

After last Sabbath's sermon, I felt that we would not be going into Part 2 of what we had covered, because I felt at the end of the sermon last week that that was probably sufficient as far as the subject matter at hand, but God has led us to following up on last Sabbath and so we are continuing on today with this being *Part 2* of the sermon entitled, *Late into the Night*.

It was sobering last Sabbath to address the kind of material that we did. It was not comfortable having to address such a subject, just as it is not comfortable when you have to go to a brother alone. Those things are difficult to do. Matters of things that we need to address in our lives, it's not always an easy thing to address, but God holds us responsible for doing those things as well, making sure we're striving to administer His Government in every way we can in our lives...and sometimes then it's necessary to address specific things.

It was necessary, as the story of Achan should be fully driven home to us; hopefully that's had a strong impact! It is not a small thing to bring sin into the assembly of God's people. It is not a small thing to bring sin into our lives individually, but when we do that and we bring it into the assembly and the congregation God holds us far more accountable for that, and that's why that particular subject matter was gone into last Sabbath. So again, it was not a small thing for the entire nation of Israel, as we looked at in that particular example, that one man brought sin into the camp of Israel, and we're to learn lessons from that.

We are not to bring sin into our own personal life; we're to repent of it quickly when that happens. That's why God has blessed us with the new covenant and an awesome thing to be able to go before Him, repent of sin, and be forgiven, to do it quickly when it happens - but not to continue practicing sin in our life and then bringing that sin into not only our own lives and condoning it but doing so within the Body, within the Church. Those things must be gotten rid of and God holds us accountable for doing that. It's not to be tolerated, as we talked about, even as Paul addressed some matters in the book of Corinthians there, it is to be dealt with and hopefully repented of so it can be forgiven. That's the whole point.

Over the past week and a half (just make some comments here), some have been approached by the ministry to make certain that some matters in their life are being addressed. Thankfully, there have been a few misunderstandings along the way. I'd far rather prefer that at times. If it's just a matter of... sometimes the going to a brother alone you're going to find out that it's a matter of a misinterpretation of events or certain things said, and sometimes we judge things by what we think we hear, but until you get everything clear and out in the open... and then it's a beautiful thing when you realize, "I misunderstood that. I misunderstood what you said." It teaches an important lesson there, the importance of communication and making sure that things are out in the open indeed, when there is doubt about a matter, and that also helps the other person to be maybe more careful in how they express things. So we all learn from that if it's done in a godly manner. And it becomes a little more difficult sometimes then when the ministry has to do some of those things and it can be uneasy for individuals. But again, I'm very thankful some of the attitudes I've heard, received back here, are great... especially when there have been misunderstandings, and that's awesome, it really is.

Sometimes there's just a need for clarification and guidance in some matters. For some, even some of what was mentioned in the sermon, there has been great repentance in some things that I mentioned in the sermon; there has been great repentance and genuine effort exerted to make things right, and that's good. It's just like when you go to someone and say, "I'm sorry." It isn't enough sometimes just to repent, it's to go back to those who have been sinned against and say, "I'm sorry for what I said. I'm sorry for what I did." And that's a beautiful thing in God's sight, making things right, making things right in our personal relationships. That isn't easy but it's something we must learn to do, whether by apologies or addressing the sin and changing and so forth - whatever is involved.

For some, there has been disfellowshipment, and for others, stern warning of such if there is not change, that there is a matter of 'suspension' from fellowship, which is the beginning phase of being disfellowshipped. We've had some suspensions. So, there are different things that take place, giving people time. It's a grace period, perhaps a period of thirty days to get your act together and then to come back to us and tell us what you're doing, that you are making things right. In some cases it's just outright disfellowshipment for the things that have been done because there is no repentance.

So again, these things are not easy but they're necessary in God's Church, and we're to go forward stronger than before, we're to get rid of sin in our life, just like Israel had to do in the matter of Achan. Not a small thing!

We are to be a Body that is individually cleansing itself - that is what we're to do on a continuing basis; that's what we do, that's what repentance is about. It's a matter of a desire to be cleansed spiritually in our life, to be clean before God and to get rid of sin, and that's what each member of the Body is to do individually, and in some cases, others are going to a brother alone or the ministry is going to a brother to encourage the cleansing of sin in the Body. Those things are necessary! They're not pleasant but they are necessary, just as it's necessary...the *best* scenario, the *best* thing we can do is individually seek to grow closer to God, seek to be on fire before God, seek to conquer and overcome sin and stay in the battle. We can't let up! That's why going to sleep, being deep in the 'night', is a serious matter to look at and to understand in what we have discussed here recently.

Who was it that sent me a good quote here the other day - I don't remember who sent it, but it was a phrase that's so true. They talked about how 'it's darkest before the dawn'. I don't know if you've ever heard that expression, but it's so true, and especially in our spiritual struggle sometimes.

We must work to keep sin out of our lives individually and we must work to keep sin out of the Body, not tolerating it in ourselves and not tolerating it in the Body.

Let's turn over to 1 Thessalonians today and begin here. **1 Thessalonians 5:1 - But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.** And how much more today? You think of the times back then and the things that he was addressing and what he was telling them in the book of Thessalonians to the Thessalonians. And he says, **For you know perfectly well that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night.** And Jesus Christ taught that. It's a matter of always being watchful, alert, and on guard. And that's the example of what's being given here. The example is of one, on a spiritual plane, that when people let down, if they begin to let down, in time if you're not careful and you fall asleep, everything you've had can be taken away from you. That's what it's talking about, just like a thief in the night. If you don't stay alert and on guard then it can be taken away, we can lose what we have...and too many people through time have lost what God gave to them, what He offered them.

Verse 3 - For when they shall say, Peace and safety; now, this scripture is sometimes used in a different manner prophetically in times past, but what's being said here is about the individual who doesn't understand the danger. Peace and safety, everything is okay, they're doing okay. The human mind can deceive itself into thinking that they're doing fine, they don't recognize they're falling asleep, they don't recognize they're letting up, they think everything is fine in their life - peace and safety. You can get so lost in sin sometimes that your mind just becomes deceived, and fall asleep spiritually. That's what it's talking about here.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, in other words, we're not to let down. God's people are always at war! We're always in a battle! You can never let down - it is a *lifelong struggle*! *It isn't easy!* *It wasn't meant* to be easy; it *was meant* to be a battle. And there is the ability to grow spiritually because of fighting that battle that is sometimes a difficult thing to learn and understand, how God works with the human mind to transform it.

...then sudden destruction comes upon them, things can go so wrong that one cannot see their true spiritual condition, truly! **...as upon a woman laboring to give birth to a child; and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as a thief.** Spiritually! We understand prophetically where we are. We understand we're deep in the 'night' on a prophetic scale, but this is talking about another matter, about how we live our lives, and that we are to be alert and on guard. And so he's saying here, **you're not in darkness!** God has given us light! He's given us the ability to see and to understand things that the world can't see, that people can't see about their own human nature, but we're blessed to be able to see in our nature, so that we can change.

So it says, **you are not in darkness so that that day should overtake you as a thief;** we're to be alert and on guard! That's the lesson over and over and over again!

Verse 5 - You are the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness, in how we're to live our lives, in what is to be reflected in our life, that we don't *practice* those things of the dark, as though we can be in the Garden of Eden amongst the trees and God isn't going to see us. God knows everything! He knows everything that's in our mind! We don't hide *anything* from God! That's an awesome thing to understand! And we can learn much about ourselves if we grasp that.

Verse 6 - therefore let us not sleep, as others; but let us watch and be sober, to be *sober minded* *always* in how we're dealing with life. It's serious! The battles are serious! The battles are mighty!

For they who sleep, sleep in the night, and they who are drunk/intoxicated are drunk/intoxicated in the night. Unusual way of expressing some of this in one respect, if you understand it spiritually; we understand what it means to fall asleep spiritually, and if we do then we sleep in the night. If we fall asleep we're in the night and we don't even *see* the night then, we don't even *grasp* where we are! That's why I mentioned last Sabbath, giving the example here about, "You may be a redneck *if...*!" A lot of those overseas aren't going to understand that one probably unless they've seen some comedy out of the United States and then they still may not understand it. But the example we gave there, the analogy of that there that we gave talking about, "You may be asleep *if...*" And the reality was, in some of those cases *you ARE asleep IF* some of those things apply to your life spiritually. And they have to be either repented of and changed or whatever, because just as Achan, it can't be allowed in the Body. It *hurts* the Body. It's something *spiritual!*

...and they who are drunk/intoxicated are intoxicated in the night. It can go so far in people's life that, in other words, you get intoxicated with the way of the world! You're not excited, you're not spiritually alert, as it talks about in Ephesians (I can't think of the exact way it states it there)... maybe I ought to look at it so that I can state it exactly. But it gives the analogy here of talking about drunkenness and about being filled with spirit, that which is physical in the sense of intoxication as far as alcohol is concerned.

Ephesians 5:18 - And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, in other words, intoxicated in that which is physical, to be intoxicated by, **but be filled with the spirit.** So the example is one here of either we're filled with God's way of life that strengthens us...and another way of saying it here then in Thessalonians, as it says here... 'and they that are drunk/intoxicated are intoxicated in the night.' In other words, using that example of those who fall asleep, that that becomes what they're excited about. That's what fulfills their life - the world! ...the darkness! They get more excited about the darkness in the world and the sin than they are about God's way of life! And that doesn't fit! So either there is repentance and change or... or whatever. God will take care of it one way or another within the Body, or He'll take care of it directly.

Verse 8 - But let us, who are of the day, be sober, sober minded, **putting on the breastplate of faith,** in other words, what God has given us to believe, to understand the need for unity and oneness in all that God has given us and fed to us in the Body and the Church, **and love,** God's love - a desire, making certain indeed that we're measuring ourselves and making sure of our attitudes and how we treat people, that we're not rough-shodding it over people, not rough-shodding it over our wives, not rough-shodding it over our husbands, not misusing the love, the care and concern that God says we should have in family, first of all, nor doing that in the Church to the Body of Christ to one another. Those things are important to God! He wants them to be important to us! He wants us to embrace them and to make sure our relationships are right.

You know, since the Feast, candidly, there have been a lot of situations of discussing things with people and things that are happening in people's lives, and because people want to get their lives right some are counselling about certain matters and finding out that there are just a lot of situations, *too many* situations where people aren't living this way of life to those who are closest to them! That blows my mind! *Where is God's love? Where is love,* period, of any kind? How people can treat people in a nasty way, in a horrible way, shutting them off, not speaking to them, pouting toward them, whatever it might be, saying nasty things to them! Why should such things come out of our human mind, our mouth? And that's what God says, we're to be filled with His love! Let's not kid ourselves and play games! Are we playing Achan in our private personal lives thinking we can bring certain sin into our life and hide it so nobody else can see it? I'll tell you what, it'll come out in time and God will manifest it and He'll make it clear, and the more we try to hide it the worse it's going to be when He brings it to the surface and shows it!

God wants us to *clean up our lives, get our lives right!* We're almost in the 'day' and He desires us to be a part of the 'day' in the sense of a 'prophetic day', and a desire to use us. But if we're playing games and we're not honest before God we're not going to be among those that have such blessings.

...and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not appointed us to wrath, in other words, to receive condemnation, **but to obtain salvation,** that's what we're called to, to be able to change, to grow, to overcome, to become something different. And unless you hate your nature you will not strive

to change! Unless you hate your human selfish part of your mind you will not seek to change! If you're comfortable in it, intoxicated in the night, well, that's where you're going to stay!

Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. Speaking then even in time if it be just a matter of death.

As I mentioned at the beginning, at the end of last week's sermon I felt that we probably wouldn't have a Part 2 but that we would go directly into what I had mentioned at the end of the sermon concerning the 430 years, the example back in Exodus there that God said He did that which was to an exact day. And candidly, I had been a little puzzled why we were being given this subject matter in the midst of this sermon series and why it's to be a part of it. So, I asked. That's how you learn. Because I have done this long enough to know exactly how God works with me in sermons, and for whatever reason there are the things we're to go into about the 430 days and I thought, "What's that got to do with what we've just gone through?" And it's important to understand.

Here it is: We have had to address what is the culmination of all the sermons we have covered concerning God's Government in action *in* the Church concerning 'going to a brother' and seeking to 'gain a brother'. Then during the Feast we added to this with more that concerns God's Government within the structure of the Church, and primarily within the ministry—to bind and loosen - powerful things, which in the context of what we are covering *is a responsibility to address sin*. We have responsibility to address sin and seek to get rid of it in the Body of Christ—doing so God's way.

In the midst of this, we are now coming to the end of a *long* history of God working with those whom He has molded and fashioned to become a part of His Government in Elohim once Christ returns. Though this process has covered nearly 6,000 years now, it has been more intense and focused over the past 2,000 years on God's Church—the Body of Christ.

So this is indeed about *how God is dealing with sin*. We are *so blessed* that God has given us such a *focus* before the Feast and during the Feast and now afterwards of this matter of focusing upon sin. It reminds me of Atonement this year! That was one of the most inspiring Atonements I've ever been blessed to speak in and to listen to, because of what God is giving us, about the importance of how God is dealing with sin in His plan...and it *begins* in us! It begins in those with whom God *calls* to the Church, those whom God has worked with over the past 6,000 years and those with whom God is working with that are going on into the Millennium - *how God is dealing with sin*. And He's blessing us to see that in an overall view, if you will, for this world too.

So again, I want to repeat this because this is a specific statement I want to make clear here.

This is indeed about how God is dealing with sin—to lead this world and the Church *out from slavery*—the *hold* of Egypt that is upon us. People that are in Egypt so often don't grasp they're in Egypt. You didn't know you were in Egypt until God began to call you out. You didn't *understand* the magnitude of how bad it was; even as God was taking the children of Israel out, over and over again they wanted to go back! And there is that battle because the hold of Egypt that's upon us, and that is such a great freedom, when you can begin to understand the hold of this world that's upon you, the hold of your own selfish human nature that's upon you and a desire to be free from that!

How much do you desire to be free from *your nature*? I long for it! I *hate* human nature because it's selfish! It *is* selfish! And you have to constantly fight that and grow in that throughout your entire life once you come into God's Church! But if you're not fighting the fight you can be 'intoxicated in the night' indeed, with what you're in. You can be fast asleep and not grasp! You've got to always be in the fight!

So let me read this again, I'm not even making it through the whole phrase here:

This is indeed about *how* God is dealing with sin - to lead this world and the Church out from slavery - the hold of Egypt that is upon us—and away from the spiritual Pharaoh of Egypt... away from Satan.

Powerful being! And so often in life we don't recognize the power that we give to him because of sin, unrepented of sin. It gives them power! And that is a lot of what we've just gone through in discussing here about Achan. We don't realize sometimes the power we give to that being to bring it in the Body and to bring that spirit in the Body. We don't think we do, people don't grasp that when they're doing that, but that's what happens, and allows that spirit, that attitude to come within the Body. And God doesn't want it there, obviously.

God is revealing more to us about what He and His Son are doing so that we might receive the encouragement and the excitement from what He reveals that is a matter of revelation and how He's dealing with this world.

We mentioned 1st Thessalonians here to set the stage about our own lives and that which we are to focus upon, a need and understanding to be free from Egypt, a desire to do things God's way, to not fall asleep, to understand we're to be sober-minded and we're to be spiritually alert to not fall asleep. And then we see God delivering this world and what God has been doing for a long time.

Exodus 12: To me, this is awesomely encouraging, the minuteness, if you will, of how God deals with life. I think of some of the prophetic things we've gone through in times past. I think of when God began to show in Daniel about the second coming of Christ and the seventy-years prophecy. We had no idea! We could see some of those things, we have through time, that applied to His first coming, but how that applied to His second? And then when God gave that, to see how meticulous, how minute, how perfect it is? It's awesome! And to me it's awesomely encouraging to see God working in such a manner...and so is this. To me, this is awesome!

Exodus 12:40 - Again, building upon these... **Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Eternal**, finally a nation, 430 years in the making, finally a time to bring them into a nation and a relationship with God as a nation of people and what God was going to do with them through Moses and taking them out; and all the spiritual things that we learn from something they did physically. A physical journey; we're on a spiritual one.

And so again, that 430 years... **It is a 'night to be much observed' unto the Eternal for bringing them out from the land of Egypt...** So at this time in this spiritual 'night' God is blessing us to see more fully, more clearly what He's doing. And again, much of this is just a matter of what God is giving by revelation to show what He's doing and what it means.

This thrust of this story is in the book of Revelation 17; we'll begin there today. There is so much to cover here I'm going to be going into some things in history. I may lose some because it may be just so totally boring; some people don't like history at all, and when you hear all these people and all the dates you may want to go back and listen again, ☺ or you may not. Some people like dates, some people don't; some people like history, some people don't. I think in God's Church though... I used to hate history until I came into God's Church, and *then* it took on new meaning because of seeing what God has been doing with mankind for 6,000 years - then history took on a new light because it was in the context of what God's doing and where God's doing it, and how He's doing it, and the nations, and the kingdoms, and all those things that become so inspiring then.

So again, the thrust of this story is, again, partially revealed in Revelation. And of course all the book of Revelation must be revealed by God *through* revelation. That's how He works; not by intellect, not by human reasoning. That's why you can get your calculator out and you can wear off the keys and it's not going to get you anywhere except maybe a headache. God has to give what He does.

So where do we begin? Revelation 17:1. And you all have a chart here that we'll be looking at as we go along here; hopefully most everyone has that with this sermon.

Revelation 17:1 - And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, Come here and I will show you the judgment of the great whore who sits upon many waters. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. They're intoxicated with that religion. They're intoxicated with that system. That becomes their life, that becomes their excitement. **So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.** Blasphemy! Against God! Twisting and distorting the things of Almighty God! That they *are* blasphemous before God. All the untruths, all the lying, all the twisting, all the doctrine that is a matter of blasphemy! And it says, **having seven heads and ten horns.**

Verse 7 - And the angel said to me, Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and ten horns.

Verse 9 - And here is the 'mind', which means, 'the understanding', 'the reason', **which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains,** speaking of governments, **on which the woman sits. And even so there are seven kings;** you remember this example here, Mr. Armstrong - **five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come;** that's when Mr. Armstrong came to a point in time where he understood that he was in the midst of the sixth at that particular time because five had already fallen, speaking of revivals of the Holy Roman Empire, **and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space.**

Verse 10 - And even so, there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, speaking of the seventh, it has not yet come; **and when he comes he must continue a short space.** Right there God tells us it's going to be a short time when that finally does happen.

Verse 12 - And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; now, we know full well, we understand that the seventh time, the seventh revival here is a matter... it says here, **the ten horns which you saw are the ten kings;** so it makes it very clear here who they are, at

this particular point, the one that comes. It says, **which have received no kingdom as yet**. So it's referring back to the one here that we just read about in verse 10 '**and the other is not yet come**' and then this one here talks about very specifically here, '**which have received no kingdom as yet**', the seventh, **but receive power as kings one hour with the beast**. And so we see Europe, we look at various articles that come out from time to time and they mention nine or ten or eleven countries that are working together there in the midst of the European Union and we know what's going to emerge out of it. We just don't know for sure who yet, but we know that ten will finally come out of it.

These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords and the King of kings: so it takes us right up to the time of Christ's coming and makes it very clear here, we've always understood who this is talking about.

Now, on your chart, just so you know a part of what's spoken of here - you see the one column there at the top where it says, '**Rev. 17 BABYLON AND BEAST**'? ...and it comes down - and we just talked about the '**SCARLETT WOMAN who rode the BEAST v. 1,2**' that we just read a little bit ago, and then it talks about the first head of the beast, and then the second head of the beast, the first one being under Justinian, "**IMPERIAL RESTORATION**" of empire by Justinian, **554 AD**' He recognized supremacy of the Pope' and it goes all the way down to the seventh, which is the final one, that has the ten horns. And so it makes it very clear in the chart there, we can see it very clearly here, understood, that the seventh head has ten horns. But as we went through chapter 17 here it doesn't refer to any of these. This one here does, it says... **verse 3 - having seven head and ten horns**, so again here, it mentions all these heads and then on the right there it give who they are, the "**Frankish Kingdom...**" the "Ottoman" [which on chart says - "**Holy Roman Empire (German Head)**"], "Charles V" [which on chart says - "**Hapsburg Dynasty**"], "**Napoleon's**" and so forth, all the way through there. Just so you know what's on the chart, okay?

Now, Revelation 13 - there is going to be a correction we're going to make right away on the chart here because there is something that hasn't been understood that has been misapplied and that needs to be spoken of here at the very beginning. Okay? As we've grown we have the present truth. We had the sermon about that - there are things we've grown in in understanding through time that God has given to us and here is going to be an example today of something that should be very clear.

Let's just notice on the chart here it has, if you go all the way up here to '**Revelation 13**' it says, "**The BEAST w/7 HEADS & 10 HORNS v. 1,2**" You notice how the horns are done? It gives ten horns all the way through there - three, and then seven more following. That's a mistake; it shouldn't be there like that. We already read in Revelation 17 who the ten horns are, so let's read it in Revelation 13 so that as we're going through this you can see it clearly, what's really being said.

Revelation 13:1 - And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and candidly, it's the exact same thing being spoken of in Revelation 17; **and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy**. Again, it's a matter of blasphemy! What is this blasphemy? Well, it's the same thing we talked about a moment ago, it has to do with that which is against God, that which is a matter of things that are said that are *fully against* the way of God, the truth of God, and they're blasphemous against God's Word.

Verse 2 - And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were the feet of a bear, and his mouth the mouth of a lion, and the dragon gave him power, and his seat, and great authority. So again here, it's talking about something that the dragon gives as a matter of power and authority. And again here, we've always understood what this is speaking of, in essence.

Before we go on I just want you to look at the chart again because it does need to be corrected here at this point. When it gives this analogy here and it shows this beast, it shows the power that's given to it that as it were, even the statue in Daniel, it brings all this power together in a very powerful beast, but now it's a blasphemous beast because of what it does and what it says and so forth, because it literally speaks out against God in a very powerful way...and we understand because of that false church that comes out of it. But again here, this thing of seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns, please... and it'll become clearer as we go along here - the ten horns are exactly the same as the seventh one here on Revelation 17 here, they should be down here with that one there.

It's not the same as Daniel 7. Daniel 7 talks about certain horns - that's a different beast and it is about something that takes place in the Roman Empire, but again, it's not about a blasphemous beast like that being spoken of here in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 all the way through. When it came down to the "The VANDALS", "The HERULI", and "The OSTROGOTHS", those things were not a matter of the Holy Roman Empire and what the church was doing at that time. We'll talk about as we go along here.

So, it should look like, exactly like the column there for Revelation 17. There are only seven heads and the ten horns don't come until the end, which are ten kings at the end.

Revelation 13:3- And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon who gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast/the system, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, so it's this marriage between a literal government and a spiritual one, a false spiritual one; **and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months:** it was wounded for a time, but not dead - interesting, the terminology being used here.

Verse 11 - And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him and he causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. So what is this first beast? Is it the Roman Empire that is being spoken of here? If you look on the chart here there is "**The ROMAN EMPIRE**" it says up here (I put it in bold up there), "31 BC to 476 AD", and then there was that which happened in 476 where the Roman Empire fell and there were "The VANDALS", "The HERULI", "The OSTROGOTHS", and then finally there is what is called here, "**IMPERIAL RESTORATION**" under the "1st HEAD..." where it speaks of "Justinian in 554 AD", who indeed "recognized supremacy of the Pope" and indeed the church and a Roman Empire were married in a very powerful fashion spiritually and as far as a physical kingdom was concerned.

So again, where is the first beast in the sense of where was it wounded? ...how was it wounded? Is it, again, the Roman Empire that's being spoken of here?

In between this period of time it shows that there are three "HORNS" mentioned in Daniel 7 over here on the left, and then again here in Revelation 13 it mentions it; but again, that's not a part of it. Daniel 7

is fine because it does talk about something that took place at a particular time of certain horns there that were rooted up and 'plucked up by the roots' and so forth. And there were things that happened for a period of time, but we need to grasp what took place and why it took place.

As the '**heads are full of blasphemy**', these are about a great false church, and this beast of Revelation 13:1 is a more specific beast within the Image of the Roman Empire mentioned in the 'Legs of Iron' in Daniel 2 of the Roman Empire pictured in the 4th beast of Daniel 7. So again, if you haven't looked at this chart, if you don't understand some of the things on the chart, don't worry about it... If you don't worry about Daniel 2 and Daniel 7...but just pointing out that there are things that have a proper flow of things that have happened in history and what it's speaking of there.

But when you get over here, when we start talking about Revelation 13 this is a more specific beast. It has a beginning that involves *blasphemies*, because the head was wounded and then it was healed. And candidly, in the Church we've only ever addressed the healing of the head, in one respect. So is it talking about the Roman Empire? No! It's not talking about the Roman Empire that began in 31 B.C. and then came to an end in 476 AD because it had nothing to do with the blasphemous woman - going all the way back. There is some history that's missing here that needs to be plugged in, and that's what we're doing today, that God is showing to us, that is exciting when you understand what God is giving.

So again, its beginning involves blasphemies concerning that which works against God—and directly against *God's Church*—and God's Church didn't exist back in 31 BC. But there are things that happened in time in history that had to do with the first beast, or the first head that was wounded severely and wasn't healed. If you'll notice here under "Revelation 17" on your chart, it says, "1st HEAD of BEAST (healed)..." But where does it speak of the wound? Where is the deadly wound and when did that happen, and what does it mean? Because, candidly, it is not about the Roman Empire, it's about a great church and an association *with* the Roman Empire...and we've left it out in the scenario in time, for a reason. God has had those things happen for a purpose and a reason, that they weren't clearly seen.

So again, when we speak of the heads of the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 it has a woman who is filled with blasphemy against God sitting on all seven, associated with all seven, if you will, that did not start in 31 BC.

So what is the beast and when does it come on the scene? When does it begin? Let's go back and read **Revelation 13:3** again - notice... **And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death;** what head? It's the *first head*! When you come on the scene and you see the first head you see it healed by Justinian in 554 AD, but *where* was it before that when it was wounded? It says... **and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered at the beast.**

And then **verse 11** it goes on and adds about another beast now - **[And I beheld another beast] coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.** So again, speaking of things here having to do even more so with the church, that church, and it says, **And he exercises all the power of the first beast;** and so it's giving another image within an image here, or another example here of another beast that's coming up. It already explained what this beast is and it makes it very clear here in verse 3 that "this head..." "...one of it's heads," it says, "was wounded as it were to death," and then it says "...and then later," in essence, "his deadly wound was healed." And then when you get down here to verse 11 it speaks of it in different terms and it says here **...he exercises all the power of**

the first beast before him, and causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast; which is the first head! ...whose deadly wound was healed. Awesome, it really is!

There is something that should be so obvious that is missing here in history! By the time we come to Justinian it is obvious that something was healed and that there is great power all of a sudden *in* the Catholic church and *in* the Roman Empire; it all of a sudden bursts on the scene once again... so much so that Justinian recognizes the supremacy of the Pope. If this is the healing of the first head... again, where did the first head begin? ...*when* was it wounded?

The answer is in Constantine the Great! Constantine the Great! I'm going to read some history about Constantine that is just absolutely awesome, of what happened, because *this* is what gave the Catholic church it's power. It happened in the time of Constantine, not Justinian. Everything that began happened in the time of Constantine, that united the Empire and, if you will, Christianity, so called, at that time. It is a powerful, awesome story that we have never focused upon in that respect in God's Church! It is the first head! It is the first beast! It is the one that was wounded! And then when Justinian comes on the scene later on that is the one that comes back up that all of a sudden continues on for a period of time as well, very specific in what is said about it.

I'm going to do quite a bit of reading here and I hope not to lose you, because when you start looking at some of these Roman Emperors, it's like the Jerry Springer show, it gets pretty complicated, and it's about as bad by who gave whom to marry who and so forth and all the different marriages and different things that were going on, everybody was related to each other and the struggle for power and how brothers killed brothers and parents killed offspring... It's history! It's things that have happened with kingdoms through time and families and what they've done to each other to have power.

I'm going to do a lot of reading now and I'll try to explain some things as we go along here. And I hope not to go too fast here because I'm trying to push this hard today because there is so much to go through in order to get through this before next Sabbath.

First of all:

Two important events marked the reign of Constantine the Great, the first (so called) Christian emperor of Rome.

There was never one before going all the way back before him.

He made Christianity a lawful religion in Roman society, and he founded the city of Constantinople, the brilliant capital, (if you will, as one historian puts it), of the Eastern Roman Empire.

So we go on here and it talks about some different ones here, Constantine, his name...

Flavius Valerius Constantinus was born in the Roman province of Moesia (what is now Serbia) about AD 280. His father, Constantius, was a member of an important Roman family. His mother, Helena...

And I'll just mention it in the very beginning, his mother was Christian and it had an influence somehow, somewhere, at some point in time on Constantine, okay? And, anyway, we'll come to that later on in the story. But what I'm going to do right now is just read a basic overview of the history. I've tried to go through and condense this the best I could because there are a lot of things that just get muddled down in time and events, trying to make it somewhat of a story flow.

His father, Constantius, was a member of an important Roman family. His mother, Helena, was the daughter of an innkeeper (it talks about here in the story). In 293 the emperor Diocletian made Constantius (Constantine's father) caesar of Gaul and Britain.

Now, it gets a little complicated here because sometimes people think of Caesars and different words that are used here...we're going to find out some of the meanings of some of them, what they are, but there can be several Caesars at one time in the Roman Empire, if they're given certain jurisdiction of certain areas and they are to work together, obviously, as a part of the Roman Empire. But Diocletian, we're going to start with him; he was the primary emperor of the Roman Empire before Constantine. He made Constantine's father, Constantius, a caesar of the areas of Gaul, which is modern day France, Britain, and Spain.

So even if you look back here in the 290's already the Romans were already up in Britain, they were in the areas of Britain, France, and Spain; they'd already conquered those regions of the world. When I was in Ambassador College we'd go up to what was called, 'the Roman Wall'; they actually had a Roman wall that was close to Bricketwood, just north there, of stone and so forth. It was kind of a boundary area of the Roman Empire in England at that time, to give them defense and so forth. They already had armies there, and so they had armies in Great Britain, in Spain, and throughout the area of Gaul, the areas and regions of France.

And so Diocletian made this Constantius then a caesar of that region of the world, and yet he was over the *whole* empire at this time, Diocletian was.

Young Constantine was kept at the court of Galerius, the Eastern emperor...

There are several individuals ruling at the same time here, but Diocletian was over all of them. They tended to separate some families because of power struggles, and if something happened to one, of what might happen to other, as much as kings and queens even did throughout history as we'll find out next week or maybe even this week if we get into it. He was kept in this part of the world for a period of time, as history records it... "...virtually as a hostage/prisoner." Not able to be with his father, not able to leave that area.

He escaped in 305 and went to be with his father in the areas of Gaul and that region of the world, Spain, Britain, whatever. But as soon as he did, as soon as he made it back to his father...

Constantius died the following year in 306.

So, here you have 305-306 and in 306 Constantius died and right away the army hails Constantine now in that part of the world, of Britain and Gaul, France, and Spain, they hail him as the new caesar. So automatic, the army followed Constantine then.

For five years (history records that...) Constantine was content with ruling the region of Gaul, primarily, the region of France.

Then he invaded Italy, making straight for Rome.

Another ceasar comes on the scene at this time, or he was the emperor of Rome. His name was Maxentius. Maybe, if you want to, you can start writing down a few names...if you want to write down, if you want to follow some of the story. Maxentius; M-a-x-e-n-t-i-u-s. At this particular time in 306 and beyond he was the emperor of Rome. Anyway, he came out of the city with his army and met Constantine at the Milvian Bridge. We'll come back to the story, I'm just going to read this as a synopsis to give a bit of an overview. And the story is that....

Constantine swept the enemy into the Tiber River, (and this is just outside Rome a little ways) and Maxentius drowned. Constantine then entered Rome as sole master of the Western half of the empire.

Because there was the eastern half of the Roman Empire and the western half of the Roman Empire. And this particular area here, the western half, then came totally under Constantine at this point in time. And I'm going to come back to these and expand upon these, but...

In 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, which gave the Christians the right to practice their religion openly.

The story is that Diocletian persecuted and killed anyone having anything to do with Christianity. You read some of the tortures of some of the things they did and you don't even want to read it because they were ruthless. Diocletian tried to wipe out anything to do with Christianity. But here Constantine, of a different mindset, perhaps because his mother having some influence there because she declared herself a Christian. But again here, Constantine, to do this at this particular time, was very sweeping in the Roman world, because in 313, for him to do this, to issue what was called the Edict of Milan, he gave Christians, again, the right to practice their religion openly without persecution and gave them a lot of other freedoms we'll come back to later.

By 323 (10 years later) Constantine had brought the entire Roman world under his own rule. At that time a quarrel threatened to split the Christian church into two camps. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, Egypt...

So, you have to understand, the Roman Empire went all the way down into Egypt. There were those who claimed to be of Christianity in that part of the world, Arius was one of them. He basically believed that Jesus Christ had a beginning, which worked out to be true. ☺ But obviously, some of his other ideas and stuff were really off base, they agreed with some of the other teachings of the other parts of the Roman Empire, of so called Christians at that time. In 323, it says here, he was a priest in Alexandria, Egypt and...

...maintained that Christ was not the equal of the Father but was created by Him.

There was another bishop in the West who claimed that the Father and Son, though distinct, were equal, and of the same substance.

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And the story goes on that Constantine was in favor of the latter view. That will come out in the story as we go on here a little bit later. But it's amazing how the Catholic church came into being with some of her primary doctrines and what took place in the period of Constantine and his rule...and candidly, his sway upon the church and what took place in the church.

To settle the matter, Constantine called together an ecumenical, or worldwide, council of bishops at Nicaea, in Asia Minor, in 325.

Awesome! Why didn't we focus upon these things? That is the head; it is the head that was wounded in time but this is where it all began, this is where the Roman Empire and so called Christianity and the influence of it began. It began under Constantine; it's awesome! *Far more powerful* than what Justinian did, or any other leader after that. Constantine set the stage for everything to follow. That's why when it talks about that other beast that rises up... I just want to read it again here because it's awesome when you see the history and you see what is said, when it talks about this other beast that finally rises up, it shows it's power...

Revelation 13:12 - And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, that first head that was wounded - this is the healing of it. ...he exercises all the power of the first beast before him and causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast! Because it's all about the Catholic church and it's about what had a start at a specific moment in time! ...and it happened under the reign of Constantine, and because of his influence and because of the power he gave and of the power he wielded at that time as well and his influence in so-called traditional Christianity.

And so it says here: **...and causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed;** that first beast was wounded, it was the one that was healed later on through Justinian.

So, going back to the story flow.

History reveals that he himself ran the meeting.

In Nicaea, Constantine was over the meeting, he presided over it, and in the story...

An overwhelming majority condemned the Arian view as heresy. The Council drew up the Nicene Creed, which obviously is the basic doctrine of traditional Christianity.

Then the story goes on:

Constantine next moved his seat of government from Rome to the East. For his capital he chose the ancient Greek city of Byzantium on the Bosphorus.

Which was Constantinople; today called Istanbul, in Turkey.

He enlarged and enriched the city at incredible expense. It reveals that in 330 he dedicated it as the New Rome...

...but it 'didn't stick'; instead it took on his name,

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...which became known as Constantinople, "the city of Constantine." The Eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire, with its capital in Constantinople (now Istanbul) survived for a little more than 1,000 years.

Incredible!

The new city also became the capital of Christianity in the East, while Rome dominated the religion in the West.

So again, interesting how they talk about how Constantine.... I'm not going to go into some of this. It mentions that...

He admitted bishops to his council, (speaking of those of Christianity) and his laws concerning the treatment of slaves and prisoners show the influence of Christian teachings.

They couldn't be used as slaves anymore, because even the Jews were using them as slaves. Interesting. I don't want to read some of this history, it gets a little complicated. I want to go back now and break down some of this history because it's good to really drink some of this in and see exactly the influence of how this emerged, why it emerged...because there's a 'type' to this that happens later on that becomes important. There are some things that led up to the establishment of a great church in Europe and there are events later on that led to the dismantling or the stripping away of the power that that church had in the nations of Europe, and it's an awesome thing when you begin to understand what God said about time and gave specific moments of time. Going back here in the story.... I'm just going to read some of this because it all fits together to show how it all came together.

In the early 300's, the emperor of the entire empire was Diocletian who spent most of his time in the east in the modern day region of Croatia (that's where he primarily governed from, in that particular region), and covered the region all the way down into Egypt. (Spent many of times going down into that region as well.) He was a vicious persecutor of anyone known as Christian. He is known for the Diocletianic Persecution (303 – 311), which was the Empire's last, largest, and bloodiest official persecution of anything calling itself Christian.

So, he went all out to totally destroy it; he worked hard at it!

In 308 the Roman senate elected a new emperor to the Western Empire, (and that's when we talked about...) Maxentius as a challenge to Diocletian.

Now, backing up a little and repeating a little of what was stated in the beginning....

In 293 the emperor Diocletian made Constantius caesar, of Gaul and Britain, (and Spain). In 305 Constantine went to join his father, Constantius, who died the following year in 306, and at that time the army in that particular region hailed Constantine as their new caesar. For over five years, Constantine was content with ruling Spain, Gaul, and Britain. Then in 312 he invaded Italy, making straight for Rome went straight for Maxentius who

was the emperor of Rome. Maxentius, in that particular time there came out of the city with his army....

...which was twice as large as Constantine's, and this is where the story of the Milvian Bridge comes into play here, which is quite a story because it's noted for some incredible things that have stuck through history, that are in churches all over the world, symbols of things that started at this particular moment in time. They're all over all kinds of Masonic, knights templar, and all kinds of things that are out there in various kinds of churches as you enter into churches, of these signs that are still there to this day. Here is where it started:

Milvian Bridge: Constantine went to war and began his conquest in the spring of 312 AD. and by the the fall of 312 was approaching to Rome...

And he supposedly - this is recorded by two different historians and there is one historian that added a little bit more; Eusebius added a little bit more to the story. But basically Constantine saw a vision.

Constantine had a "religious vision." According to one historical account, Constantine was visited by a dream the night before the battle at the Milvian Bridge outside Rome, wherein he was advised "to mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of his soldiers...by means (of what is referred to as...) of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent down and around, and he marked (supposedly) Christ on their shields."

It was supposed to be about Christ.

Another notable historian, Eusebius, states that as they were marching toward this battle, (before he had this dream) in midday Constantine "saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, *In Hoc Signo Vinces....*

...which is used to this day... IHS, you see IHS in so many places, it's supposed to be a part of the name of Christ and how His name was as well...But, these are the words that it's all about and it means basically...

...or "with this sign, you will conquer."

And you think of what it developed into through time. It started out basically as a letter 'X' that they used with a letter - what looked like a 'P' sticking out of it. ✠

Later it's... they misconstrued or they changed it to being a cross later, it's that's where He died, on the cross. Some things, the origins of some of these things is really incredible. But again, the IHS has been used extensively by the Catholic church, in the Vatican, by the Knights Templar, masons, and many others.

Eusebius states that Constantine had a dream the following night, in which Christ appeared with the same heavenly sign, and told him to make a standard for his army in that form. His soldiers were to have the symbol of Christ on their shield for protection.

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Though outnumbered about 2 to 1, (but then a very swift defeat here...) Constantine and his army defeated Maxentius and his army of Rome easily. By the spring of 313, Constantine was the undisputed emperor of all the Western Roman Empire.

So again, amazing how little things like this work into history and how they affected the mind of this particular individual, because this is what he claimed, these things that he claimed he saw and he did do these things. He had these things put on the shields of his soldiers and they went into war after war after war and he gave the credit to that to Christ. And so these things were affecting his lifestyle even though he was known as a pagan as well, because he still practiced within the temples and things that they did there, but that slowly began to change through his history, through time.

So, we come up to the history of the Roman Empire in this period leading up to Constantine. I want to back up a little bit just to add a little bit more so you can understand how these things have affected thinking and what was taking place, because it was a slow transition but it was a powerful one, of what happened with Constantine.

From this time, due to all his victories, Constantine fully supported Christianity.

I think it's good to interject here some things going back to the Roman Empire to the time of Diocletian. So again, backing up here a little bit.

Diocletian was the overall Emperor of the Roman Empire, and in 293 AD, he made a 4-part division of the Roman Empire, which is called a Tetrarchy—a division of 4.

That's why there are caesars then put into different areas. He was over all. So though he was known as the emperor over all of the whole Empire, he divided the east and west and he even divided up the west, because in the west, in the farthest west part of the western Empire - again, that's where he put Constantius, Constantine's father of the areas of Spain, France and Britain. And then farther in... I'll just read part of this in what I've got written here.

Though Emperor Diocletian was over the whole Empire (what they called an "Augustus"), he divided the east and west of the empire and made Maximian a co-emperor of the Western part of the empire (raised from a "Caesar" to an "Augustus").

This is the one that was defeated by Constantine. That was Maximian's son. So it gets a little complicated here.

...Diocletian made Maximian a co-emperor of the Western part of the empire.

Constantius was placed farther to the west. These people were generals a lot of times, they were fighters and they loved their armies and wars. And Constantius was known for that. This individual here was a great general and known for his fighting and conquering and so forth as well. And so Diocletian, because of their influence and because of where they were politically, their families, and with Rome, he put them in these different areas. I want to make sure I get all this in here.

At the same time, Diocletian made Constantius "Caesar" of the region of Spain, Gaul, and Britain under Maximian.

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Does that make a lot of sense to you? ☺ It's just a matter of government and over all was Diocletian and then in the western province was Maximian, and under him was Constantius who was farther west. So it was just a matter of order of government and who they answered to.

Moving forward to 305 AD Diocletian ask Maximian to step down and retire, so Maximian, who was in Rome, stepped down, he abdicated at that request and Diocletian made Constantius the new "Augustus of the Western Empire".

But he was still out west, he was still in the area of Gaul. And so this is the story I told you about, when Constantine escaped and went there to meet his father. His father hadn't come back to Rome, he stayed in the west. But by this decree Diocletian has still made Constantius the overall Emperor of all the western Empire, removing, basically, Maximian. So this gave some credibility and a reason why later on that Constantine went ahead and took Rome, because he believed it had been given to his father anyway. So again here, in the story....

It was also at this time that Diocletian was stepping down as Emperor of the Empire. He became the first Roman Emperor to voluntarily abdicate his title.

His health was getting bad right at this period of time; a year later, 306, Constantius died. But Diocletian was becoming ill so he himself stepped down. So he was trying to set up the Empire to be how he wanted it to be after his retirement. He was ill, he wasn't able to do the things he had done before and so he was just going to basically step down. He was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire to ever do something like this, to voluntarily abdicate. But a year later things got really messed up because in 306, then, Constantius died and his son Constantine was declared the caesar by the army. But if you remember, right there just before this Diocletian had asked Maximian to step down from his rule so that Constantius could rule the whole western part.

So Maximian, who had retired to the south of Italy, came back to Rome and declared his title of Augustus again...

...because there was this vacuum and Constantius wasn't coming back and so there were problems in Rome.

...but his son, Maxentius, was gaining in power there, and things weren't going well with that so Maximian came back in 307 and declared himself as Augustus again. In 307 he tried to depose his son because his son...

Families fought against each other; father and son, sons against sons, they would kill each other to gain power and this is what was happening here. His own father tried to depose him because of the things that weren't being done by Maxentius, but he failed. Anyway, it wasn't safe for him so he fled. Maximian had to flee and he went to the court of Constantine in the area of Gaul to get away. I'll just read it as it is here:

...he had to flee, he wasn't able to take back the power of his own son, Maxentius. He had to flee to the court of Constantine, who was Maximian's step-grandson and also his son-in-law.

Anyway... you don't have to know any of these things but it just shows you how messed up some things are sometimes in keeping track of everything. But that's where he went for safety.

As mentioned at the beginning, “in 308 the Roman senate elected Maximian’s son, Maxentius as the new emperor to the Western Empire.

By this time Diocletian was totally out of the picture, things were in chaos in the western part and Maxentius had gained enough power there... his own father tried to take him out of it, but it didn't work. So by 312 Constantine then decided to take over all of the Roman Empire on the western half, and that's where he came up to the Milvian bridge then in 312 AD and the great war that took place there and the putting of the 'X' and so forth on the shield there with the picture of the sun in the midst of all that.

So that was in 312, when Constantine took over Rome, took over the entire western part of the Empire, was definitely the Emperor at that particular time. One year later....

Edict of Milan in 313 AD:

By 313 AD, there was a Caesar in the western region of the Eastern Empire know as Licinius...

Just gets more and more complicated doesn't it? This is the Eastern Empire now, okay, where Diocletian spent most of his time. So you have the western half of the empire and the eastern half of the Empire that went all the way basically from Turkey all the way down to Egypt, but most of them stayed around the area of Croatia and tended to have their headquarters out of there for the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

But Licinius was up in the area of Byzantium, the area of Istanbul. And he came down to meet Constantine in Milan in 312.

He was fully pagan in all his beliefs and he persecuted anyone known as Christian, (Licinius did, he kind of followed up in the way of Diocletian) but not to the degree Diocletian had been doing.

He wasn't nearly as bad. He wasn't nearly as hard on those that called themselves Christian but he didn't like them in the least, he tried to outlaw them at different times. And so he came together to meet Constantine in the area of Milan, Italy.

But in 313, Licinius sought to secure an alliance with Constantine...

...because Constantine was gaining in power, and so what do you do at times like that? You want to make an alliance because you don't want Constantine to come on over and take you too, take the whole Empire. So he came down to Milan and at that particular time there he sought...

...to secure this alliance by the marriage of Licinius and Constantine's half-sister, Constantia.

So, he's going to marry Constantine's half-sister, Constantia to make an alliance. So they come down to Milan and while he's there he acquiesces, if you will in one respect, to this Edict of Milan that Constantine wanted to have, because he wants to get along with Constantine.

It was at this time that Licinius was willing to sign an “edict” with Constantine, known as the **Edict of Milan**...

It just shows you here a process of something... The Roman Empire was totally pagan in their beliefs. That's why Diocletian tried to wipe out anyone calling themselves Christian. And so at this particular time, this movement of what was taking place was very powerful and very strong, what Constantine was doing. So, this Edict of Milan...

...which was to formally end the persecution of all Christians.

That's what it was about.

This edict was to officially grant full tolerance to Christianity and all religions of the Empire. (But it was geared toward Christianity.) The document had special benefits for Christians, legalizing their religion and granting them restoration for all property seized during Diocletian and his time of persecution upon the churches there. The edict stated that Christians should be allowed to follow the faith without oppression. This removed all penalties for professing Christianity, (which under Diocletian was a matter of being killed).

Licinius had to cut short his trip to Milan because a rival caesar in the East was crossing the Bosphorus and invading his territory into the European area. Licinius returned and defeated this Caesar (not going to get into names) and he gained full control of the Eastern Empire by doing this. Within another year however, Constantine and Licinius were now engaging in battles...

...because Licinius didn't uphold the Edict, in giving the full tolerance of freedom to so-called Christianity throughout the eastern part of the Empire. So now, later in 313, the same year the Edict was signed they begin to go to war.

They clashed in battles in 316 and 317, and Licinius began to work against the Edict of Milan and persecute those calling themselves Christian.

And I'll just mention here that there were a lot of Edicts that were signed or that Constantine pushed for.

History records a series of edicts (that first one in 313, the most famous in the beginning, was the Edict of Milan) of 315, 316, 319, 321, and up to 323, when he completed the establishment of Christianity as a *state religion*.

So by 313 he had established Christianity as the state religion.

Christians were appointed to the offices of the State, both military and civil; the Christian clergy was exempted from all municipal burdens and taxation; the emancipation of Christian slaves was facilitated; (again, this is where it's mentioned here that...) Jews were forbidden to keep Christian slaves, etc.

An edict of 321 ordered Sunday to be celebrated by cessation of all work in public.

Isn't that amazing? It was associated with Christianity but this was giving power to this emerging.... He is the one that really that set the stage for what transpired more so...even more so of what transpired in the Catholic church. But he made this Edict, going along with certain Bishops and so forth, but again...

An edict of 321, he ordered Sunday to be celebration by cessation of all work in public. He instructed that Christians and non-Christians should be united in observing the 'venerable day of the sun'.

So, they were still pulling the pagan part of it, calling it 'the venerable day of the sun' but it worked its way into Christianity.

That proclamation of July 3, 321 AD, made Sunday a day of rest throughout the Roman Empire.

Incredible! So going on with some of the story here.

The Roman Empire re-established in 323 under one Emperor, under Constantine, a major change to the entire Empire:

In 323 AD, Constantine began an all out war against Licinius and invaded his territories. Licinius was defeated and Constantine became the Emperor of all the Roman Empire, both East and West.

Licinius was killed the following year in 324 but lost all power in 323.

Also in 323 AD he made a fateful decision to move the capital of the Roman Empire to the Greek town of Byzantium. He then changed its name to Constantinople, now Istanbul, Turkey.

In order to unify the entire empire, Constantine commanded that all the people under his rule had to believe that Jesus Christ was God. At that time Constantine made Christianity the Roman state religion (in 323) and declared himself a Christian. Thus, Constantine (as history says) is perhaps best known for being the first "Christian" Roman emperor.

The first beast; the first head that was wounded, because after him things began to deteriorate, but he was the first, he was the one that set it up and gave it it's boost from the very beginning, and then the Ostrogoths, the Heruli, the different ones that came along, that followed the Roman Empire later on, quite a bit later on. But the point being is this is where it started. He is, he was, the first head.

Starting in 323 and up to 327 he pushed hard to build churches in Europe.

He even set his mother to help officiate, oversee some of it.

His most famous building projects include the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Old Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. His intense interest in building such churches triggered a massive 'church building' fad in large cities all over the Empire.

Because he was pushing it, it became the popular thing and that particular church was gaining tremendous power and influence through the entire Roman world at that time in just a few short years, starting in 323. There was another massive structure that I thought I'd mention too that had a powerful impact.

A massive structure that had a powerful impact on architecture and engineering design was in the work Constantine commissioned which was the main church of Constantinople that is called Hagia Sophia—Church of the Divine Wisdom.

Awesome building that's gone through earthquakes and so forth, had a part of its dome destroyed at one time, but rebuilt, but it changed a lot of things even in architecture and in engineering that was built clear back then. He didn't get to see it finished.

It was finished and dedicated at the end of the reign of his son, Constantius II in 360 AD.

A massive structure that is still there to this day, as are these others. Just like that one, 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre', that's where they say that Christ was killed. That's where different ones...the protestants argue it's outside in another place, a place that looks like a skull. But this church here built within the walls of the old city, this particular church here and that's where the Catholic church to this day...they have these long lines of people constantly going to see this little area supposedly where Christ was killed. Anyway...but who had the influence and who did it? This man here, Constantine. Awesome! He's the one that established it in the Roman Empire and yet we haven't recognized him for who he was and what he did, that he was the first head, he was the first beast of Revelation that's spoken of here, who received a deadly wound and wasn't healed until the time of Justinian indeed.

I want to read a little bit more on some of this because the hallmark and the power of Constantine's influence is what he did just two years later after gaining full control, declaring Christianity as the Roman state religion, in 323 all that he accumulated, he had secured the entire empire at this time. And only two years later had called together this 'Council of Nicaea', and so I just want to read some of this I'd written down here.

Constantine had called several religious councils and made many religious edicts over the years, and by 325 he called the most renowned of all and he summoned the bishops of the east and west to Nicaea.

Incredible! I marvel that until God says it's time to see it, something so clear we hadn't seen it. You'd think something that should be so obvious, someone had such powerful influence - this is the council that did everything, this is the council that established everything that was to follow even beyond and even through the protestant churches later on.

... by 325 he called the most renowned of all and he summoned the bishops of the east and west to Nicaea. At this council the branch of the Christian faith known as Arianism was condemned as a heresy and the only admissible Christian creed of the day (the *Nicene Creed*) was precisely defined.

Because the push was, because of Arianism, the push was from the other bishops to have this concept of the three in one and the one in three. That's where it started. It's because of this and because of this man's influence. Again, you read these verses... I just marvel at some of this when you read some of this and you think about what it says...**and he exercises the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.** The first beast who was wounded...and this is the first! Just mindboggling!

So I just wrote down some things that are recorded in history. It says....

Constantine was quite involved in ecclesiastical politics, so he convened and presided over this first "ecumenical" council—which is the summoning of the entire known leadership of Christendom at that time, as they were called to a council at Nicaea to respond to the teachings of Arius. The reign of Constantine established a precedent for the position of the emperor as having great influence and ultimate regulatory authority within the religious discussions involving the early Christian councils of that time. The Council of *Nicaea* also required the feast of the resurrection to be celebrated on a Sunday and never on the day of the Jewish *Passover*.

You just go back and read some of these things... it's absolutely incredible. Anyway, let's go back and read Revelation 13 again. I hope it stands out, it's so bold and so powerful and so clear, of something that took place. The first beast is not the Roman Empire. The first head is not the Roman Empire that existed from 31 to 476...it is Constantine, and as a date it is 323 that's important. 323, when everything was established as the Empire, as Christianity being the religion of the Empire, all those things that Constantine declared in 323...and everything proceeded from that.

Revelation 13:1 - And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. It was on the first head. This is where the blasphemy began; this is where it started, this first beast, this first head. **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, feet as *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth the mouth of a lion, and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat,** shows who is behind all this, who worked to accomplish all this, **and great authority.**

Verse 3 - And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed, again, so clear, should be so clear now that that one head that was wounded to death was the first head, it was the first beast, if you will, **and all the world wondered after the beast.** You think about how the world has been since that period of time and the influence he had over the Catholic church and the Catholic church that basically got its start at that particular point in time, the Nicene Creed, all the things that happened in 325 that basically established Sunday, that basically established Easter, that basically established the trinity, all the things really that had its establishment at that period of time.

Going to continue on from that point and focus here on a particular verse, verse 5 where it says, **Revelation 13:5 - And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and**

power was given unto him to continue forty-two months. Powerful! Awesome! A certain power that was given in Europe, a certain power that began with this first beast, a certain power that was established in 323 when he declared Christianity as the religion of the state and the blasphemies associated with this, all the things as that church began to grow and became more and more powerful through time. It did have an interruption in time because of what happened to the Roman Empire, when it collapsed, and what was the date it gave there...476 AD, what had continued on, some of the things that had continued on, that church becoming greater and greater and more powerful through that period of time, had its start from Constantine. But it went by the wayside in the sense of having the Empire over it and the Empire didn't come back until the deadly wound was healed in 554 by Justinian.

So again here, it was given to Mr. Armstrong to understand that once Justinian recognized the supremacy of the pope that the deadly wound had been healed and that the restoration of the Roman Empire under the influence of the Roman Catholic church had begun with this first head that had been healed - but we really never addressed who the first head was, in that respect. It's not on the chart, it doesn't say it clearly.

And it was also understood that the forty-two months, or 1260 days prophecy was about 1260 years that the influence of the Catholic church would continue with such influence upon the Roman Empire. So, if you notice on the chart here under "**Revelation 13**" and that big open area down toward the middle, toward the bottom, it says, "554 to 1814 = 1260 Years Beast continued"... 554, that was Justinian, to the end of Napoleon in 1814 was 1260 years that the beast continued. Now, I'm going to make some comments about some of that because once healed the powerful relationship with the Roman Catholic church over the Roman Empire continued from Justinian through the reign and finally, again, to the fall of Napoleon in 1814.

But the period between Justinian and Napoleon is only a 'type' to what is even more important concerning this particular prophecy. This shows a time when there was a healing, if you will, of something that had taken place, but also a time that this power would continue in Europe, to have influence over the leaders of Europe. And after that it didn't have it. By the time you get to Garibaldi, as it shows here, or down to Hitler, or to Mussolini and them, the Catholic church didn't have the same power anymore, it didn't have the same strength anymore. Something happened! Obviously here there were certain things...that's why it's noted here, that the fact of the certain ones here, where it says "Napoleon's Kingdom (French head), crowned by the Pope, 1805" In other words, there was this recognition of the church very much so over the Roman Empire, having more influence, having say in the government and what the government would do and powerful say in the state and how the state was run. The Catholic church wielded great power for indeed, 1260 years from Justinian all the way through the time of Napoleon, but it's also here about a 'type' of something here in this prophecy in Revelation 13. It's about the firm establishment of the Roman church once Constantine became sole Emperor of the Roman Empire in 323 AD, and this process whereby the Roman Empire was married to the Roman Church that had its beginning in 323 AD - also had its influence over Europe, again, diminish in a similar manner that it began when it was established.

So if you look at this period of time that something was established, speaking of the power of the church that was established in 323 by Constantine, when he declared it as being over the Roman Empire, it talks about a period of time that was going to continue on, and it says, **and it was given power for him to continue forty-two months;** and candidly we're going to go into some history here - I don't know how much time I have left today here but I didn't want to get started too far into it - but even as there was a

great European ruler who gave the Roman church its influence and power throughout Europe, it was another great ruler in Europe who was the primary force to, in essence, begin changing or reversing the control of the power of the Roman Catholic church over Europe...and it's Queen Elizabeth I. *Awesome!*

Because you see something where great power was given in Europe over rulers and how they wielded power throughout time, but there was a time when a shift took place, and the shift took place in the time of Queen Elizabeth 1, which again becomes important as far as prophetic events is concerned because it has to do with the rise of Protestantism in Europe, it has to do with the rise of power that began to stand up against the Catholic church, where the Catholic church began to lose its power over some of the rulers of Europe, and basically it happened in England, it happened through there for a period of time.

I don't know how much to go into here before I have to quit here. I'll set the stage for some of this right now just to go into a part of this. But it's interesting, we're going to go back through here and look at the rise of Protestantism because there is something that took place through time here that's continued on that gave, that shifted, if you will, something that was taking place as far as the Catholic church wielding its power, but through time changed where the daughters spoken of in Revelation begin to come on the scene and individuals or groups began to stand up against the Catholic church. And so we're going to go back through just a little bit of history here of how some of this came on the scene, because in similar manner as to how the Catholic church came on the scene and gained power, because of Constantine, in similar manner it began to decline in time as well and lose its power over leaders throughout all of Europe. Because through time they had a lot of control over and over again throughout Europe and it continued on for a space of time until that power began to be diminished.

But anyway, I'm going to go back all the way through history here about Protestantism just as a matter of a story flow here of some things that took place starting in the 1300's and the 1400's, because groups began to spring up in regions of Europe as they began to stand up against some of the teachings of the Catholic church, and there was a tremendous struggle that went on for a long time here, but it basically began in the mid to late 1300's and early 1400's when some of these things really began to take shape...but met a lot of obstacles, obviously, because of the Catholic church.

The first one that's well known is Wycliffe. You've heard of the Wycliffe Bible? I don't recommend it but the Wycliffe Bible was written by this individual up to the period of about 1384. I'm going to read just a little bit of history here. This particular movement, different ones rising up at different times and beginning to stand up against some of the teachings of the Catholic church had its strongest movement, candidly, in England. That's where it got its foothold, and John Wycliffe was in England. He was a lay preacher, a translator and a university teacher in Oxford, and his followers were known as 'Lollards', if you've ever heard that term used. The 'Lollard Movement' was a precursor to the Protestant Reformation, and so it really had its roots here in England and basically started in large part with some of the work of this particular individual. He was one of the earliest opponents to papal authority influencing the secular power, if you will, in other words a separation of church and state, which is important because this is what had to take place in Europe in time, a separation of church and state, so much so that it came into our history, didn't it? It came from there. That's where some of these things took place, they started in England and they started by various teachers at that particular time.

Wycliffe was an early advocate of translations of the Bible to a common language, in other words, for them into English, because to that point in time what did the Catholic church have? Latin. The Latin

Vulgate. Through time, through a *long* period of time in its history, and it continued on and on and so the priests had power because of the Latin and nobody understood Latin and so basically they told you, "Don't worry about what the Bible says." And people didn't have Bibles back then so everything was done by what the priests taught and everything came out of the Vulgate, if you will, and then spoken by Latin in what they wanted to teach. So there wasn't, until somebody came along and started to study some things and begin to say, "Hey, this isn't what it says!" And Wycliffe was one of the first ones to begin to do this and so he completed his translation directly from the Vulgate into the vernacular English in the year of 1382, again, now known as the Wycliffe Bible and he died two years later.

Now, in history, going on some more. I'm going to go as far in this as I can in this time I have here today because that way I can finish next Sabbath. Next to come on the scene up to about the period of 1415 was an individual by the name of Jan Hus [Jon Hus or John Huss]. He was a Czech priest in the region of Moravia and Bohemia. He was a philosopher, reformer, and a professor at the University of Prague. He was influenced by what Wycliffe had done and he is known in history as anticipating a reformation, a protestant reformation, if you will, a reformation denouncing some of the doctrines and the abuses of the Catholic church, and so he proceeded on, being stirred if you will, by what Wycliffe had done.

So, the Catholic church and a conclave during the Council of Constance that began in 1414 condemned this Jan Hus and he was excommunicated by burning him at the stake in 1415. So a lot of things happened that the Catholic church is well known for through time, that a lot of persecutions took place through time. Anyone that tried to stand up against the Catholic church, if it was viewed as heresy most of them were burned; that's how they did it. A lot of them were tortured in other ways but he was burned at the stake.

Wycliffe had already died back in 1384 but this same conclave concluded that Wycliffe should be posthumously burned as a heretic. So even though he'd been dead for a long time they decided that he should be burned. Anyway, then after what happened, because of this then, what happened to Jan Hus, because he was killed like this, it precipitated what's known as the Hussite wars in Bohemia and Moravia that followed that period of time. So a lot of wars began to pop up in different areas because of religious beliefs and so forth.

The next individual most people are familiar with, Martin Luther, and there is a big span of time, a fairly good span of time, if you will, from 1415 up to 1546 when Luther lived, in that period of time. But in the early 1500's here it was, again, almost a century before protestants again pushed forward against the Catholic church in a strong way, and it was done through Martin Luther, a well known German who posted what's known as 'The Ninety-Five Theses' on a castle door (I think it was) in 1517.

Following him was a fellow by the name of Huldrych Zwingli (Ulrich Zwingli), Swiss. He was the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, but this was right in the same period of time with Martin Luther, and he (Huldrych Zwingli) was the leader of the reformation in Switzerland. He was a reformer, literally in the region of the area of Zurich, and things got so stirred up in that particular region that there was what was known as the five states of Switzerland that went to war against the region of Zurich. Zwingli and a whole bunch of other priests fought in that war and he was killed in 1531.

So any uprisings in Europe like that, they generally met with war, if it gained a popular backing, because the Catholic church wielded the power, the Catholic church sent armies, the Catholic church had tremendous sway over several of the rulers at different times throughout all of Europe, and if anyone

tried to stand up against them they would generally try to kill them by whatever means they could or send in armies to defeat them.

Then we come up to Jean Calvin (John Calvin). Again, all these names known in Protestantism as a whole. He was an influential French theologian. So you see the different areas here, Switzerland, France, Germany, there were things happening in The Netherlands, all over Europe, and the Czechoslovakian region. John Calvin was an influential French theologian and pastor. He broke from the Catholic church in 1530. All three of these basically very similar in timing - Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. He had a lot of persecution in that particular area, he had to flee to Switzerland for a time, he had to flee again from Basel, Switzerland over to Strasberg. So he had to do a lot of running around to keep from being put to death for what he was doing. Calvinism came out of that, different churches came out of these individuals, as it did from Martin Luther, speaking of the Lutheran church.

So just a little bit of history showing some of the things that were happening in Europe, that people were starting to stand up against the Catholic church, it was starting to affect government as time went along, and again, the hallmark of all this was something that took place in England.

We're going to stop there. I don't want to go any farther because we're going into Queen Elizabeth I, because she is....well, actually King Henry VIII, (you know the song... ☺). King Henry VIII is the one who really stood up in a very powerful way against the Catholic church, but things were not cemented under him, they were later on under Queen Elizabeth I.

Awesome history, but it's all pertinent to the times we live in. I was talking to Laura here the other day, because some of the things that happened under Queen Elizabeth I, I think, "What an awesome thing - started under Queen Elizabeth I and 430 years will pass before it's over with under Queen Elizabeth II." Awesome! So might as well throw that out front so people can go out punching calculators; because the point being there is 1260 years, there's another 430 years, and it takes us up to 2013 and that's what God is showing us in the Church. There are some things we don't fully know about the period of 1583, but Queen Elizabeth I being instrumental in some things that took place in her life through that period of time. But God hasn't given that because we don't really even have it in history, but God will give it in time.

There are a lot of things that have happened on Pentecost to God's Church that haven't necessarily been recorded as a matter of history. We understand the Church began on Pentecost in 31 AD, we understand that Jesus Christ returns on Pentecost of 2013. God moved us to see, to know that we began as a Church, and what God recognized as the remnant, that began and were firmly established in 1998 on Pentecost. Awesome how things have revolved around Pentecost and we haven't even known it.

Anyway, we'll stop there today and continue on next Sabbath, but an incredible story of something to me, that as I go through some of this I find inspiring and encouraging because God is showing that He does things in a timely fashion, in a timely manner, things that are here that sometimes we don't recognize and we don't see - just like with Constantine being the first head, the first beast. I hope it's abundantly clear to you how powerful that is, the head that was wounded, the first beast that had a deadly wound and healed later on through Justinian.

Awesome stories here but they're important, and also the process of how God's leading the world out of Egypt as well...and all coinciding with what God is doing with the Church as well. Anyway, to me an awesome, beautiful picture that God is giving us toward the very end here.

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