

Satan and His Team of Evil Powers



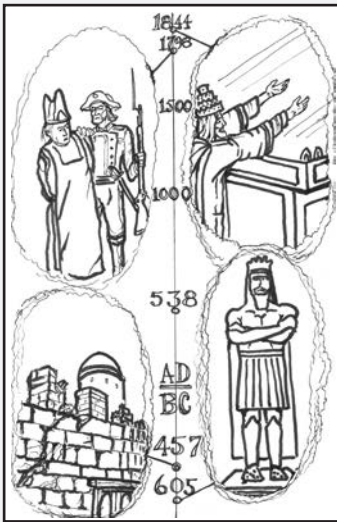
SABBATH—FEBRUARY 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 13

MEMORY VERSE: “Then the dragon was very angry at the woman. He went off to make war against all her other children. Her children are those [people] who obey God’s commands and have the truth that Jesus taught” (Revelation 12:17, ICB).

REVELATION 12 shows us Satan’s attacks against God’s loyal people during the 1,260 days or years (A.D. 538–1798; read Revelation 12:6, 13, 14). Chapter 13 tells us more about Satan’s attacks at different times in Christian history. In the end times, Satan uses two powers on earth to do his work. The Bible shows us these two powers as dangerous animals. Together, they work against God’s plan to save humans. These evil powers try to win the hearts of people.

We need to be careful as we continue our study of end-time happenings. So far, we talked about the things that already happened in the past. But starting with Tuesday’s study, we will talk about things that have not happened. God gave us these special messages about the future so that we will not be surprised about what will happen. Yes, God tells us **what** will happen. But He does not tell us exactly **when** things will happen and **how**. So, we must be careful not to try to make God’s special messages about the future say things that they are not trying to tell us. Let us not forget that God gave us these messages to teach us how to live today and to help us get ready for what will happen in the future.



Yes, God tells us **what** will happen in the end time. But He does **not** tell us exactly **when** things will happen and **how**.

THE WILD ANIMAL FROM THE SEA (Revelation 13:1–4, 8)

Revelation 13:1–4, 8 and Revelation 17:8 show us the wild sea animal. How does this animal, at different times, become different from what it was before?

John watches a large animal climb out of the sea. In the Bible, animals often are word pictures for governments. But John shows us that the wild sea animal also is a religious power that behaves the same way as a government. In Revelation 13, the sea is a word picture for the large number of people living in the land of Europe. The wild sea animal rises to power out of the land of Europe after the Roman Empire came to an end (read Revelation 17:15).

The wild sea animal has seven heads and ten horns, the same as the dragon in Revelation 12:3. The seven heads and ten horns show us that the wild sea animal is connected to the Roman Kingdom. What are these heads? They are the governments that Satan used to attack God's people at different times in history (Revelation 17:9–11). On the heads of the wild sea animal we see an awful name written. This name shows us that the wild sea animal hates God. The wild sea animal has horns on its head, too, and crowns on its horns. The awful name on the wild sea animal's heads shows us that it thinks it has the same power God has. The ten horns help us remember Daniel 7:24. That verse talks about the countries that came from the Roman Kingdom after it ended. These pictures about the wild sea animal help show us who it is. We see that the wild sea animal is the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages.

As the wild sea animal climbs out of the water, it looks the same as a leopard mixed with a bear and a lion. We see that the wild sea animal is four animals all in one animal. These four animal powers are word pictures for kingdoms that ruled the earth in the past. In Daniel 7:2–7, we learn that these powers are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Do you see that John's list of animal powers starts with the animal power that is the last one on Daniel's list? John did that to show us that the wild animal coming up from the sea rules on earth after the 4th animal in Daniel 7. That 4th animal is the Roman Kingdom. In Revelation 13, Satan gives the wild sea animal its power. This second member of Satan's team acts the same as a god. That is because Satan wants this wild sea animal to take the place of Jesus in people's minds and hearts.



The wild sea-animal power acts the same as a god. That is because Satan wants this power to take the place of Jesus in people's minds and hearts.

WHAT DOES THE WILD SEA-ANIMAL POWER DO? (Revelation 13:5–8)

Revelation 13:5 talks about a time when the wild sea-animal power attacks God's people. The attacks continue for 42 months. The 42 months are the same time as the 1,260 days that Satan attacks the woman in Revelation 12:14. We learned that a woman can be a word picture for a church. "Days" in the Bible's special messages about the end time also are word pictures: one day equals one real year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). The year A.D. 538 is the start of the 42 months or 1,260 days (or real years). At this time, the Roman Catholic Church becomes a religious power that controls Europe during the Middle Ages. Then, the French Revolution ends the Roman Catholic Church's power in A.D. 1798. The Bible shows us this fact in the word picture of the wild sea animal who gets a deep cut that almost makes it die. That deep cut shows us that the power of the Roman Catholic church ends for a while.



The wild sea-animal power gets a deep cut that almost makes it die. That deep cut shows us that the power of the Roman Catholic Church ends for a time.

Compare the wild sea animal in Revelation 13:5–8 with the little horn in Daniel 7:24, 25. Read about the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2:2–12. How does the wild sea animal act the same as both the little horn and the man of sin?

The wild sea animal's behavior during the 1,260-year period of history shows us that he wars against God and tries to steal God's power for himself. There is a special name for the wild sea animal's sin. It is named blasphemy. What is blasphemy? In the New Testament, blasphemy can mean bragging that you are equal to God (John 10:33; Matthew 26:63–65). Blasphemy also can mean trying to act the same as God (Mark 2:7). The wild sea-animal power shows he is guilty of blasphemy against God. How? He "spoke [said bad things] against God's name, against the place where God lives, and against all those [people] who live in heaven" (Revelation 13:6, ICB). Where does God live? In the sanctuary. The sanctuary is the place in heaven where Jesus works right now to save His people. The wild sea animal tries to remove Jesus' power to save His people. How? He replaces Jesus and His work for us as our High Priest, or holy leader, with human priests. The wild sea-animal power says that these priests can both save humans and forgive sins. These are two things only God can do. That is why the wild sea-animal power is guilty of blasphemy, or acting the same as God.

THE WILD ANIMAL FROM THE LAND (Revelation 13:11)

The first half of Revelation 13 tells us about the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages during the time of 1,260 days, or 1,260 real years. After the French Revolution, this religious government got a deep cut that almost killed it. The deep cut is a word picture that shows us that the wild sea-animal power, or Roman Catholic Church, lost its power. But this deep cut will be healed. Then the Roman Catholic Church will get back the power it had before in the Middle Ages. The second half of Revelation 13 shows us how the deep cut of the wild sea animal, or Roman Catholic Church, will be healed.

How does John show the second wild animal power in Revelation 13:11? This second wild animal comes from the land. Why does this animal come from the land and not from the sea? Hint: read Revelation 12:14–16.

John sees another wild animal. But this one comes from the land. This second wild animal is as powerful as the first wild animal from the sea. But the two wild animals also are different. The first wild animal is very scary to look at, the same as a monster. But the wild land animal does not look scary. It has “two horns like [the same as] a lamb” (Revelation 13:11, NKJV). The lamb in the book of Revelation is a word picture for Jesus. So, that tells us that the wild land animal seems to act the same as Jesus.

The wild land animal comes from the same land where God protected the woman. You will remember that a woman is a word picture for God’s church. The wild land animal becomes strong out of this same land where God protected His church. That happens at the end of the 1,260 days of the dragon’s attacks against God’s church (Revelation 12:14–16). At that time, the wild sea animal, or Roman Catholic Church, gets the deep cut that almost killed it during the French Revolution. So, that tells us that the wild land animal is a word picture for only one end-time power on earth: the United States of America.

Revelation 13:11 shows us that soon the wild land-animal power that looks the same as a lamb will start to talk as a dragon. The wild land-animal power will try to make everyone on earth worship the wild sea-animal power. That shows us that the country that offered a safe place to God’s church will attack God’s people at the end time.



The wild land animal is a word picture for only one end-time power on the earth: the United States of America.

THE FALSE GOD THAT LOOKS THE SAME AS THE WILD SEA ANIMAL (Revelation 13:12, 13)

How do 1 Kings 18:38 and Acts 2:3 help us understand the wild land animal's tricks in Revelation 13:12, 13? What is the wild land animal's biggest trick of all?

The wild land animal will trick people into believing what it says is true, even when its words do not agree with the Bible. How will the wild land animal trick so many people? It will use “the power of demons to heal people and do miracles.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 588, adapted.

At the same time, the wild sea animal's deep cut will heal. Its healed cut shows us that the Roman Catholic Church will get back the same power it had in the Middle Ages. At the same time, the wild land animal will start to talk the same as a dragon. It will have all the power of the wild sea animal. The wild land animal will act the same as the wild sea animal did in the Middle Ages. The wild land animal will not let people worship the way they want. Then “the wild land animal that looks the same as a lamb will talk as a dragon. . . . ‘He told **those [people]** who live on the earth to make a god that looks like [the same as] the first wild animal’ [Revelation 13:14, NLV]. This verse shows that the wild land animal is a symbol for a government whose people have power to make the laws that govern them: the United States.

“But what is the ‘god that looks like [the same as] the first wild animal?’ . . . If you want to understand what the ‘god’ is and how it is made, then you must study the wild sea animal itself—the Roman Catholic Church.

When the church turned away from Bible truth, she became rotten. She lost the Spirit and God's power. Then the church used the government to control people's minds, to make herself powerful, and to punish anyone who disagreed with her teachings. . . . When the churches in America join together to cause the government to support their laws, Protestant America will become an exact copy of the Roman Catholic Church. Then the Protestant churches will punish anyone who does not obey their laws. . . . The ‘god that looks like [the same as] the first wild animal’ is a word picture for what will happen when Protestant churches in America use their government to punish anyone who does not support their teachings.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 442–445, adapted.



The healed cut shows us that the wild sea-animal power gets back the power it had during the Middle Ages.

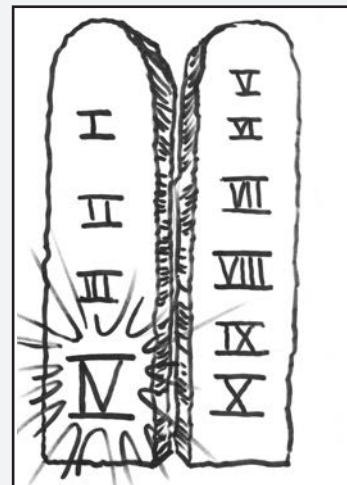
THE WILD SEA ANIMAL'S MARK (Revelation 13:16, 17)

Read about the wild sea animal's mark in Revelation 13:16, 17. The wild sea animal's mark is the proof of his power. Now read Deuteronomy 6:4–8. The wild land animal works for the wild sea animal and causes the wild sea animal's mark to be put on the right hand or on the forehead. What does this mark have to do with God's law?

The wild land animal will force people everywhere, rich and poor, to accept the wild sea animal's mark on the right hand or on the forehead. The wild sea animal's mark is not a mark or stamp you can see. So, if you cannot see the mark, then what does it mean when a person gets the mark on the right hand or on the forehead? Look at Deuteronomy 6:8. Do you see that Moses commands the Israelites to put God's law on their hands or foreheads? The hand is a word picture for behavior. The forehead is a word picture for the mind. This information helps us understand Revelation 13:16, 17. Some people will accept the mark on the hand so that they will not be killed. Other people will accept the mark on the forehead to show that they fully worship this wild sea animal with their hearts.

The wild sea animal's mark attacks the Sabbath. The mark shows that the wild sea animal put a false day of worship in place of God's Sabbath. What do we see today that shows this change really happened? The answer: Sunday worship (read Daniel 7:25). "The wild sea animal's mark is Sunday worship. The Roman Catholic Church changed God's Sabbath to Sunday. . . . In the future, a law shall be made that forces people to honor Sunday. Then the 3rd angel's message will warn humans not to worship the wild sea animal power and his false sabbath. . . . Anyone who continues to keep Sunday holy will get the wild sea animal's mark."—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism [preaching the Good News about Jesus everywhere]*, pages 234, 235, adapted.

Revelation 13:18, NIV, says: "Anyone who is wise should figure out what the beast's [wild sea animal's] number means. It is the number of a man. And that number is 666." Who is this man? Paul says he is "the Man of Evil" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, ERV). That name points us to the wild sea-animal power, who is a symbol for the Roman Catholic Church. The wild sea animal has an awful name written on his heads. This name shows us that he attacks God's law and tries to replace the Son of God on earth.



The wild sea animal's mark attacks the Sabbath. The mark shows that the wild sea animal put a false day of worship in place of God's Sabbath.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: The book of Revelation tells us that at the end of history, the Sabbath will be a test to show everyone on earth who God’s loyal followers are. But we must remember that Sunday worship does not mean that a person has the wild sea animal’s mark right **now**. Soon, in the future, Sunday worship will become the wild sea animal’s mark. That means that Sunday keeping will be the special mark that shows the wild sea animal’s power. At that time, people will have a chance to understand clearly what it will mean to choose to worship on Saturday or Sunday as the right day of worship. Then they will make their choice either to serve God or Satan. But that time has not happened. It is in the future.

“No one at this time has gotten the wild sea animal’s mark. Our testing time is not here now. There are true Christians in every church. That includes the Roman Catholic Church. God does not judge people for turning against the Sabbath truth until they have a chance to understand it first and know that He wants them to keep the Sabbath holy. But when the law shall be made that forces people to worship on a false sabbath, the loud cry of the 3rd angel shall warn men to not worship the wild sea animal and the ‘false god’ made to honor his power. At that time, we will see false and true worship divide people. Then those people who continue to sin against the truth will get the wild sea animal’s mark.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* [preaching the Good News about Jesus everywhere], page 234, adapted.

Let us remember that Sunday worship today does not mean a person is **not** saved any more than keeping the Sabbath makes a person saved. But the time will come when each person will see that the wild sea animal’s mark is the most important question in the end time. Then our choice of the day we will worship will test our loyalty to God. The book of Revelation asks God’s people to study the end-time happenings in the Bible with open hearts that want to know the truth. Then people must do everything they can to share the truth with others who do not know the Good News about Jesus.



“When the law shall be made that forces people to worship on a false sabbath, the loud cry of the 3rd angel shall warn men not to worship the wild sea-animal power and the ‘false god’ made to honor his power.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, page 234, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What do you see happening on earth today that seems the same as what you read about in Revelation 13?
- ② As we witness to Christians from other churches, how can we show respect for them and their beliefs?