obey God instead of [we must put God first, ahead of] people” (Acts 5:29, NIV).

Things got worse when Sara stopped selling pork and beer. Sara explained to Mother that God doesn’t want His people to eat pork or any other meat that isn’t clean (Leviticus 11:7). God also doesn’t want His people to drink alcohol (Proverbs 20:1). Sara told her mother that the Bible says, “So if you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything to honor God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, NIV). Sara explained that she must honor God. She must not sell things that God didn’t like or accept.

Mother threw Sara out of the house. Sara moved in with her Adventist brother and his family. Sara’s heart was sad. She wondered, “Is this trouble the price I must pay to follow Jesus?”

Sara’s brother talked about her troubles with the leaders at his church. Then an Adventist pastor met with Mother. Mother listened carefully to what the pastor said. She didn’t agree with him on everything. But she said Sara could come back home.

Today, Mother is not a Christian. Sara prays for the Holy Spirit to touch her heart. Sara knows that the God who helped her to understand His love can do the same for her mother.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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