

The Two Marks: Part 2



SABBATH—JUNE 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 13:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 9–12; Revelation 17:12–14, Revelation 14:9; Exodus 20:8–11.

MEMORY VERSE: “Anyone who puts people in prison will go to prison. Anyone who kills others with a long knife or sword will be killed by a long knife or sword. This is why God’s people are patient and keep on believing” (Revelation 13:10, WE).

IN THE 1400s, a group of people lived high in the mountains in northern Italy. These people were named the Waldenses. The Waldenses were loyal to Bible truth. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church attacked the Waldenses for their faith. In A.D. 1488, the Roman Catholic Church attacked and killed the Waldenses in the Valley of Loyse.

Two hundred years later, the Roman Catholic Church attacked the Waldenses again. The Duke of Savoy sent an army of 8,000 soldiers to the Waldenses. The Duke ordered the Waldenses to feed and house his troops in their homes. But this plan was just a trick. The duke wanted his soldiers to pretend to be guests so that they could kill everyone. On April 24, 1655, at 4:00 A.M., the duke’s army killed more than 4,000 innocent people while they slept.

Sad to say, the same things happen in history again and again. The two marks of Revelation 13 show us that Rome’s attacks on God’s church in the past will happen again.



The Duke of Savoy sent an army of 8,000 soldiers to the Waldenses.

THE CUT THAT CAN KILL (Revelation 13:5)

As we've already learned, the animal powers in Revelation 13 and 14 show us a worldwide church with false teachings and false worship. But there's more.

Read about the sea-animal power shown in Revelation 13:5; Revelation 12:6, 14; and Daniel 7:25. How long will this religious kingdom have control?

The wild sea animal will have control for many long years. In time messages in the Bible, a day is the same as one real year. In Numbers 14:34, we read “ ‘ “For each day you will carry your guilt a year” ’ ” (NLV). This verse shows us that one day is the same as a real year in time messages. God gives us this same rule in the book of Ezekiel: “ ‘One day equals [is the same as] one year’ ” (Ezekiel 4:6, ERV). So, if we use this Bible rule with the time message of 42 months in Revelation 13:5, we can use math to figure out how many real years 42 months will be. In Old Testament times, each month had 30 days. If we multiply 42 months by the number of days in a month, we get 1,260 days or real years.

In the A.D. 300s, the Roman king Constantine made the Christian religion legal. Constantine wanted to join the eastern part of his kingdom with the western part. So, he moved the capital of his kingdom in A.D. 330 to Byzantium. At that time, no one was left in control over Rome. So, the pope became Rome's leader. The pope is the religious leader of the Roman Catholic Church. The pope became the most powerful leader of the church and a strong king. In A.D. 538, King Justinian controlled the Roman kingdom. In that year, Justinian made the leader of the Roman church the top leader of the whole Christian church. The Roman Catholic Church was very powerful, from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. During this time, the church's leadership killed many people loyal to Bible truth. In A.D. 1798, General Berthier, one of Napoleon's generals, made the pope a prisoner. General Berthier and his army “removed” the pope from his throne. In this way, the Roman Catholic Church leadership got a cut that could kill, just as the Bible said would happen. But this cut would heal in the future.

How does the 42-month time message help us trust that God will keep His promises?



The pope is the religious leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

THE DAY WHEN MANY PEOPLE STOP BELIEVING GOD (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 9–12)



We see that the little horn, the sea animal, and the Man of Evil are very much alike.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 9–12. In these verses, Paul talks about the end times. What does Paul say will happen? What does Paul tell us about the sea-animal power?

Paul warns Christians about a time when “many people will stop believing God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, WE). That is, people will stop believing Bible truth. Paul is worried about the false teachings already in the church during New Testament times. Later, a false good news will come into the church. This false teaching will lie about how we are saved and about Jesus’ work for us in heaven.

Guess who’s teaching all these lies? Satan. Satan is the real “Man of Evil” that Paul talks about. Satan wants to “put himself against God. He will put himself above everything to do with God, and above everything that people worship. He will sit in God’s holy place and tell people that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4, WE). But Satan is a liar. He works with human religious leaders to do his work. Satan will use the little horn in Daniel 7 to do his work. The little horn is the same power as the sea animal in Revelation 13 and 14. The little horn and the sea animal also are the same as the Man of Evil in 2 Thessalonians 2. So, all three word pictures show us the same power.

“Study the little horn in Daniel 7. Compare the little horn with the wild sea animal that looks the same as a leopard. Also, compare these two powers with the Man of Evil. We see that the little horn, the sea animal, and the Man of Evil are very much alike. So, we see that Daniel, Paul, and John talk about the same power or kingdom. The leadership of the Roman Catholic Church.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 7, page 271, adapted.

We must remember that Daniel, Paul, and John are talking about a religion, not its members (Revelation 18:4). The leaders of this religion have taught false ideas. They have replaced Bible teaching with human teachings. So, God gave us these special messages in the Bible to warn us. God loves us and wants us to be ready for His coming. He wants us to warn His people who are part of this religion, too, because He loves them so much. We must always remember how much God loves them when we share Bible truth with them.

SATAN'S FINAL PLAN (Revelation 17:12–14)

Read Revelation 17:12–14. What does John say will happen at the end of earth's history?

John shares three important ideas in these verses. First, the government leaders make an agreement. They give the control of their governments and their laws to the sea-animal power. Second, this worldwide government will make war against Jesus the Lamb. Third, in earth's final war, Jesus and His followers win. The sea animal will lose.

Have you wondered what plan Satan will use to join the governments and kingdoms on this earth? History shows us that the things that happened in the past often happen in the future. If we look at the history of the Kingdom of Rome, we can learn some important lessons about what will happen at the end of time. During the time that Constantine was the king of Rome, the German people forced their way south into his kingdom. The large groups of foreigners coming into the kingdom caused a problem for Constantine and his people. Constantine decided religion was the best way to solve the problem and keep his kingdom strong. So, he joined the Christian religion with his government. In the A.D. 300s, Constantine made Sunday the day of rest for the Kingdom of Rome. Constantine hoped this rest day would help join together the different groups in his kingdom. Constantine wanted his kingdom to stay strong. The church wanted everyone in the kingdom to join them. That is why “the church made Sunday holy. . . . Sunday was celebrated each week as the festival of the sun. So, the Christians decided to take control of this festival and other celebrations that the people loved so much. These holidays and celebrations were about their false gods. The church changed the holidays to make them about Christian teachings.”—Arthur Weigall, *The Paganism in Our Christianity* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), page 145, adapted.

Very soon, a time of trouble will come. Everyone on earth will be hurt and afraid. They will want someone to protect them. History shows us that when trouble comes, people become scared. Evil leaders have an easy time taking control of the planet when people are scared. Things happened this way in the past. There's no reason to think it couldn't happen again. The Bible shows us that some tragedy will happen in the future that will cause the end times to come. We don't know how everything will end. But we already saw how big changes can come fast. So, we must be ready for whatever is coming.



Sunday was celebrated each week as the festival of the sun. So, the Christians decided to take control of this festival and other celebrations that the people loved so much.

THE SEA ANIMAL'S MARK (Revelation 14:9)

Read Revelation 14:9 and compare it to Revelation 14:12. Where do people get the sea animal's mark? (Also read Deuteronomy 6:8 and Deuteronomy 11:18.) In what two ways are God's people different from the people who get the sea animal's mark?

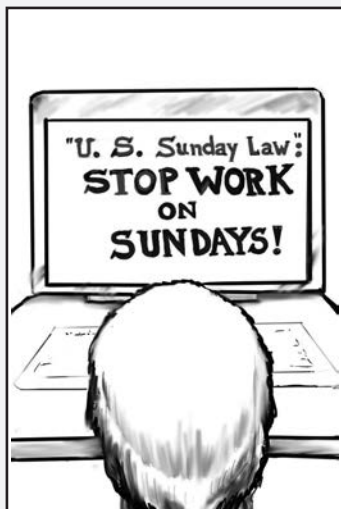
There will be two groups of people living in the end times. The first group of people on earth worships the sea-animal power. The second group keeps the commandments of God. These commandments include the Sabbath or fourth commandment. The sea-animal power tried to change this law. The second group has the faith that comes from Jesus. The devil works with the sea animal and the land animal to attack the Sabbath. The sea animal's mark is put on the front part of the face above the eyes or in the hand. The front part of the face above the eyes or forehead is a word picture for the mind, thoughts, and choices. The hand is a word picture for our actions and the things we do.

The day is coming soon when governments will pass laws that will remove our religious freedom. These days may be coming sooner than we think. Those who follow Bible truth and keep the seventh-day Sabbath will be blamed for all the evil things that happen on the earth.

"People who honor the Bible Sabbath will be blamed for causing bad things to happen. They will be accused of breaking the law and making God angry. Other people will say that the Sabbath keepers are stubborn and refuse to follow the law. These same people will say that God's loyal followers are enemies of the government."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 592, adapted.

The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church announce that Sunday is the special mark of their power. "Of course, the Catholic Church says that the change from Saturday to Sunday is her idea. . . . This change is a symbol or mark of her control over religion."—*The American Catholic Quarterly Review*, January 1883, adapted.

The book of Revelation tells us that in the future a terrible disaster will happen. This disaster will be worldwide. At that time, Sunday worship will be made a law. Then it will become the sea animal's mark. We don't know how or when this will happen. But we do know that the Sabbath will be the final test in the end times.



The day is coming soon when governments will pass laws that will remove our religious freedom.

THE SABBATH TEST (Exodus 20:8–11)

When we look at what is happening around us, we can see signs that the end of human history is near. On June 6, 2012, Benedict XVI made an announcement in Saint Peter's Square in Rome. Benedict was the pope or religious leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Benedict told people in the square that Sunday must be a day of rest for everyone. The pope said that people must be free to spend time with their families and with God on Sunday. The pope said, "By protecting Sunday, we protect human freedom." Of course, the pope's announcement isn't the same thing as ordering everyone to keep Sunday holy. But the pope's announcement shows that sooner or later, Sunday laws will be passed. Then all people who refuse to keep Sunday and who keep the seventh day holy will suffer for their faith.

God's people will stay loyal to their faith. They will not follow the sea-animal power. God's people will get His mark or seal. In Bible times, seals were special marks that were put on important contracts. These marks showed that the people who made the contract could trust the promises in the contract. So, we should expect to find God's seal or mark in His law. In Bible times, every person's mark was special and different. No two marks were alike. The Bible talks about the seals or marks put on agreements: "The Lord said, 'Write this agreement. Tie it up and seal [lock] it so that it cannot be changed' " (Isaiah 8:16, ERV).

Read Exodus 20:8–11. What parts of a seal or mark do you see in the Sabbath commandment? How is the Sabbath command different from all the other commandments?

In Bible times, a seal or mark had three parts. The fourth commandment has all three parts. First, we see the name of the person making the agreement: " 'the LORD your God' " (Exodus 20:10, NKJV). Second, a seal tells us about this person's job: the Lord who "made" (Exodus 20:11, KJV). And third, a seal names the land that belongs to this person: " 'the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in them' " (Exodus 20:11, ERV). Revelation 7:1–3 tells us that God's seal or mark is put only on the front part of a person's face above the eyes. Why there? Because this part of the face is a word picture for our minds. Jesus respects our freedom of choice. He invites us to choose Him. His Spirit will help us stay strong in faith until the end of time.



In Bible times, seals were special marks that were put on important contracts.



A time will come when the leaders of the Protestant churches will make an agreement with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “A time will come when the leaders of the Protestant churches will make an agreement with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant churches also will accept the false teaching that the spirit doesn’t die. They will believe that the dead can communicate with us. Then the Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and the people who believe that the dead can communicate with us will join in agreement. This three-part group will cause the people of the United States to reject every important rule and law of their Protestant and republican government. [Another name for a republican government is a republic. The United States is a republic, and not a democracy, as many people think. The United States government is a special type of republic known as a constitutional republic. In a constitutional republic, the people vote for a president and other leaders to run the country. These leaders must follow a special set of laws known as the Constitution. In a democracy, the public, and not the law, has the final say about what the government can and cannot do. In a constitutional republic, the law, and not the public, decides what a government can and cannot do. The law also has the final say in how much control leaders can have in government.] Then the people of this country will pass laws that honor Roman Catholic teachings and lies. When these things happen, we will know that the time has come for Satan to do his surprising work. The end is near.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 451, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why can’t we say that Jesus will come back on this date or that date? Why must we not try to guess about happenings that the Bible never talks about? What dangers are there to our faith in doing these things? In the past, people have said that special things are going to happen or that these things will happen on this date or that date. What happened when these things didn’t happen how and when people said they would happen? How did people feel? Did these experiences hurt their faith? If yes, how?
- ② There are people who say that the sea animal’s mark is not a test about Sunday. They say that it isn’t possible that there will ever be a worldwide Sunday law. They say that a Sunday law can never happen. So, they think we have nothing to worry about. Why is this thinking wrong? Look at how fast big changes happened in life in the last couple of years. What answer will you give to the person who says a Sunday law can never happen?

SCHOOL SAVES

An expensive-looking car stopped in front of a Seventh-day Adventist School in Ukraine on the first day of classes. Two children got out of the car with their parents. The children held flowers. Ukrainian children often give their teachers flowers on the first day of school. The father told the school manager, "We want our children to study at your school."

"I'm afraid that's not possible," the school manager said. "We can't accept any more students."

The father didn't give up. "We will buy new desks and chairs for all the students. We also will pay double the money that it costs to go to school here. Please let our children study at your school."

The school manager said, "We don't have permission from the government to hold final exams here," she said. "So your kids will need to take the exams at the public school if they become students at our school."

"That's no problem," the mother said. "We'll help you get permission."

Then the school manager asked, "You know that our school is a Seventh-day Adventist School, right?"

The manager asked this question because many people in Ukraine thought that Adventists were a "strange" religious group. The father knew that the school was Adventist. "Yes," he answered. "We want our children to study here anyway."

The mother explained that she and her husband and their two kids had gone on vacation to the Black Sea a few weeks earlier. The children made new friends while they were there. Their new friends went to this Adventist school. Every evening, the kids told their parents about the school and asked to go there. Then the mother gave her business card to the school manager. She was a city judge. Her husband was an important leader in the army.

The children started the second and third grade at the school. They loved it right away. As the weeks passed, the children asked their parents to read *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories* to them, just as their classmates' parents read to their children. The mother told the children to ask the teacher to sell the storybooks to them. Their mother said, "Then I will read to you every night." The children bought the storybooks, and every night their mother read to them, as promised.

Months passed. Then the children asked their parents to take them to Sabbath School and church. The parents took them every Sabbath. The next summer, a year after the family first learned about Adventists, the mother and father were baptized.

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INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



"We want our children to study at your school."

