

The Battle over the Seal and the Mark

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import--the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. {9T 19.1}

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them. They are not to engage in speculation...{9T 19.2}

...So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel to whom came the word: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 33:7-9. {9T 19.4}

Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God's judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God? Must we see things foretold come to pass before we will believe what He has said? In clear, distinct rays light has come to us, showing us that the great day of the Lord is near at hand, "even at the doors." Let us read and understand before it is too late. {9T 20.1}

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The Contest over Worship

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. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 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; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev 13:11-17)

The introduction of this beast with lamblike horns, John identifies coming upon the scene after the first beast is lead into captivity by receiving a wound by the sword; which was shown to be the year 1798 when the Pope was taken prisoner by the army of France.

What nation came upon the scene around 1798 that possessed Christian features? If your American, you should that we were recognized as an independent nation by none other than France.

The forty and two months are the same as the "time and times and the dividing of time," three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7 - - the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity." {GC 439.2}

At this point another symbol is introduced. Says the prophet: "I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb." Verse 11. Both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols. The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when "the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." Daniel 7:2. In Revelation 17 an angel explained that waters represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power. {GC 439.3}

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But the beast with lamblike horns was seen "coming up out of the earth." Instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully. It could not, then, arise among the crowded and struggling nationalities of the Old World--that turbulent sea of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." It must be sought in the Western Continent. {GC 440.1}

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America...{GC 440.2}

America is represented as the beast with lamblike horns rising up out the earth. The activity of this nation is the focus of our study.

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.
(Rev 13:11)

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 13:12)

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.
(Rev 13:15)

Notice the determined effort by the beast with lamblike horns as he speaks as a dragon! He is adamant about your worshipping the first beast and the image made to this first beast.

Let's draw up a contrast between two powers who we'll call the:

Lamb of God (Revelation 14:7-12)

- 1.Rev. 14:7 = Worship the Creator
- 2.Rev. 14:9 = Wrath of God t/ disobedient
3. Rev. 14:12 = Keep the law of God/faith.
4. Isa. 33:14-17 = God will provide.

lamblike beast (revelation 13:11-17)

- 1.Rev. 13:12,15 = No! worship the 1st beast and his image
2. Rev. 13:15 = disobedience will lead to death!
3. Rev.13:14 = uses deception and false miracles.
4. Rev.13:17 = No mark. No buy or sell.

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Now that we are beginning to see the issue over who you will worship is a very serious issue. Let us look at a few precious promises for those who are tried and tested and found faithful through God's enabling Power.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. (Rev 15:2-3)

The term "*stand on the sea of glass*". Where is it?

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. (Rev 4:2-6)

The "*sea of glass*" is before the heavenly Father's throne!

Let's look at another precious promise to those who are "*purified, made white and tried*".

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev 20:4-6)

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The promise is sure! Will you reach out with the hand of faith and lay hold of the promises to obedient and faithful?

I would be negligent if I failed to put before you the consequences for compromising your loyalty to God.

Who will go along or give in to the forcing of the laws and traditions of men over the law of God?

Listen to this:

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. Those who have yielded step by step to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will then yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. At that time the gold will be separated from the dross. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliance will then go out in darkness. Those who have assumed the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will then appear in the shame of their own nakedness. {PK 188.1}

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Mat 15:9)

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. (Rev 13:8-9)

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. (Rev 16:2)

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev 19:20)

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In closing, we have an abundance of resources at our request to aid us in this final showdown between truth and error, darkness and light, good and evil. If we commit ourselves to God and His cause the promise is sure "lo I am with you". Take some time and meditate on the subject. Settle in your mind today that you will go yield your souls salvation and receive the *mark of the beast*. We cannot wait until the final test comes without preparing for it and pass the test. Remember character is only revealed in a crisis, it cannot, I repeat it cannot be developed in the crisis!

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.
(Rev 2:11)

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.
(Luk 12:42-44)

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deu 30:19-20)