

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To show that the Bible foretold the power that would attempt to change God's law; to identify the antichrist and call the interest to worship and obey God rather than man.

TEXTS:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. DA 7:1-7 | 8. JN 10:33; MK 2:7 |
| 2. RV 17:15 | 9. REV 12:14, 6 |
| 3. DA 7:17, 23 | 10. REV 13:1-3 |
| 4. JE 4:7, 13 | 11. REV 13:3, 12 |
| 5. DA 7:7 | 12. REV 13:5 |
| 6. DA 7:8, 24 | 13. MT. 15:9 |
| 7. DA 7:25 | 14. AC 5:29 |

THE STUDY:

- 1. What did the prophet Daniel see coming up out of the sea? DA 7:1-7**
Four beasts. One is like a lion w/ eagle's wings, another like a bear w/3 ribs in its mouth, a third like a leopard w/4 heads and 4 wings, and a fourth beast he can only describe as dreadful, terrible and exceedingly strong.
- 2. What does the sea represent? REV 17:15**
Revelation tells us that the waters in prophecy are representative of large centers of population. As Daniel sees the winds stirring up the waters, he sees multitudes of people beings stirred up to war and conquest. As a result, these four strange beasts rise up out of the midst of the turmoil.
- 3. What do the four beasts represent? DA 7:17, 23**
Four kings, or kingdoms, that will arise.
- 4. How does the prophet Jeremiah describe the conquests of Babylon? JE 4:7, 13**
With the symbols of a lion, eagle's wings, and a whirlwind (Je 4:7, 13). In addition, figures of winged lions can be seen in the famed Ishtar gate built by King Nebuchadnezzar. We can identify the first beast as Babylon, the kingdom Daniel is writing from. Daniel further says that the fourth beast would "devour the whole earth" – that is, it would be a world empire. Just as in Daniel 2, the sequence here begins with the kingdom of Babylon, followed by Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, respectively.
- 5. What was on the head of the fourth beast? DA 7:7**
There were ten horns on the head of the beast, representing the division of Rome into the nations of Europe. These divisions were complete by the year 476 A.D. Here is a list of the Germanic tribes that originally sacked Rome and divided it -
 - Alemanni (Germany)
 - Burgundians (Swiss)
 - Franks (French)
 - Lombards (Italians)
 - Saxons (English)
 - Suevi (Portugese)
 - Visigoths (Spanish)
 - Heruli (extinct)
 - Ostrogoths (extinct)
 - Vandals (extinct)
- 6. What came up among the ten horns? DA 7:8, 24**
Another horn, little at first, would arise from among the others, and after them. He would be different from all the others, overthrowing three of the horns and taking their place.
- 7. How does the angel describe the reign of this fourth beast? DA 7:25**
He would blaspheme God, would persecute the followers of God, and would attempt to change the very law of God, and would reign for "a time, times and half a time."
- 8. How does the Bible define blasphemy? JN 10:33; MK 2:7**
The dictionary defines blasphemy as "The act of claiming for oneself the attributes and rights of God". The Bible defines blasphemy as man claiming to be God and man claiming the power to forgive sins.

9. How long is “a time, times and half a time”? REV 12:14, 6

The margin of the NIV says “a year, two years and half a year.” Comparing Rev. 12:14 with 12:6, we see that this time period is also referred to as 1260 days. The Bible uses the year/day principle in prophecy (Eze. 4:6; Nu. 14:34), making this a 1260-year period over which the antichrist will reign.

What clues can we derive from this chapter to identify this little horn power?

- rises to power amid the ruins of Imperial Rome (vs. 7-8)
- arises after 476 A.D., overthrows three other powers to make way for its reign (v. 8, 24)
- blasphemes God by claiming to be God on earth and claiming the authority to forgive sins (v. 25)
- attempts to change the Ten Commandments (v. 25)
- persecutes God’s people (vs. 21, 25)
- reigns for 1260 years (v. 25)

There is only one power in history that fits all of these points – the Papacy, or the Roman Catholic Church-State. Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Bunyan, Sir Isaac Newton, Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, and countless others, all saw the office of the Papacy as the antichrist. These men are known as “Protestants,” but few understand that they themselves were Catholics who merely protested the church’s right to put tradition above Scripture.

It is important to distinguish between the system of Catholicism and the people of Catholicism. It is the Papal system of worship that is here condemned, just as it was the Jewish system of worship in Christ’s day. This is not an indictment of all Catholic people any more than Jesus’ “Woes to the Pharisees” in Matthew 23 were an indictment of all Jewish people. The issue is one of faithfulness to God’s Word.

Let’s review these 7 points to see whether we can confirm our conclusions (refer to quotes page).

10. How does John describe this same power in the book of Revelation? REV 13:1-3

John sees a single beast coming up out of the sea, where Daniel saw four. He describes the beast as having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. This is in the reverse order that Daniel saw these beasts – lion, bear, leopard. This is because Daniel was looking into the future, while John is now looking into the past.

11. What does John describe as the main objective of this antichrist power? REV 13:3, 12

To receive worship.

12. When people worship this beast, who are they really worshipping? REV 13:5

They worship the dragon. The antichrist is the devil’s front man in the last days to deceive the people of the earth into giving him the worship he wanted from the beginning (refer to the study on the Great Controversy). The word antichrist, found only four times in the Bible (1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 7), literally means “in the place of Christ.” The antichrist power puts itself in the place of God. This system has established man’s tradition above the authority of God’s Word, thus putting man in the place of God; people are led to confess to earthly priests instead of going directly to Jesus, our heavenly High Priest; multitudes are being given a counterfeit gospel that cannot save them as a result.

13. How does Jesus regard the worship of those who place tradition above Scripture? MT 15:9

Their worship is considered to be in vain (empty, worthless).

14. When faced with a decision between truth and tradition, what counsel does Jesus give? AC 5:29

We ought to obey God rather than men.

APPEAL:

The Bible has foretold a power that would attempt to change the law of God, ultimately affecting the worship of God. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment has been changed, and people have been deceived into worshipping on Sunday out of tradition rather than Sabbath in harmony with Scripture. This is far more than a matter of days – it is a matter of masters. Who is your master? Jesus is looking for people who will choose to stay true to His Word over custom, culture and tradition; those who accept His authority over man’s authority; those who will seek His kingdom and righteousness with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. Today, Jesus invites you to acknowledge Him as the supreme Lord and Master. Will you choose to serve Him?

Rises to power amid the ruins of Imperial Rome

No one would argue that the Roman Catholic Church-State proceeded from Rome.

Arises after 476 A.D., overthrows three other powers to make way for its reign

After the division of Rome, the Emperor Justinian issued a decree later known as “Justinian’s Decree,” which set up and acknowledged the Bishop of Rome as the head of all churches. It gave the papacy civil power as well as ecclesiastical power.

At that time there was a popular viewpoint growing among some believers called Arianism. One of the beliefs of Arianism was that Jesus was a created being, which Catholicism did not teach. For this reason, the three Arian powers – the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals – withstood the decree of Justinian. As a result, in 493 A.D. the Bishop of Rome, using the military might of the Imperial Rome, attacked and “uprooted” the Heruli power. In 496 A.D., Clovis, the king of the Franks (who later became known as the French), was converted to Catholicism. Wherever he went afterward to conquer, the people were given the choice to become Catholic or move. In the year 534 A.D., he made war against the Vandal kingdom and they were stamped out. Then finally in 538 A.D., they waged war against the Ostrogoth kingdom and uprooted them, opening the way for the decree of Justinian to finally go into effect, and Pope Vigilius ascended to the papal throne.

"Vigilius, a pliant creature of Theodora, ascended the papal chair under the military protection of Belisarius (538-555)." – Schaff, *History of the Christian Church (7-vol. Ed.)*, Vol. III, p. 327. New York: Scribner's, 1893.

"From the death of Silverius the Roman Catholic writers date the Episcopacy of Vigilius, reckoning him thenceforth among the lawful popes." - *History of the Popes*, Vol. II, p. 488, **under the year "538."** Dublin: 1751.

Blasphemes God by claiming to be God on earth and claiming the authority to forgive sins

Claiming to forgive sins

"Seek where you will, through heaven and earth, and you will find but one created being who can forgive the sinner, who can free him from the chains of hell. That extraordinary being is the priest, the (Roman) Catholic Priest. Yes, beloved brethren, the priest not only declares that the sinner is forgiven, but he really forgives him... So great is the power of the priest that the judgments of heaven itself are subject to his decision." – *The Catholic Priest*, by Fr. Michael Mueller C.S.S.R., Baltimore, Maryland: 1876, Kreuzer Brothers, pp. 78, 79.

"God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priest, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution... The sentence of the priest precedes, and God subscribes to it." – St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, Vol. 12, p. 2.

Claiming to be God

"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." – *Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII*, p. 304.

"The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself hidden under the veil of flesh. Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ who speaks." – *Archbishop of Venice prior to become Pope Pius X*, *Catholic National*, July, 1895.

Claiming authority over Scripture

"Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and divine tradition contain the Word of God... These two divine streams are... of equal sacredness... still, of the two, tradition is to us the more clear and safe." – *Joseph Faa Di Bruno*, *Catholic Belief*, p. 33.

Attempts to change the Ten Commandments

The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even Divine laws...
– Translated from Lucius Ferraris *Prompta Biliotheca*, art. "Papa," II, Vol. 5, pp. 26-9.

The Catholic Catechism deletes the second commandment regarding idol worship and divides the tenth commandment into two parts in order to keep the number ten. In addition, Catholicism actually claims the

responsibility for the change of the Sabbath commandment to honor the first day of the week, Sunday, in place of the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as the day of worship.

Q. – Which is the Sabbath day?

A. – Saturday is the Sabbath Day.

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

A. – We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. – *Rev. Peter Geiermann, Convert's Catechism, p. 50.*

The Catholic Church, for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. – *The Christian Sabbath, p. 29 (Printed by the "Catholic Mirror", the official organ of Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore, Md., 1893.*

Q. – Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

A. – Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural Authority." – *Stephen Keenan, Doctrinal Catechism, p. 174.*

Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible. – *Cardinal Gibbons, "Catholic Mirror," Dec. 23, 1893.*

Persecutes God's people

"That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history... It is quite certain that no power of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings." – *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Vol. II, p. 32.*

Reigns for 1260 years

We have already seen that the Papal reign began in 538 A.D. when the Ostrogoth power was overthrown and Justinian's decree went into effect. If our application is correct, we should expect the power of the Papacy to be broken 1260 years later, in the year 1798 A.D. In a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy, Napoleon's general Berthier entered into Rome in the year 1798, captured the pope, and had him exiled to Valence, France, where he died in captivity.

"Berthier entered Rome on the 10th of February, 1798, and proclaimed a republic." – *The Modern Papacy, p. 1, London: Catholic Truth Society.*