

HOPE FOR HUMANITY

REVELATION TODAY

PRESENTATION 16 • THE MARK OF THE BEAST

My expectation is that you remember where you were at the time. (Share where you were.) Planes had hit the World Trade Center in NYC. A plane had hit or was on its way to hit the White House, early stories said. This was a disaster. Speaking from the Oval Office, President George W. Bush said, “Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.”

Freedom under attack. Speaking during the American Civil War at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln said, “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” 213 words later, that short speech concluded with these words. **(SLIDE • QUOTE)** “This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Freedom. We’re attracted to freedom.

By the time Lincoln appeared on the scene,

SLIDE • GROWING USA. The United States had grown substantially since its humble beginnings. The population of the country when Lincoln was President was right around 30 million. That was a long way from 1620, the year in which a little over 100 passengers boarded the **(SLIDE • MAYFLOWER)** Mayflower and sailed from Plymouth on England’s south coast. Just over a third were Puritan Separatists, who had come to this new land in order to break away from the established Church of England. They were looking to create a society in harmony with their religious ideals. Some were destined for the Colony of Virginia. Four of them were small children who were indentured servants.

It was a rough start for the colonists, but within 150 years there was war between the 13 colonies and England, and in 1776 the **(SLIDE • DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE)** Declaration of Independence was written. Drafted by **(SLIDE • JEFFERSON)** Thomas Jefferson and approved unanimously by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, the Declaration begins, **SLIDE • QUOTE.** “When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another...” And then follows some of the most famous words written in the modern history of the world.

SLIDE • QUOTE. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” **(SLIDE • FLAG VIDEO)** The United States had declared themselves to be free.

SLIDE • STATUE OF LIBERTY VIDEO. But wouldn't you expect that something so valuable—freedom—would come under attack? And it has in so many ways. And that's because there's someone who hates freedom.

We're caught in a battle, every one of us. What do we see? We see war. We see racism. (**SLIDE • TERRORISM**) We see terrorism. We see violence. (**SLIDE • ILLNESS**) We see illness. If you wanted to, you could simply say, "Things are rough." You could say, "People can be lousy." You could say, (**SLIDE • ACCIDENT**) "Accidents happen." You could say, "People get sick." And that'd be fair enough. But somewhere along the line you'd have to ask yourself WHY these things are so.

SLIDE • BIBLE. There's one story in the Bible that really shows this clearly. It's the story of Job. As we read the story we're able to see what Job could not see. There was a spiritual battle going on behind the scenes, as Satan was inflicting misery, causing pain and loss. An angry, fallen angel is behind the sin and misery we see in the world today.

You'd expect freedom to be attacked. And we see that one day it will be. Ultimately, the house of this world is going to be divided over a significant issue. We'll find out about that right now. And I want to suggest something to you. Remember this verse? (**SLIDE • 2 CORINTHIANS 11:14**) "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light." You should probably expect the unexpected. A good deception looks good. That's why counterfeiters don't make counterfeit three dollar bills in the US or \$4 coins in Canada.

The United States has since its establishment been very open about its Judeo-Christian values. (**SLIDE • IN GOD WE TRUST**) Even the currency of this nation bears the words, In God we Trust. If you were the devil and you were wanting to deprive people of freedom, and there was a nation that was a bright and shining light for freedom, wouldn't you go after that nation? No doubt you would.

SLIDES (4) • REVELATION 13:1–4. Let's look at the book of Revelation.

"Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

SLIDE • REVELATION 13:8 says, "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."

SLIDE • LIST OF POINTS.

And we've identified that power as the church of Rome, the Vatican City.

In case you missed that, we looked at a long list of identifying points, taken straight out of the Bible, and it's clear there's only one power in all of history that can fulfill this role.

But how's that going to happen that the world will worship this power? Clearly, the world isn't going to all convert to one particular faith.

According to what we read in the Bible, the second nation mentioned in Revelation 13 is going to use its power and influence to cause the earth to follow after that first nation, the Vatican.

Which leads us to that big issue in Earth's last days. Starting in verse 16 of Revelation 13.

SLIDES (2) • REVELATION 13:16–17. “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

So what is the mark of the beast? What is the mark of that second nation mentioned in Revelation 13? Or, what is the sign of the authority of the church of Rome? We've looked at this.

SLIDES (2) • CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Question	Answer
Which is the Sabbath day?	Saturday is the Sabbath day.
Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?	We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, p. 50 (Peter Geiermann)

SLIDES (2) • KEATING QUOTE. “Fundamentalists meet for worship on Sunday, yet there is no evidence in the Bible that corporate worship was to be made on Sundays. The Jewish Sabbath, or day of rest, was, of course, Saturday. It was the Catholic Church that decided Sunday should be the day of worship for Christians, in honor of the resurrection.” *Catholicism and Fundamentalism, Keating, p. 38.*

SLIDE • GIBBONS. “Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these two alternatives: either Protestantism, and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity, and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.” *Cardinal Gibbons, The Catholic Mirror, December 23, 1893.*

Think about this. A church changed the ten commandments.

SLIDE • COMMANDMENTS. If you think it's acceptable for a church to change the law of God, then you won't have a great problem with that. And what's interesting is that the changes didn't stop with the amendment to the fourth commandment. If you look at the ten commandments in Roman Catholic teaching, you'll see that the commandment about worshiping idols is either missing, or merged with the first commandment. That's because there was—is—so much in the way of idols and images in that church. But removing a commandment would leave you one short! So, the tenth commandment—the one about coveting—was cut in two, and became the 9th and the 10th commandments.

SLIDE • QUOTE. In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI said, “And thus, they also understood that Saturday was no longer the liturgical day, but Sunday, on which the Lord wants to be with us physically again and again, and wants to nourish us with his Body, so that we ourselves may become his Body in the world.”

I want you to see this. The same pope wrote these words.

SLIDES (3) • QUOTE. “The Second Vatican Council teaches that “the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the “Lord's Day” or “Sunday.” Sunday remains the fertile foundation and at the same time the fundamental nucleus of the liturgical year

which originated in Christ's Resurrection, thanks to which the features of eternity were impressed on time.... "The Word", Origen affirms, "has moved the feast of the Sabbath to the day on which the light was produced and has given us as an image of true repose, Sunday, the day of salvation, the first day of the light in which the Saviour of the world, after completing all his work with men and after conquering death, crossed the threshold of Heaven, surpassing the creation of the six days and receiving the blessed Sabbath and rest in God" (Comment on Psalm 91)."

That's breathtaking.

Sunday is called the Lord's Day by whom? Not by God, and not in the Bible

Sunday is important because the resurrection occurred on that day. No doubt the resurrection is vitally important, but it doesn't change the Sabbath day from the 7th to the 1st day of the week.

And you'll notice Ratzinger—Pope Benedict—cites Origen as the authority for moving the Sabbath to Sunday. Origen? He was nothing more than a scholar, a writer, and may have been a little weird. But Origen, who lived in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, was hardly John the Revelator. No way in the world do you appeal to him as authoritative for changing a commandment of God.

SLIDE • QUOTE. Benedict went on to write, "Inspired by knowledge of this, St Ignatius of Antioch asserted: "We are no longer keeping the Sabbath, but the Lord's Day"... Sunday is the day on which the Risen Lord makes himself present among his followers, invites them to his banquet and shares himself with them so that they too, united and configured to him, may worship God properly."

SLIDE • QUOTE. Benedict wrote, "Every Sunday and every Eucharist is a personal encounter with Christ."

And of course there's much more.

So now we understand how this can be fulfilled. The Bible says, (**SLIDE • REVELATION 13:8**) "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him..."

The Mark of the Beast is very simple.

SLIDE • TEN COMMANDMENTS. When we accept a change to God's holy, moral law, and follow what the beast says instead of what God says, we accept the mark of the beast's authority in our lives. Ultimately, MOB is rejecting the sovereignty of God. The true Sabbath is man coming into communion with God. And that's the Seal of God. The Seal of God's law is the seventh-day Sabbath. The Mark of the Beast is a counterfeit, where people choose their own way and put that ahead of the word and the will of God.

How can it be when everyone is doing it? We both know that a counterfeit is always close to true. Just because the majority does it, it doesn't make it right.

This might seem like a small thing to you. But it doesn't seem small to God. It's a matter of the heart. If God has your heart, you'll want to do His will as you come to understand it. And remember what Jesus said.

SLIDE • JOHN 14:15. "If you love me, keep my commandments."

So what does it mean to receive the Mark of the Beast in the (**SLIDE • FOREHEAD**) forehead or hand? Having it in your forehead means you have it in your mind. You choose it. You agree with it. You've given your mind to this. Receiving it in your hand means that even if you don't agree with it, you're going along with it.

Now, some people enthusiastically say that the mark of the beast is something that has to do with buying and selling, so it's going to be a (**SLIDE • CHIP**) silicon chip, or a card, or some such thing. This is where I'd like you to think about what the world is going through right now. We honestly don't know what the mechanism will be that governs buying and selling. No doubt, if there's computers involved it makes things very simple. But there are already computers and chips involved. At your bank. In your credit card. In your phone. No, the mark of the beast is that change in God's law that mandates Sunday to be kept holy. How can that stop people from buying and selling?

Let's try to separate a couple of different things here. One is the Mark of the Beast. The second is, How that mark is going to be enforced. Whatever the Mark of the Beast is, there will be some people who do not want to go along with it. So, in order to force people to accept it, it will be said that if you don't take the Mark of the Beast, you won't be able to buy and sell.

Whatever the mechanism to prevent people from buying and selling, that is not the Mark of the Beast. It is just a way to enforce the Mark of the Beast. A person's behavior can surely be influenced when they can't pay their rent or buy their food.

It is a very old practice. Sanctions and boycotts have been around for a long time. We've seen them against South Africa, Iraq, Cuba. Preventing people from buying and selling is not new.

And recent development show us clearly that there will be no problem enforcing such a decree.

What would bring such a thing about? We know that when it's a time of crisis, society reacts. In the end of time there will be a time of crisis. Daniel speaks of (**SLIDE • DANIEL 12:1**) "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." In a time of crisis you can imagine people saying, "We need to come together." You can imagine people wanting to take time out, to let the environment rest. Good things. But when worship is regulated, mandated, enforced, when consciences are forced, your freedom is taken away, and you're compelled to violate God's law, then we will be facing the Mark of the Beast.

People will promote the mark of the beast as a good thing. But when you have the law of God relegated, and the law of a church promoted... The law of man above the law of God, that's where the disciple of Jesus has to say, That's too much.

Nobody has the mark of the beast right now. It's future. But the groundwork is being laid today, so that at some future time this will be enforced. And Satan will have succeeded in leading the entire world away from fidelity to God, away from faithfulness to the law of God. Instead, the world will have accepted a replacement for God's law, no different from Israel rejecting God and worshiping Baal.

So it becomes important to make decisions that will see you stand faithfully for Jesus and His word. If you value the cross of Christ today, you'll value it then. If you've come to know Jesus as a friend today, you'll have Him as a friend then. If you're serious about the word of God now, you'll likely be serious about it then. If your eyes are on Jesus today, they'll be on Jesus tomorrow. Jesus said that (**SLIDE • JOHN 4:24**) "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

SLIDE • BIBLE. This calls for an experience of faith in Jesus. Trusting in His Word.

The Bible says that the devil goes around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He does a lot of roaring. But here's what you need to remember. This is 1 John 4:4.

SLIDE • 1 JOHN 4:4. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

That's your answer in temptation. God is greater. That's your answer in trial. God is greater! That's your answer when you're in need. God is greater! A vast army of unnumbered millions might come against you, but "greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world." God is greater!

SLIDE • SECOND COMING. Jesus is coming back soon. And you can make a decision now for Jesus. Don't worry about your lack of faith, or your lack of strength. You take hold of the hand of God, and the grace of God flows through your life. You receive the righteousness of Christ! Jesus is your hope. Jesus is your righteousness. Jesus hides you under the shadow of His wings...

Prayer and out.



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