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The Beast, Image, and Mark

By HENRY DERING



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Introduction

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Revelation 14:9-11.

magine someone walking into a grocery store to buy some food items. The owner of the store has replaced the product scanning machine with a body scanner. The scanner picks up the information stored in the microchip that was recently implanted in the customer's right hand, following the passing of a new national law. The chip signals whether or not the customer will be allowed to purchase anything. The biometric data on the chip identifies the

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person, similar to the photograph on his or her driver's license. Information that is considered vital to national security is recorded on the chip. It has the person's name, address, date of birth, medical history, church affiliation, and, lastly, whether he/she is a supporter of the new world order.

In another possible scenario, others think that visible marks or tattoos will be imprinted on everyone's forehead or right hand, causing "all people great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name." Revelation 13:16, 17, *New International Version*. Might Social Security numbers be used to track down and subject people to imprisonment or death?

Could such things happen in the future? Is this what the Bible implies about the mark of the beast? There is a lot of speculation about the beast, its image, and its mark. What is the truth about these things? Let us examine some seeming mysteries in Revelation.

Identifying the Beast

The book of Revelation provides many identifying characteristics of the beast.

IT WOULD COME UP FROM THE SEA

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea...." Revelation 13:1.

Beasts in prophecy represent nations and kingdoms (Daniel 7:23), and the sea or water represents multitudes of people. Revelation 17:15. This symbol represents the papal power that emerged in the densely populated old world of Europe.

IT WOULD RECEIVE POWER AND AUTHORITY FROM THE DRAGON

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Revelation 13:2.

The dragon represents Satan working through pagan Rome. It was pagan Rome that gave

papal Rome authority to rule the world. When the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great moved his capital to Constantinople in A.D. 330, the pope inherited the power, prestige, and even titles of the Roman emperors. The most significant of such titles is Pontifex Maximus, meaning "Bridge builder between heaven and earth." "The papacy is but the ghost of the Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof." —J.C.A. Gaskin (ed.), Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 463.

IT IS A WORLDWIDE, RELIGIO-POLITICAL POWER

"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." Revelation 13:8.

The Roman Catholic Church is a mammoth system that has tremendous worldwide influence on governments as well as religious and secular organizations. Presently the Vatican has 183 diplomatic ties to foreign nations. Its overt and covert efforts are aimed at regaining control of the world. Five hundred years after the birth of the Reformation, the current pope is very active in reaching out to Protestants with the goal of healing "the rift of the Reformation." He is also working to build a confederacy of world leaders and has called on leaders of major world religions with an ecumenical prayer program to pray for world peace. In a recent message, Pope Francis very clearly expressed his belief that all of the major religions are different paths to the same God. He is laying the groundwork for one religion to unite the world.

IT WOULD RECEIVE A DEADLY WOUND

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death...." Revelation 13:3.

How was this fulfilled? The wound was inflicted when the pope was taken prisoner by Napoleon's general Berthier in 1798, and the papal government was abolished. Stripped of his power, both civil and ecclesiastical, the captive pope, Pius VI, died in exile in Valence, France, on August 29, 1799. Thus the papacy lost its influence and power in world affairs for a time.

THE DEADLY WOUND WOULD BE HEALED

[&]quot;... And his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3.

Prophecy stated that the deadly wound would be healed; the papacy would regain its power. In 1929, the Vatican regained its independence when the "Supreme Pontiff" was restored to temporal power. In fact, on February 12, 1929, the San Francisco Chronicle published an article with the headline: "Mussolini and Gasparri Sign Roman Pact,... Heal Wound of Many Years." In the near future, according to the Scriptures, the whole world, except for a faithful remnant, will wonder after (marvel about and follow) the beast.

IT WOULD BE GUILTY OF BLASPHEMY

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...." Revelation 13:5.

Jesus was accused by the leaders of Israel of blasphemy because He forgave people's sins. Did He have the authority to do this? Of course He did. He was and is God. But if any other person or organization claims the authority to forgive sins, it is blasphemy. The Roman Catholic Church claims to have the right to forgive sins. Consider the following statement: "Seek where you will, through heaven and earth, and you will find but one created being who can forgive the sinner.... That extraordinary being is the priest, the Catholic priest." —*The Catholic Priest*, pp. 78, 79.

In addition to its false system of forgiveness of sins by man, the Roman Catholic Church officially claims that "The Pope alone is deservedly called by the name 'Most Holy' because he is the Vicar of Christ, who is the fountain and source and fullness of all holiness." —Bill Stringfellow, *All in the Name of the Lord*, p. 115. This blasphemy is recorded in *Extracts* from Lucius Ferraris, "Papa II" (art.), *Prompta Bibliotheca*, vol. 6, pp. 25-29. "The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God."

Friends, I have some very good news for you. Jesus Christ, who is God, is able and willing to forgive sin. You may pray to Him any time and in any place! He is the one and only High Priest and Mediator, who pleads in heaven for every repentant sinner. Go to Him with all your sins and in humility and contrition ask for forgiveness. His atoning sacrifice is all-sufficient. What a great God we serve!

IT WOULD PERSECUTE GOD'S PEOPLE

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them...." Revelation 13:7.

The war that was waged against the saints was terrible and iniquitous. At least 50 million people who believed in the Bible and would not follow the traditions of the Catholic Church perished at the hands of Rome during the Middle Ages. A faithful record is kept in heaven of all such atrocities, which are too horrible to contemplate. In fact, the church acknowledges and lauds this persecution. "The Church has persecuted. Only a tyro in church history will deny that.... We have always defended the persecution of the Huguenots, and the Spanish Inquisition. When she thinks it good to use physical force, she will use it...." —Western Watchman, December 24, 1908.

"We confess that the Roman Catholic Church is intolerant; that is to say, that it uses all the means in its power for the extirpation of error and sin; but this intolerance is the logical and necessary consequence of her infallibility. She alone has the right to be intolerant, because she alone has the truth. The church tolerates heretics where she is obliged to do so, but she hates them mortally, and employs all her force to secure their annihilation."—Shepherd of the Valley (Catholic), St. Louis, MO, 1876.

"That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history. The memorials, indeed, of many of her persecutions are now so scanty, that it is impossible to form a complete conception of the multitude of her victims, and it is quite certain that no power of imagination can adequately realize their sufferings." —W.E.H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. II, p. 32.

IT WOULD RULE FOR 1,260 YEARS

"... And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Revelation 13:5.

What is the meaning of 42 months in prophecy? It is a prophetic time period that can be calculated by applying the key found in Ezekiel 4:6. That is, one day in prophecy equals one literal

year in fulfillment. It is that simple! Therefore, 42 months equals 1,260 years (based on 30 days per month, which was used by the Jews). The Roman Catholic Church reigned supreme from A.D. 538 to 1798. In A.D. 538, by the decree of Emperor Justinian, the bishop of Rome was chosen to be the head of all churches, definer of doctrines, and corrector of heretics. This papal supremacy came to an end in 1798 when the pope was arrested and imprisoned, where he died; but, as already explained, the papacy was restored to power.

IT WOULD HAVE THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBER 666

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Revelation 13:18.

How can we figure out this number? The beast is a religio-political system that bears the number of a man—666. What man do you think of when you think of the papacy? Its head, the pope, right? What official title does he carry? An inscription once found on the papal triple crown reads VICARIUS FILII DEI. An article in a Catholic publication, *Our Sunday*

Visitor, April 18, 1915, states: "What are the letters supposed to be in the pope's crown, and what do they signify, if anything? 'The letters inscribed in the pope's miter are these: *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God.'"

The book of Revelation says that the Roman numeral value of the letters of his name will equal 666.

V = 5	F = 0	D = 500	
= 1	I = 1	E = 0	
C = 100	L = 50	= 1	
A = 0	I = 1		
R = 0	I = 1		
= 1			
U* = 5			
S = 0			
112	+ 53	+ 501 = 60	66

*Formerly the same as V.

God's Seal, the Sabbath

A seal deals with legal matters and has three elements—name, title or office, and territory of the authority. For example, the President of the United States uses his presidential seal to authenticate official documents. On his seal are his name—Abraham Lincoln; his title— President; and the territory over which he presides—the United States of America.

Just as secular rulers or presidents have seals of authority, the God of heaven also has His seal. It is found in the heart of the Ten Commandments. In the fourth commandment are the three elements of a seal.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the *Lord thy God:* in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord

blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11 (*emphases supplied*).

Here are the three elements in the fourth commandment: (1) Name: the Lord thy God; (2) Title: Creator (*made*); (3) Territory: heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

"Moreover also I gave them *My sabbaths*, to be a *sign* between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them." Exodus 20:12 (*emphases supplied*).

God gave the human race the Sabbath as a sign or mark of His creative power and authority. He wants to place His seal upon people's hearts and minds.

It is interesting to read from a noted authority of the Roman church that Saturday is the correct day to worship. "If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew.... Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the tradition of the Church?" —Conway, *Question Box*, 1903, pp. 254, 255.

In contrast to the seal of God, the Catholic Church also has a mark of authority, which is a counterfeit seal or mark. We will look at this now.

Mark of the Beast

n reply to a letter dated October 28, 1895, to Cardinal Gibbons, asking if the church claimed the change of the Sabbath as its mark, the following statement was received: "Of course the Catholic church claims that the change was her act.... And the act is a *mark of her ecclesiastical power and authority* in religious matters." —C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons" (*italics supplied*).

Here is one more quotation, and there are many more: "Sunday is our mark of authority.... The church is above the Bible, and this transference of sabbath observance is proof of that fact." —The Catholic Record, London, Ontario, September 1, 1923.

Here is an explanation from the pen of inspiration that shows what it means to have the mark of the beast.

"But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlight-

ened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome-'the mark of the beast.' And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'" -Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 449.

"The change of the Sabbath is the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish church. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false sabbath in the place of the true, are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. The mark of the beast is the papal sabbath, which has been accepted by the world in the place of the day that God hallowed.

"No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast." —Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 234, 235.

The great issue that will divide this world will be the commandments of God. His people will not receive the mark of the beast, because they will be loyal to all of His commandments, including true Sabbath worship. This world is moving swiftly toward the final contest that will decide the destiny of all who inhabit the earth.

Identifying the Image of the Beast

"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." Revelation 13:11-14.

We have identified the first beast as the Roman Catholic system. Prophecy declares that another beast with two horns like a lamb will be instrumental in forcing everyone in the whole world to pay homage to the first beast the Roman hierarchy. This second beast, coming out of the earth, symbolizes the United States of

America, which will pattern itself after the papal power. In other words, America will take on the characteristics of the first beast through antagonistic activities against conscientious dissenters. Following are two paragraphs that describe what the image of the beast is and how it will use persecution to accomplish its purposes.

"The 'image to the beast' represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas....

"In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends." —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 445, 443.

Apostate Protestants are already joining hands with the government in tearing down the fragile wall of separation between church and state. Soon the final battle will begin.

"When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result....

"Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world, and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium." —Ibid., pp. 445, 589.

The two beliefs that unite the mainline Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church are the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness. "Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome." —Ibid., p. 588.

The Protestant Reformation was the beginning of the restoration of Biblical truths that had been hidden, or set aside, by the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. Protestant Reformers, like Luther, Melanchthon, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Knox, the Oxford Martyrs

(Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer), and others accepted the plain teachings of the Bible, while the church was not willing to follow the Bible but cruelly persecuted those who would rather die than give up their faith in their Saviour Jesus Christ. "They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death." Revelation 12:11, Holman Christian Standard Bible.

The decisions of the Council of Trent, which sought to counter the Protestant Reformation, are still in force today. Sadly, much of the Protestant world seems to have forgotten those teachings that brought about the Protestant Reformation and that violate God's holy word. Consider the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Protestant Reformers could not accept the teaching of the Catholic Church that the priests could convert the bread/wafer and the wine into the literal body and blood of Jesus. Man would thereby be given power to re-create God! Then there is the worship of Mary and the infallibility and ecclesiastical authority and power of the pope. And the very thing that ignited the Protestant Reformation, the sale of indulgences, is being reintroduced. "For Catholics, a Door to Absolution Is Reopened," reads a *New York Times* article, February 9, 2009. "... The indulgence, a sort of amnesty from punishment in the afterlife ... reminding [Catholics] of the church's clout in mitigating the wages of sin."

In a speech delivered in St. Peter's Square on June 25, 2014, Pope Francis said: "There are those of you who believe that you can have a personal, direct and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ outside of the communion and mediation of the Catholic Church. These temptations are dangerous and harmful. They are, in the words of the great Pope Paul VI, 'absurd dichotomies.'" But the Bible, on the other hand, clearly teaches something different: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5.

Over the last forty years, the Roman Catholic Church has worked very hard to bring about ecumenism by reaching out to non-Catholic denominations to reconcile ancient differences. Pope Francis is one of the most ecumenical popes. He has also made great efforts to unite with Protestants, and his activities have not been limited to Christianity. He has put forth efforts to support environmentalism, combat extremism, uphold humanitarianism, and unite with other faiths.

Following are some remarkable headlines praising the benefits of keeping Sunday and urging the establishment of a Sunday law.

Keeping stores open on Sunday is not beneficial for society: Pope Francis

---www.nydailynews.com/news/world/pope-francis-sundays-article-1.1856433.

Let's make Sunday a day of rest, for God's sake: Fox News

Slow Sunday: The simple solution to global warming.

"Using Sunday as a day of rest and renewal would be good for our personal health as well as the health of the planet." —*The Guardian*, September 17, 2009.

Sunday as a Mark of Christian Unity: Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.

—Idausa.org/2015/04/18/sunday-as-a-mark-of-christian-unity/

Arizona State Senator: Make Sunday Church Attendance Mandatory

Why Sunday Is the Most Important Day of the Week for Your Wellbeing (June 2018)

-https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/314269.

Protect the work-free Sunday! (March 2018)

"On the occasion of the European Day for a Work-Free Sunday on March 3, the European Sunday Alliance calls on all its supporters to take action against Sunday Work.... The European Sunday Alliance is convinced that working on Sundays endangers the health and safety of workers as well as the social cohesion in our societies...." —https://www.cesi.org/ tag/european-sunday-alliance/.

Taking Sunday Seriously—Poland "leads the way in providing an EXAMPLE TO AMERICA" (April 2018)

The European nation's new law sharply restricting Sunday shopping provides an opportunity to take a closer look at American habits. —www.ncregister.com/daily-news/taking-sunday-seriously-poland-leads-the-way.

Advocates of a Sunday law believe a weekly day of rest would help restore stability and order to families and society as a whole. It may sound like a good idea, but it will lead to the loss of civil and religious freedom. Are we ready to face the consequences that will follow the passing of such a law? God's word tells that such a law will be passed, and the prophecy is sure.

How might this come about? An apocalyptic event of some kind—a catastrophic natural disaster, economic crisis, or major military conflict—could easily lead the pope to proclaim that the world needs to get back to God by legislating Sunday observance. After all, the way is already being prepared for the world to accept Rome as the world's perceived moral and spiritual leader!

"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." Revelation 13:15 -17. Once a national Sunday law is enacted in the U.S.A., it will then sweep through every other country. This will include all atheist and communist regimes, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu nations, and heathen countries. America will work jointly with the papacy to compel people's consciences. This is definitely not God's method of working. God does not use force but LOVE to draw people to Himself.

"History will be repeated. False religion will be exalted. The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will be set up as was the image of Babylon. All nations and tongues and peoples will be commanded to worship this spurious sabbath.... The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to go forth to all the world." —Ellen G. White, *Last Day Events*, pp. 134, 135.

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false sabbath, the people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her example." —Ellen G. White, *Maranatha*, p. 214.

Can you imagine a day when the United States will turn away from its established principles

of civil and religious liberty and become a dictatorship? Force will be used to make people trample on the seventh-day Sabbath and honor a counterfeit day by worshipping on it. No one will be able to buy even food and other necessities for himself or his family unless he receives the mark of the beast. Selling your car, furniture, or anything else will be impossible.

How will you feel when your little child says, "Mommy, Daddy, I'm hungry!" Will you give up your faith so that you can continue to provide for your family? How will you react when you are forced to leave your apartment or comfortable home to seek refuge in remote places away from the cities? Will you leave your home, or will you submit to the government? Someday soon this will become a sober reality. The issue will ultimately be about worship. To whom will you give homage-to God or to Satan? America, followed by the rest of the world, will first use persuasive power and economic pressure, but it will ultimately use force and pass a death decree against all who will not receive the mark of the beast. This will be the final test for every person on earth.

A Choice

A the end of earth's history, everyone in the world will be divided into two classes of people—those who serve God and those who do not. One class will cling to and obey God's word as found in the Holy Scriptures, and the other class will not. One class will receive the seal of God, and the other will receive the mark of the beast.

Those who love God above all will be recognized by Jesus when He comes in the clouds of glory. He will call His faithful people of all ages from their graves and take all of the redeemed to His heavenly home.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself

shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Now, while mercy lingers, take your stand by the side of Jesus, for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Believe with all your heart that Jesus is your Saviour, and surrender your life to Him. He is longing to be the Lord of your life and to give you everlasting life. He promises to be your refuge and your fortress in the days of difficulty that will come upon the world at the very end.

All who love God above all will be victorious.

"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 I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither

A CHOICE

sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 15:2; 21:1, 4; 22:17.

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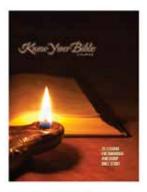
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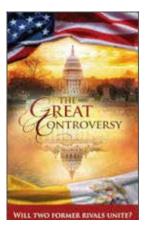
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