

# Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 15



# Future Warnings

- **Bruce Kelley and Leslie Matlock were putting up hay in a barn near the eastern Oregon town of Heppner on the hot, sticky afternoon of Sunday, June 14, 1903 when they noticed two ominous cloud formations moving toward each other. The dark clouds collided and began dumping a tremendous load of hail and rain.**
- **Realizing what was about to happen, the two farmers unhitched their horses and rode rapidly down the gorge and into the town crying, “Flee to the hills! A flood is coming!” Most of Heppner’s residents were busy getting ready for an afternoon meeting at the church. Only a few took the warning seriously and fled to safety.**

## Future Warnings

- **Within minutes a giant wave of debris-filled water rolled through the little town, sweeping over houses, livestock, and people. The flood left only splintered ruins behind. When it was over, the raging waters had taken the lives of 225 people.**
- **So many people were lost because they failed to heed the message of the two heroic horsemen—lost because they wouldn't take notice of the great danger threatening them.**

# Future Warnings

- **In Genesis 3, the Bible tells us about someone else who failed to heed a warning. Her name was Eve. As this woman walked alone in the Garden of Eden, near the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, she wasn't aware of the great danger lurking nearby.**
- **God had told her not to eat fruit from that particular tree (see Genesis 2:17). She just didn't take the warning seriously enough.**
- **She was blind to the consequences. Disobeying God in this matter didn't seem very earthshaking. But it forever shaped the destiny of mankind.**
- **Satan told lies about God when he persuaded Eve to taste that forbidden fruit. And that warm, sunny day in the garden set the stage for all his later deceptions.**

# Future Warnings

- **The entire Bible lays out an epic struggle between Satan and God. The book of Revelation pictures the highlights of the conflict down through the ages.**
- **This battle between good and evil has been called “The Great Controversy.” Each side struggles for the allegiance of mankind and control of the earth—but for vastly different purposes. Jesus wants to bring human beings back to their original perfection and happiness. Satan wants to impose his rule in order to continue to strengthen his rebellion against God.**
- **This is the issue Revelation 13 spotlights: To whom will you belong? Whom will you follow and worship?**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The issue in Revelation 13 is: Whom will we follow and worship? God or Satan? (False or True)**

# John's Vision of a Beast

- **READ REVELATION 13:1-10.**

- **John observes an amazing sight! He is standing on the beach watching the waves roll in on the shore, when out of the ocean a hideous, fearsome animal arises.**
- ***How does John describe this beast and its actions?***

# John's Vision of a Beast

- **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 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?'**

# John's Vision of a Beast

- **And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.**
- **Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.**
- **It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.**
- **All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:1-8).**



# John's Vision of a Beast

- **A remarkable vision! Let's list the key facts.**
- **FACT #1—The beast is like a leopard, has the claws of a bear and fangs like a lion. It displays seven heads and ten horns as it arises, dripping with the brine of the windswept sea (vss. 1, 2).**
- **FACT #2—The beast has the name “blasphemy” written on its head (vss. 1, 5, 6).**
- **The dictionary defines “blasphemy” as: “the act of claiming the attributes of God.”**
- **In addition, John 10:33 and Mark 2:7 tell us plainly that a human being who claims to be God commits “blasphemy.”**

# John's Vision of a Beast

- **FACT #3—The beast dominates the scene for forty-two months (vs. 5). Other verses define the period as three-and-a-half years or “time, times and half a time” (Revelation 12:14), or 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6). In symbolic prophecy this translates to 1,260 years. We studied this same time period in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7.**
- **FACT #4—Who is the beast power?**
- **It is a religious power (vs. 8 says the beast receives worship from the world).**
- **It represents a political power (vss. 1, 2 state the beast has thrones and crowns).**
- **After ruling for 1,260 years, this power is wounded and almost destroyed (vs. 3).**
- **The wound heals, and the beast power reasserts its global dominance (vs. 3).**
- **The power makes war on God’s people (vs. 7).**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **Satan has always deceived people just as he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.**
- **But he will intensify his deceptions just before Jesus returns to this earth.**
- **He will use this religious/political power to try to coerce everyone into turning from the true God and joining his alliance.**
- **The vision of the beast shows us Satan's last major attempt to get people to follow him. Let's consider some facts carefully.**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **The identifying marks of the little horn of Daniel 7 actually parallel the identifying marks of the first beast of Revelation 13.**
- **We learned previously that the little horn ruled from A.D. 538-1798 (1,260 years).**
- **During this period, the medieval Christian church, under the leadership of Rome, was the dominating religious/political power in the world.**
- **Thus the beast power is the Roman papal church system of the Middle Ages combined with the civil powers of the Roman Empire.**
- **John says, “I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed” (vs. 3).**

# The Beast is a World Power

- In 1797 leaders of the French revolutionary government grew concerned that the Church of Rome would continually oppose its policies and plans. In response, Napoleon sent General Alexander Berthier to Rome.
- On February 15, 1798, he arrested Pope Pius VI in the Sistine Chapel and proclaimed that the rule and authority of the popes had ended.
- Pious VI died in prison in the French fortress city of Valence on August 29, 1799.
- But the prophecy states that the beast's mortal wound would be healed. Shortly after Napoleon inflicted a "wound" on the Church of Rome, other political powers began to rally to its aid and give it support.
- This support increased until, in 1929, Benito Mussolini signed a document giving the pope full authority over Vatican City as an independent state. Once again the pope was a civil ruler as well as a priest.
- The deadly wound was well on its way to being healed.

# The Beast is a World Power

- **John saw that when the beast's mortal wound was healed, "all the world marvelled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' " (vss. 3, 4).**
- **Verses 6-10 indicate that the religious error and persecution of the Dark Ages will reappear during the time of the end.**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.**
- **All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (vss. 7, 8).**
- **In other words, the world will again witness the rise of this beast power using political power to gain the worship of everyone on earth—everyone that is whose names are not recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life.**
- **The beast power and its allies will make this happen. Let’s look at exactly what the beast continues to do.**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **“He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.**
- **It was granted him to make war with the saints and to overcome them” (vss. 6, 7).**
- **Verse 10 says of those who live through this stressful time in the last days of Earth’s history without worshiping the beast: “Here is the patience and faith of the saints.”**
- **These “saints” will be preserved under Christ’s watchful eye and remain in His protective hand.**
- **Suffering, persecution, and even death are possible, but eternal life is their abiding assurance as they trust in an all-powerful and all-knowing God.**



# The Beast is a World Power

- **Maybe you're going through a pretty stressful time right now.**
- **Maybe you're glad to know God will watch over you during the last days, but you feel the need of God's care right now.**
- **Guess what? You can know God as your present Companion right now.**
- **He is the one who cares about you so much that He even numbers the hairs on your head.**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **When he was a young boy attending his father's evangelistic meeting, Norman Vincent Peale saw Dave, the foul-mouthed town drunk, wife beater, and all-around sinner, accept Jesus as his Savior.**
- **No one figured this conversion would last. How could this hopeless alcoholic really change?**
- **But young Norman couldn't forget how Dave looked as he knelt at the altar—"**
- **I was awed by the look on his face, a look of wonder and inexpressible joy."**
- **And as a matter of fact, the conversion did take—it lasted a lifetime.**
- **During his remaining years, Dave became a positive influence on every life he touched.**

# The Beast is a World Power

- **The same God who turned Dave's life around can do the same for you. If He could take on this hopeless case, He can take on your problems.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: We can trust God to be with us during the trials of the last days, but right now we must depend on ourselves. (False or True)**
- **The beast pictured in Revelation 13:1-3 is a power that combines both political and religious authority. (False or True)**

# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

• READ REVELATION 13:11-18.

- **As John continues watching prophetic scenes unfold, he sees another beast emerge from the earth having two horns like a lamb and speaking like a dragon.**
- **The description of this new beast tells us something about its relationship to the beast power already pictured.**

# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **There is an interesting contrast between this new beast of Revelation 13:11 and the beasts of Revelation 13:1 and Daniel 7 which represent historical world empires. The beasts of Revelation 13:1 and Daniel 7 rose out of the water.**
- **This beast of Revelation 13:11 rises out of dry land. So we have sea beasts and land beasts. Since water, as a prophetic symbol, represents people (see Revelation 17:15), then dry land must represent an area lacking a large number of people.**
- **When John first sees it, this new power has the characteristics of a lamb. It rules in a mild, gentle manner. But later it speaks like a dragon, like Satan.**
- **This power ends up deceiving and oppressing, just like the Roman power that appeared before it.**

# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **Putting information together from verses we've studied, we can conclude that this new power arises out of a relatively uninhabited area at the end of the 1,260-year period described in Revelation 13:1-10, or around 1798.**
- **What nation arose in this time period in a relatively uninhabited area? The signs point clearly to the United States of America.**
- **The United States, as a champion of democracy and individual rights, began its rule as a lamb. The two horns symbolize two notable features of the United States' system of government—civil and religious liberty.**
- **But something happens to this lamb-like power. Verses 12-18 tell us that it takes on very different characteristics just prior to Christ's second coming. And it makes an alliance with the beast. Let's see how this happens.**

# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **The beast that arises out of the earth:**
- **Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.**
- **And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.**
- **He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.**
- **And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.**

## The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**
- **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 (vss. 11-17).**



# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **Verse 18 states that the beast power from the sea, supported by the lamb-like beast, has the number of a man. “His number is 666.”**
- **These verses contain amazing information! Remember, they are describing what happens just before Jesus returns.**
- **Let’s discuss a few specific points in Revelation 13:12-18. Remember we are discussing a system—an alliance—that will be formed.**
- **These verses do not describe God’s sincere people currently worshiping Him within Protestant or Catholic churches.**
- **It refers to those who in the future choose to align themselves with the beast power and its image.**

## The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **An image is something that looks like something else. A boy who looks like his dad is said to be the “spitting image” of his father.**
- **So an image to the beast would be a replica or copy of the beast.**
- **As we have seen, the beast power of the past was a persecuting union of church and state, a religious system allied with national governments in order to enforce “orthodoxy” and combat those it considered heretics.**

# The Lamb-Like Beast Aids the Leopard Beast

- **Revelation says that the lamb power is going to establish the image of the beast.**
- **That means that in the future, the lamb power (the United States of America) will join with the beast power (the Roman Papal system) and enforce its decrees as described in Revelation 13.**
- **The medieval Roman Church thought it was doing God's will by persecuting "heretics."**
- **In the same way, the lamb power will consider its persecution of God's people necessary for the good of society.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The beast described in Revelation 13:11-18 represents the United States of America. (False or True)**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **Have you noticed that the issue of worship is a key element in the descriptions of the beast and lamb powers? In fact, worship seems to be their ultimate goal. They want the people of the world to bow before them, instead of to the God of heaven.**
- **Revelation 13:16, 17 tells us that the sign of those who worship the beast is a mark in the head and hand. Revelation 7:3 tells us that God's people receive His seal.**
- **The mark of the beast vs. the seal of God—this is yet another of the many contrasts in the book of Revelation. Satan is always trying to counterfeit God's truth in order to deceive.**
- **The mark of the beast symbolizes counterfeit worship. It is the opposite of true worship.**
- **What does worship of God involve? True worship centers around allegiance and relationship to the Creator, demonstrated by hatred of sin, love of God, Christ-like character, obedience, and Sabbath worship.**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **The issue of worship first appears in the Genesis account of the creation story.**
- **Genesis says that God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day. He made this particular seventh day special.**
- **“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.**
- **Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:1-3).**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **Later, God anchored the importance of the Sabbath in the fourth of the Ten Commandments:**
- **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11).**

## Worship and Beast Power

- **Years later Jesus demonstrated the importance of the Sabbath during His earthly ministry.**
- **Jesus always kept the Sabbath Himself. It was His weekly practice. “So he came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read” (Luke 4:16).**

## Worship and Beast Power

- **The Sabbath is such a special day that Jesus identifies Himself as Lord of the Sabbath.**
- **“And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath’ ” (Mark 2:27, 28).**

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# Worship and Beast Power

- **Jesus honored the Sabbath even in death. “This man [Joseph from the town of Arimathea] went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation [Friday], and the Sabbath [Saturday] drew near.... And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. Now on the first day of the week [Sunday], very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb” (Luke 23:52-54, 56 and 24:1, 2).**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **The three days mentioned are recognized by the entire Christian world on Easter weekend. Today we call these three days, Good Friday (the day Jesus died on the cross), Holy Saturday (the day Jesus remained in the tomb), and Easter Sunday (the day Jesus rose from the dead).**
- **Scripture indicates that the Sabbath is an important day to God. It is a sign, a symbol, an identifying seal that He is Creator and that He should be worshiped.**
- **The Sabbath is the seal of God—His special mark. For this very reason Revelation 14:7 states that men and women should “worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **Worshiping God according to His direction is not “legalism” or “works.” It is people choosing freely to spend time with Someone they love. It is people accepting God’s invitation to join Him on His special day.**
- **The Scriptures identify the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week. Most Christians, however, observe Sunday, the first day of the week, as their Sabbath.**
- **Why? In 1998 Pope John Paul II answered that question in an apostolic letter.**
- **In this letter the pope called the Catholic Church and the Christian world in general back to Sabbath worship. (But the Sabbath He spoke about was not the seventh day, Saturday, but Sunday, the first day of the week.)**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **Pope John Paul II began by quoting Pope Innocent I at the beginning of the fifth century.**
- **Pope Innocent had stated that, “We celebrate Sunday because of the venerable resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**
- **(Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful of the Catholic Church on Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy.)**
- **Pope John Paul II went on to declare the key reason that Sunday is celebrated is as a means of showing honor for Christ’s resurrection.**
- **The Church made Sunday a holy day in honor of the resurrection. In fact the Catholic Record, September 1, 1923, states that Sunday is “our mark of authority.” The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, asks,**

## Worship and Beast Power

- **Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?**
- **A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church... transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. (1957 edition, Peter Geirmann, p 50).**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **Scripture (the fourth commandment) states that the seventh day is God's Sabbath day of rest and worship. At creation, God gave the Sabbath to the entire human race (Genesis, chapters 1 and 2).**
- **Concerning the Sabbath, God said to Israel, "It is a sign between Me and the Children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh-day He rested and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).**
- **Revelation 13:16-18 mentions the "mark of the beast." The mark of the beast will become an issue in the future involving loyalty to God and following His Word, the Bible, including the Sabbath of the fourth commandment—as opposed to a man-made Sabbath.**
- **No one has the mark of the beast today. When it is a future issue, everyone will be forced to choose to follow God's Word completely or receive the mark of the beast.**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **How did this change from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday come about? Roman Emperor Constantine issued the first Roman law commanding Sunday observance on March 7, A.D. 321.**
- **His edict began, “On the venerable day of the Sun, let magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.” (Codex Justinianus, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3 trans. By Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vol. 3, p. 380, note 1.)**
- **This man-made change of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first was predicted by the prophet Daniel. We studied about it in Lesson 4. We read that the beast power and the subsequent “little horn” of Daniel 7:7, 8 representing the combination of church (papal Rome) and state (civil Rome), would “intend” or “think to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25). As you can see this is exactly what happened! Notice one can only “think” to change God’s law. God’s law is eternal; it never changes.**

# Worship and Beast Power

- **These historical facts about church worship are reflected in Revelation 13 in dramatic detail.**
- **How we worship does matter. God is simply revealing truth.**
- **He wants us to accept and follow the truth He reveals and to be prepared for events that will precede Christ's return to Earth.**
- **God is saying, "Be ready. Be informed. The Son of Man is coming to deliver you."**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The Sabbath is the identifying seal that God is the Creator and worthy of our worship. (True or False)**



# Conclusion

- **Laura lost her father to cancer at an early age and missed him keenly in the months after the funeral. He'd been such a loving man.**
- **At her next birthday however, she was astounded to find a letter from Dad addressed to her bearing the current date.**
- **It offered her encouragement and counsel about the challenges she'd face at this stage in her life.**
- **On her next birthday, there was another letter from Dad, talking to her about this particular time in her life.**
- **And so it went, through every birthday as Laura grew into a mature young woman.**

## Conclusion

- **Her father, knowing he was dying, had composed a series of letters to her addressing each special year in her life.**
- **It was his way of saying how much he cared about her and her future.**
- **That's why God has given us these wonderful prophecies in the Bible.**
- **How does it make you feel to know that God loves you so much that He has revealed details about the future?**