



THE LAST BIG TEST

In our first lesson, we learned about a real-life test for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. That test was about worship: Would they keep God's law, the Ten Commandments, or would they bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol?

Jesus also faced a test over worship. One time, Satan boldly asked Jesus to bow down and worship him. (Matthew 4:8, 9.)

The book of Revelation tells us that during the last days, there will be another real-life test that involves every person in the whole world. This test will also be over worship. In today's lesson, we are going to explore Revelation 13 and find out more about this important real-life test we will face soon.

- 1** What does the Bible teach us about choosing whom we worship and obey? **Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two _____; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."

A servant obeys his master. He cannot obey two masters at the same time. What if they tell him to do opposite things? He would have to choose which one to obey.

In the same way, we cannot serve both God and Satan at the same time. We either choose to obey and worship God or we choose to obey and worship Satan. (See Romans 6:16.)



The one we worship and obey is the one we have chosen to serve.

Now let's start reading what John wrote in Revelation 13.

- 2** What did he see first? **Revelation 13:1** "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a _____ 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."



- 3** Match the symbols to the interpretation:

a. beast

1. peoples and nations

b. sea

2. king or kingdom

- 4** What else did John say about this beast? **Revelation 13:2** "Now the beast which I saw was like a _____, his feet were like the feet of a _____, and his mouth like the mouth of a _____. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."

Have we seen a lion, bear, and leopard before? Yes! Let's review the beasts of Daniel.

- 5** How many heads are mentioned in **Daniel 7:4-7**?
 lion = _____ head
 bear = _____ head
 leopard = _____ heads
 terrible beast = _____ head
 Total number of heads = _____



- 6** How many horns do we find in Daniel 7:7? _____ horns

It looks like this is a strange, mixed-up beast made up of parts of all the beasts that Daniel saw in his vision. God is pointing us back to Daniel 7, which will help us understand what kingdom this strange beast represents.

- 7** Who gave this beast its power, throne, and great authority? **Revelation 13:2** "...The _____ gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."

Remember, the dragon is Satan. (Revelation 12:9.) So Satan is the mastermind behind this great beast's power.

Then John saw something strange. One of the heads had a terrible wound on it. It was so bad, John thought it would cause the beast to die!

- 8** But then what happened? **Revelation 13:3, 4** "And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was _____. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they _____ the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'"

Marvel: To be filled with wonder or amazement at something

- 9** John saw the **entire world** marveling and following this beast. Should we copy what others are doing when we choose whom we will worship and obey? **Exodus 23:2** "You shall _____ follow a crowd to do evil."



When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego had to choose, they did not follow the crowd. Everyone bowed down to the king's idol except those three brave young men.

- 10** Why were these three young men able to say No to the crowd? **John 14:15** "If you _____ Me, keep My commandments."

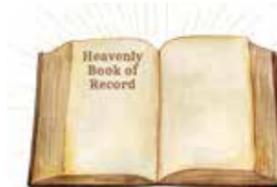
Because they loved Jesus, they obeyed His second commandment which tells us not to bow down to images. At the end of time, love for Jesus is what will keep us from following the world in its worship of Satan.

- 11** What kinds of things did this beast do and say?

Revelation 13:5-8 "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 _____, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make _____



_____ with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. _____ 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."



Did you notice that those who worship this beast won't have their names written in the Book of Life? The outcome of this test determines who will be in heaven.

Did you also notice that this strange beast is a mix of the beasts in Daniel 7 which came before the little horn? (Lion, bear, leopard, and terrible beast.)

Now let's use the clues we have learned from the Bible to figure out who this strange beast is.

Do you remember learning about the little horn power in lesson 8? Notice that this beast does the same blasphemous things as the little horn: It persecutes God's people; it tries to take Jesus' work in heaven and the heavenly sanctuary; and its mouth speaks great words and blasphemies.

Also, this beast rules for exactly the same length of time as the little horn (42 months = 1,260 days = 1,260 years).

So this beast must be the same power represented by the little horn—the Roman Catholic Church system.

12 What did John say would happen to this beast?
Revelation 13:10 "He who leads into captivity shall _____ into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

During the 1,260 years that the papacy ruled, it killed and imprisoned millions of Jesus' true followers. At the end of this time period, however, the papacy itself was led into captivity and killed by the sword. The pope was taken captive in 1798 after the upheaval of the French Revolution. He died in captivity, and many people thought the power of the papacy was ended forever. We see that predicted in Revelation 13 when one of the heads of the mixed-up beast is "mortally wounded" (Revelation 13:3).

Now that we understand who the beast is, let's think about the next question. What is its mark?

To understand what the mark is, let's go back to the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. Standing up when everyone else bowed down was a sign to all those around that they were loyal to God. It was their "seal" of God.

The rest of the people all bowed down and worshiped the image. Their bowing down was a sign or "mark" that they were loyal to the king.

The beast is marked, or characterized, as attacking God's law and trying to change its "times." (Daniel 7:25.)

The law of God includes a commandment that honors God as Creator, establishes His authority on earth, and identifies Him as the Sovereign of the universe. It is the fourth commandment, the only one related to "times."¹

The Catholic church claims to have more authority than what God says in the Bible. Here are their own words:

"The [Catholic] Church is above the Bible and the transference of Sabbath observance from Sabbath to Sunday is proof positive of that fact."²

"The observance of Sunday is solely a law of the Catholic church and therefore is not binding upon others. The church changed the Sabbath to Sunday and all the world bows down and worships upon that day in silent obedience to the mandates of the Catholic church."³

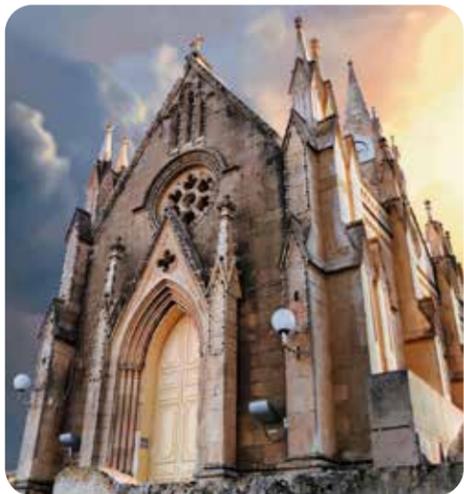
At the end of time, the test will be simple. There will be only two choices for people to make.

1. Those who choose to **obey** God's Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath, will receive the seal of God.

2. Those who choose to **disobey** God's Ten Commandments, including the fourth commandment, will receive the mark of the beast.

Next, John saw something else very interesting—another beast.

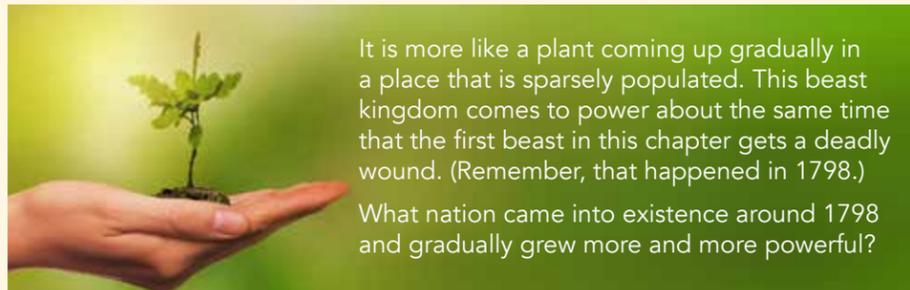
13 Where did this beast come from, and how did it speak?
Revelation 13:11 "Then I



saw another beast coming up out of the _____, and he had two _____ like a lamb."



Now let's figure out who this new beast is. The other beasts we have learned about all became powerful by attacking another beast. This beast is different. It comes out of—not water this time, but the earth! If water represents people, a lack of water represents what? A lack of people.



It is more like a plant coming up gradually in a place that is sparsely populated. This beast kingdom comes to power about the same time that the first beast in this chapter gets a deadly wound. (Remember, that happened in 1798.)

What nation came into existence around 1798 and gradually grew more and more powerful?

14 In 1776 **AACEIMR** _____ [unscramble] declared her independence as a nation. People were escaping to it much sooner than that, though. (Remember how the earth helped the woman in Revelation 12.) It was known as Protestant America because many of the people who went there were trying to get away from the tyranny and cruelty of Rome.

15 How many horns did this beast have? And what were they like?
Revelation 13:11 "He had _____ horns like a _____."

What do those horns represent? There are two fundamental principles that make America unique: **1. Freedom of religion.** This allows Americans to choose who they want to worship, and how; and it gives them freedom to share their religion with others. **2. Freedom of government.** This allows Americans to elect (or choose) their own leaders.

Did you notice that this beast from the earth doesn't have any crowns on its horns? Kings wear crowns, and the United States has a president instead of a king.

16 Who is called a lamb in the Bible?
John 1:29 "The next day John saw _____ coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"



In Revelation, Jesus is called the "Lamb" many times. Just like Jesus doesn't force people to worship Him, the United States protects the right of people to worship as they choose. These truths, which really should have been obvious to everyone, were totally new ideas to the world at that time.

17 But what does the Bible say this gentle-looking, lamb-like beast will do?
Revelation 13:11 He "spoke like a _____."

Governments speak by making laws. Someday, the United States will speak like the dragon, Satan.

18 When it does, what will happen?
Revelation 13:12 "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to _____ the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

God is warning us that someday America will make laws that will force the false worship of the Catholic church beast. These laws will influence the whole world. When America makes these laws, it will be speaking like the dragon, Satan, who likes to use force. Just as the Catholic church system used to force worship, America will do the same.

19 What will happen to those who **don't** go along with this false worship?
Revelation 13:15 "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 _____."

20 What will happen to those who **do** go along with this false worship?
Revelation 13:16, 17 "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a _____ 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."

The mark of the beast is not a literal mark on the forehead or hand that people can see. It is another symbol. Those who obey the beast because they truly think they are worshiping God are represented as receiving the mark in their foreheads. Those who obey the beast because they are scared of the death penalty are represented as receiving the mark on their hand. They do what the beast says, even though they know it is wrong. Obeying the beast means disobeying God's law, the Ten Commandments.

We can get the mark by what we believe or by what we do. These things reveal what is really in our hearts. And Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

No one has the mark of the beast yet. That will happen when Sunday worship is forced.



Do we have to be scared of the mark of the beast? No!

If we love Jesus, He will write His law on our hearts. We will keep His law because we love Him and receive His seal on our foreheads. And just like Jesus was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the fiery furnace, He promises to be with us during this final trial.

21 Do you love Jesus and want to serve and obey Him whatever the cost? _____

Answers

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. masters | 6. 10 | 12. go | 18. worship |
| 2. beast | 7. dragon | 13. earth / horns | 19. killed |
| 3. a. 2 | 8. healed / worshiped | 14. America | 20. mark |
| b. 1 | 9. not | 15. two / lamb | |
| 4. leopard, bear, lion | 10. love | 16. Jesus | |
| 5. 1, 1, 4, 1 = 7 | 11. God / war / all | 17. dragon | |

Sources

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