

to Sunday is proof positive of that fact. Deny the authority of the Church and you have no adequate or reasonable explanation or justification for the substitution of Sunday for Saturday...

In 1950, a Roman Catholic publication entitled, *Our Sunday Visitor*, reiterated the claim that Sunday sacredness upholds the authority of the Pope rather than the authority of God:

Protestants...accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change... But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that... in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman to the church, the Pope.

The mark of the beast, like the seal of God, is entirely an

issue of authority—*do I accept God's authority or man's authority in my life?* At the end of time, right before the return of Jesus Christ, all people living on earth will have to decide whose authority to accept, and this decision will be revealed by whom they obey. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

God's three angels have a life-saving message even more vital than that of Thailand's "Angel of the Beach." Tilly Smith's message saved nearly 100 beachgoers from physical death, but God's three angels' messages can rescue us from spiritual destruction and eternal death. Remember, the Good News of "the everlasting gospel" of Jesus Christ? Jesus died for our sins of breaking the Ten Commandments – including Commandment Number Four about the Sabbath (see 1 John 3:4). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9).

It's true that we cannot earn heaven, merit, or favor in God's sight, even by

trying to keep His law. However, when we are truly sorry for our sins, repent, and are forgiven by His grace, wonderful miracles can occur in our hearts. We can be "born again" (see John 3:3). Jesus' very life will dwell in us (see Colossians 1:27), and He will write His holy law inside our hearts and minds (see Hebrews 8:10). Then we will live as Ten Commandment-keepers, because we love Jesus (see John 14:15).

Friend, is it your desire to do God's will in your daily life? Do you want to live a new life with Jesus, and to walk with Him every day? If so, why not stop and pray right now that Jesus will forgive your sins, cleanse you from all unrighteous, and begin living His life through you today. When you do, God will totally transform your character so that you can be among His overcomers described at the end of the three angels' messages: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). Then you will be prepared for the return of Jesus Christ and the END OF THE WORLD (see Revelation 14:14-16).

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THE BIBLE'S THREE FINAL WARNINGS



On December 26, 2004, ten-year-old Tilly Smith stepped onto Maikhao Beach in Phuket, Thailand. Tilly, who lived in England, was on vacation with her family and was looking forward to a fun day in the water. Suddenly, the ocean began swelling and froth began forming on the water's surface. Tilly froze in her tracks. She had just studied in school that this is what oceans do just before a tidal wave, or tsunami, strikes. Frantically, Tilly began screaming for her family to leave the beach. Minutes later, three deadly waves pounded the coastline, triggered by a massive 9.1 magnitude earthquake off northern Sumatra earlier that morning. When the disaster ended, 227,898 people were dead or missing. On Maikao Beach, however, the Smith family and nearly 100 other tourists survived because Tilly recognized the signs of an approaching tsunami and gave a warning message at the right time. British tabloids dubbed her the "Angel of the Beach."

The Indian Ocean tsunami killed hundreds of thousands, yet the Holy Bible warns us that a much greater disaster will soon break upon this world. Revelation 16:18-20 predicts that someday "there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Then "the cities of the nations fell ... and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." In simple language, these verses describe THE END OF THE WORLD. For those unprepared for this looming apocalyptic catastrophe, the

danger will not be merely physical—but spiritual. Those who aren't ready will lose their souls.

Fortunately, the same Bible that warns us of coming disaster also provides clear instruction on how we can prepare for the Day of God. Just as Tilly Smith, the "Angel of the Beach," warned her family and others about the approaching tsunami, the book of Revelation reveals that today God is sending *three* angels with life-saving messages. These messages are described in Revelation chapter 14, verses 6-12. Notice carefully the first angel's message:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, 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.

—Revelation 14:6,7

The first angel's message starts with "the everlasting gospel" – which refers to the Good News of salvation that God freely offers to each of us through His Son Jesus Christ. Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus was born into our world, lived a perfect life, died on a cruel cross for "the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2), and then rose from the dead (see Matthew 28:1-7). If we are willing to repent of our sins, and trust Jesus, we have the assurance that God will "forgive us our

sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Even more than this, God promises to do something amazing! "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:25-27). These wonderful promises mean that God will so change our minds and hearts so that our old destructive, harmful habits and thought patterns will be replaced with holy and pure ones.

The first angel also urges us to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:7). This passage is directly quoting Number Four of the Ten Commandments, which states:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, 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...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.—Exodus 20:8-11, emphasis added

The true, original "seventh-day" Sabbath, which begins Friday evening at sun-

set, and ends Saturday evening at sunset, always has been, and will always be, a memorial of God's perfect work of creation at the beginning of time (see Genesis 1,2). The first angel's message tells all humankind to worship their Creator by keeping holy the seventh-day Sabbath each week. This message is followed by that of the second angel, who warns the world of spiritual deception at the end of time:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. —Revelation 14:8

Babylon is Revelation's name for an apostate one-world religion that is spearheaded by a "fallen" form of Christianity. The Bible uses numerous terms to identify this "fallen," apostate Christian power, such as the "little horn" (see Daniel 7:8), the "man of sin," "son of perdition" and "mystery of iniquity" (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9), "antichrist" (1 John 2:18), and "the beast" (Revelation 13:1).

From the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s until today, countless Bible scholars have identified this ominous prophetic power with amazing consistency. Consider the following statement by Henry Grattan Guinness, a famous Protestant Christian preacher in the nineteenth century:

To the Reformers Rome was the 'Babylon' of the Apocalypse, and the Papal pontiff the predicted 'man of sin.' Separation from the Church of Rome and from its pontifical head was regarded by them as a sacred duty...To them separation from Rome was not separation from Christ, but from antichrist. This was the principle upon which they began and prosecuted the work of the Reformation, the principle which directed and supported them, and rendered them invincible.

Famous Christian leaders like Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, John Bunyan, Sir Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and countless others all interpreted the words "Babylon" and "the beast" as applying to the papacy. Even Tertullian, an early Christian living hundreds of years before the rise of the papacy, expected the antichrist power to arise within Rome sometime after the fall of the Western Roman empire:

[H]e who now hinders must hinder until he be taken out of the way. What obstacle is there but the Roman state; the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce antichrist.

When the Roman Empire collapsed in the 5th century A.D., the Roman Catholic Church emerged as the dominant religio-political power of Europe. In these end-times, the second angel's message warns all people everywhere that the largest Christian church in the world today is actually "fallen," and has "made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Revelation 14:8). What does this mean? One part of her fall is noted in Daniel 7:25 which predicts that the papacy, or "little horn" that was to arise out of the Roman Empire would "think to change times and laws." This happened in history when the Roman Catholic Church changed the original seventh-day Sabbath (God's "times") enjoined in the fourth commandment (God's "laws") into Sunday, "the first day of the week."

In 321 AD, the Roman emperor Constantine contributed to this switch when he decreed that "the venerable day of the sun," or Sunday, which was a pagan holiday celebrating sun worship, should be a day of rest for all citizens. The decree stated:

On the venerable Day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits: because it often happens that another Day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting: lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.

The decree proved to be a brilliant maneuver by Constantine, for it effectively unified paganism and Christianity throughout the Roman Empire under the power of his throne. A stricter version of the Sunday law was enacted several decades later at the Council of Laodicea (364-380 AD). This decree prohibited worship on the "Jewish Sabbath" and mandated that Christians work on the seventh day of the week:

Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ.

Roman Catholic Church leaders were instrumental in the passing and enforcement of these Sunday worship laws:

The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity and points to the real authors of the change. 'All things,' he says, 'whatever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's Day [Sunday].' Robert Cox, *Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties*, page 538."

The change of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week is a fulfillment of how spiritual Babylon has "fallen" from the truth of God's word. True to the warning of the second angel, "all nations" have drunk of the "wine" of this counterfeit Sabbath. Today, most Christians around the world worship on the first day of the week, rather than on God's holy seventh day, *without realizing that such a practice originated in apostasy from God's Word*. The third angel follows and warns the world against receiving "the mark of the beast":

If any man worships 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.
—Revelation 14:9-10

The topic of "the mark of the beast" has intrigued, puzzled, and terrified many people, but the Bible clearly explains what it is. It is a counterfeit to the seal of God. At the end of time, right before the return of Jesus Christ and the END OF THE WORLD, all people will receive one or the other of these two marks. In Revelation 7:1-3, John sees four angels holding back four winds of strife from blowing on the earth while God's servants are sealed. Like the mark of the beast, the seal of God is placed on the forehead, and once we understand the seal of God, we can easily understand the mark of the beast. Here is how the Bible describes the seal of God:

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."
—Revelation 7:2-3

The Holy Spirit is the One who seals God's true-hearted servants, for Paul told the church in Ephesus, "you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). The Bible compares the Holy Spirit's sealing work to that of

an author's writing: "Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:3). You have no doubt written or signed some important documents in your life, but this is a writing assignment that only God can accomplish! What does the Holy Spirit write on the hearts of God's servants? Here's the answer. God says, "I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Hebrews 8:10).

In Old Testament times, God gave the Israelites a tangible way to show that His law was in their hearts, and that they recognized His supreme authority. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart...You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 8). God instructed them to literally attach copies of His law to their hands and foreheads—exactly the same places that Revelation 13 says the mark of the beast is placed!

So what is the seal of God? Any king or monarch has a royal seal that identifies who they are. When the president of the United States reviews and endorses an important document, he presses down a round seal which identifies his name, title, and territory. Only one of the Ten Commandments contains God's royal seal of authority—the fourth commandment requiring the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Read Exodus 20:8-11 closely. Only the Sabbath commandment reveals:

1. God's name ("the LORD thy God")
2. His title (Creator, "for in six days the LORD made...")
3. His territory ("the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is").

In ancient times, God specifically told the Israelites that the original seventh-day Sabbath is His chosen sign of power and authority. "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it

is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you." (Exodus 31:13, emphasis added). Even the Roman Catholic Church, which we have already seen is the beast power of Revelation 13 and the leader of end-time spiritual Babylon, recognizes this. In 2001, the Pontifical Biblical Commission plainly stated that the seventh-day Sabbath points to God's authority:

...human existence is endowed with a certain rhythm. As well as the rhythm of day and night, lunar months and solar years (Gen. 1:14-18), God establishes a weekly rhythm with rest on the seventh day, the basis of the sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3). When they keep the sabbath observance (Ex 20:8-11), the masters of the earth render homage to their Creator.

If God's authority is recognized when we worship on "the seventh day" of the week, then how is man's authority recognized? In 1923, the Catholic Record provided this answer:

The Bible still teaches that the Sabbath or Saturday should be kept holy. There is no authority in the New Testament for the substitution of Sunday for Saturday. Surely it is an important matter. It stands there in the Bible as one of the Ten Commandments of God. There is no authority in the Bible for abrogating this Commandment, or for transferring its observance to another day of the week...The Church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance from Saturday

