

TAMPERING WITH HEAVEN'S CONSTITUTION

The last battle in the great controversy between good and evil centres in the law of God. Satan hates the eternal principles that are the basis of the heavenly government. He desires to lead all to violate God's law and disregard the eternal foundation of His throne.

His special attack focuses upon the fourth commandment, which exalts Jesus as the Creator. As we discovered in the previous study, the seventh-day Sabbath is a memorial to Christ's creative activity. As such, it is an eternal symbol of both our "rest in Christ" for salvation and our absolute loyalty to Him. Therefore, Satan has made it the centre of his attack.

Since there is no command in the Bible to observe Sunday, certain obvious questions arise. Who is responsible for the change, and when did it take place? Is there information in the Bible forecasting such an attempt to change God's law? The answer to these questions is found in a symbolic vision given to the prophet Daniel.

1. What did Daniel see in prophetic vision? Daniel 7:1-3.

THE BIBLE SAYS: ". . . Four winds . . . were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other."

2. What is represented by the symbols of winds, sea, and beasts? Jeremiah 49:36, 37; Revelation 17:15; Daniel 7:17, 24.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "I will bring the four winds . . . I will send the sword after them until I have consumed them." "The waters which you saw . . . are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. " Those great beasts . . . are four kings which arise from the earth."

In Bible prophecy, winds represent war, the sea or waters represent peoples or multitudes, and beasts represent kingdoms.

3. How many beasts did Daniel see and what were they? Daniel ' 7:4 8.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "The first was like a lion...a second, like a bear...another, like a leopard, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong... and it had ten horns...and there was another horn...coming up from among them..."

In Daniel 7, the prophet pictures four great beasts rising out of the sea (verse 3). These beasts represent four great kingdoms that arise in succession (Dan. 7:17). As we studied in Daniel 2, the four great nations that ruled for many centuries from Daniel's time, are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The four beasts of Daniel 7 are a fitting description of these ruling powers. A lion with eagle's wings has been found on Babylonian coins and on the brickwork of ancient Babylonian buildings.

The king of beasts is a fitting symbol of the king of empires. The prophet Jeremiah describes Babylon as a lion (Jeremiah 4:7). Media-Persia, as a dual empire, came into prominence by destroying Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt, and soon the Persians rose to ascendancy over the Medes. The Bible aptly describes this empire as a bear raising himself on one side with three ribs in his mouth. A leopard with wings clearly describes how Greece, under Alexander the Great, swiftly conquered the nations of his day and the dragon-like beast, dreadful, terrible and exceeding strong, describes well the fierceness of Rome.

In today's study we will discover the identity of the beast of Daniel 7 which had ten horns. We will learn the role of its eleventh horn in changing God's law.

4. According to Daniel 7:8, what came up after the ten horns (divisions) of the Roman Empire?

THE BIBLE SAYS: "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them . . ."

5. Where did this little horn arise? Daniel 7:8.

THE BIBLE SAYS: ". . . there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, . . ."

Whoever this little horn is, it arises among the ten horns, the divisions of the Roman Empire Arising out of Rome, it dominates the world.

6. When did this little horn arise? Daniel 7:23, 24.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; . . ."

The little horn arises after the fall of the Roman Empire. It was rising to prominence somewhere between 351 A.D. and 476 A.D.

7. What special identifying characteristics does this little horn have? Daniel 7:8.

THE BIBLE SAYS: ". . . And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

Eyes in the Bible represent wisdom. Ancient prophets were called seers. They saw with divine wisdom into the future. This power does not have the eyes of wisdom of God but substitute's human wisdom for divine truth. The little horn substitutes human authority for the eternal claims of God's law. He replaces God's law with human traditions.

8. What does the little horn do to the people of God? Daniel 7:25.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "He . . . shall persecute the saints of the Most High . . ."

The little horn oppresses those who do not accept its authority. It defends its traditions and persecutes those who do not conform.

9. How long would it reign? Daniel 7:25.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."

A time equals a prophetic year. Times (or two times as stated in the margin of some versions) would be two years, half a time equals one half a year. This makes a total of 3 1/2 years, or 1260 days, calculating at 360 days in a prophetic year. Revelation 12:6, 13, 14 equates the 1260 years with the time, times and one half time.

In 538 A.D., church and state united in Europe. The pagan Roman Emperor, Justinian, gave to the pope of Rome civil as well as religious authority. Eventually this resulted in severe persecution. The Dark Ages followed on the heels of this union. God's people were imprisoned, tortured and martyred.

From 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D. this union of church and state continue throughout Europe.

10. What would this power, based upon human wisdom, due to the truth of God? Daniel 8:12

THE BIBLE SAYS: ". . . And he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered."

11. How did the Apostle Paul describe this apostasy in early Christianity? Acts 20:30.

MY BIBLE SAYS: "Also from among yourselves (from within the church) men will rise up, peaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

In Daniel 7:24, the little horn is described as being different from the other ten horns. The ten kingdoms are political. The little horn is clearly an apostate religious power.

12. As the crowning act in apostasy from God, what would this little horn power attempt to do with the law of God? Daniel 7:25.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "He . . . shall intend to change times and law. . ."

Let us ask ourselves, What power arose by destroying three of the ten tribes into which pagan Rome was divided? Which power was not merely political but religious? Which has made boastful, presumptuous claims about its authority? Which has persecuted the people of God, has reigned for 1260 years, and attempted to change God's law? There is only one power in history that could possibly fit into this clear delineation—Papal Rome.

Let us note how it fits Daniel's description:

The Papacy arose in Western Europe in the territory of Imperial Rome immediately upon Rome's decline. It grew into power by bringing about the destruction of the last three of the Arian tribes (Heruli, 493 A.D., Vandals, 534 A.D., and Ostrogoths, 538 A.D.). See Gibbons' Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire chapters 39:40.

It was a different type of government than its predecessors. It claimed dominion over the souls as well as the bodies of men. Under it, in the Reformation period, between 50-150 million died for their faith in God's Word. The Papacy reigned supreme for 1260 years. In 533 A.D. the Roman Emperor, Justinian, declared the Bishop of Rome supreme and in 538 A.D. the Roman general, Belsarius, drove the Ostrogoths out of Rome.

Thus the Papacy ruled for 1260 years, from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.. In 1798 A.D. the French general, Berthier, under orders from Napoleon, attacked Rome and took the Pope captive, thus ending the reign of Papal Rome. The Papacy clearly admits changing the Sabbath from Saturday, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day of the week, and declares the change to be an act of her ecclesiastical authority:

"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."—Catholic Mirror, Sept., 1893.

"You are a Protestant, and profess to go by the Bible only; and yet you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of the Sabbath. The command to keep

holy the seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments; who gave you the authority to tamper with the fourth?"—Library of Christian Doctrine page 3.

"But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."—Gibbon's Faith of Our Fathers page 111.

"The observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the Catholic Church."—Plain Talk About Protestantism, by Father Segur, page 213.

"If you look to the Bible as an authority for the observance of the day, you will not find it. It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all other Christians outside the pale of the Mother Church, that the Bible does not support them anywhere in the observance of Sunday. The Seventh-day Adventists are the only ones who properly apply the term 'Sabbath,' because they do observe the seventh day, and not the first day, as the day of rest."—Chfton Tracts, Vol. IV, page 15.

"Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the church, has no good reason for its Sunday theory, and ought, logically, to keep Saturday with the Jews."—American Catholic Quarterly Review, Jan., 1883.

"Now, every child in school knows that the Sabbath day is Saturday, the seventh day of the week. We can thank God for revealing this error to us that we may know and keep His Sabbath holy. Satan hates God and has attempted to overthrow the authority of His Son, Jesus Christ, by attacking the sign of His creative authority.

13. How important is obedience to God's commandments, including the Sabbath commandment? 1 John 2:3, 4.

THE BIBLE SAYS: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

God lovingly appeals to each of His true followers to willingly obey Him. Our obedience is a sign of our deep love. He invites us to turn from the commandments of men to the law of God. No human being has the authority to change God's law. The issue is much more than a matter of days. It is a matter of master. Jesus invites and to acknowledged Him as the supreme Lord and Master of our lives.

Human tradition can never be a substitute for divine truth. The commandments of men are no substitute for the commandments of God. No human power has the authority to change the law of God written with His own finger on tables of stone. Jesus invites us to listen to His voice alone. He says, "If you love me, keep my commandments John 14:15.