

DISCOVERIES

By Mark Finley

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When Paganism and Christianity Shake Hands

A fascinating story from Greek mythology warns against deception dressed in religious clothes. The Greeks, unable to defeat the Trojans, resorted to deception. They built a huge wooden horse and delivered it to the gates of Troy, declaring it was an offering to the goddess Athena. But armed Greek soldiers were hiding inside the horse. The Greeks left it outside the walls of Troy and sailed away.

The Trojans were happy to accept it as a token of divine favor, embracing it as a symbol of victory from the gods. But that night, once the horse was inside the city, scores of Greek soldiers jumped out of a secret door. These warriors opened the gates to other Greeks who had returned. The city was set afire. The Trojans had accepted falsehood and were defeated through deception. An offering to the gods, a religious symbol which they at first rejoiced over, was actually part of the enemy's deceitful plan.

Could it be that there's a Trojan horse in the midst of the Christian Church? Could millions be deceived and not know it? Maybe we've accepted a so-called "offering to God" which is actually falsehood under a religious guise. Let me speak plainly: Satan's greatest deceptions are religious ones. Satan disguises error as truth. He's a cunning foe who'll do anything to mislead us—including the substitution of a COUNTERFEIT religious day of worship in place of the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments! Satan's master deception, his Trojan horse under the guise of religion, is a counterfeit day of worship.

Incredibly enough, the Bible predicted it. God foresaw that a rival power would *dare* to attempt to change His holy law! The Devil knows that if he can initiate the change of the TEN COMMANDMENTS—written with God's own finger on tables of stone—he can open the floodgates for every other species of falsehood to flow into the Christian Church. Let's see how it happened . . .

Daniel's Amazing Dream: In Lesson 3 we learned about King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image, recorded in chapter two of Daniel's book. Now we'll look at chapter seven, where Daniel himself had a dream and saw four "beasts" rise up out of the sea. These divinely-inspired dreams are full of vital meaning for us today. Daniel chapter seven is like an INSTANT REPLAY of Daniel chapter two, only better, because it adds more details and looks at things from a different perspective. Daniel's dream starts in the days of Babylon but takes us through the days of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—the four world empires. It takes us through Christianity's early days and shows how, after the death of Christ and His disciples in the early centuries, *a power would arise that would attempt to change the Sabbath.*

Read **Daniel 7:1-8** and consult the illustration on page 3, below. Note that the fourth beast was indescribable—not like a **lion**, a **bear**, a **leopard**, or *anything* Daniel had ever seen before! The fourth was a dreadful, powerful beast with iron teeth and ten horns. Then among those ten horns, Daniel saw *another* horn come up. This "Little Horn" became a great power. Daniel 7:8 says, "In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a *man*, and a *mouth speaking great things*"—verse 20 says, "*very great things.*" And this Little Horn tried to change the commandments and the very Law of God.

Unlocking The Symbols: Some think interpreting prophecy is anybody's guess. But **2 Peter 1:21**, RSV says, "No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation." That means I shouldn't depend on what I personally think the prophecy means—I shouldn't give my own private interpretation, because the Word of God explains itself, if we let it. God tells us plainly in **Daniel 7:17** and **23** that "These great beasts, which were four, are four kings, which shall arise. . . . The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth." So these beasts are not four individual kings but rather four successive kingdoms or world empires. In fact, The Living Bible says the fourth beast "is the fourth WORLD EMPIRE that will rule the earth." Even today we use beasts or animals as symbols. We say the *elephant* symbolizes the Republican Party, and the *donkey* the Democrats. We use the Russian *bear* as a symbol of that country, the regal *lion* for England, the *eagle* for the United States. Just as we use animals as symbols for nations, so does God.

Which kingdoms or nations do the beasts in Daniel's dream represent? Chapters 2 and 7 of Daniel contain remarkable parallels. For instance, the last part of the image had ten toes, and the last beast had ten horns. The four metals and the four beasts symbolize the same four world empires. The fourth beast is the Roman Empire which fell in A.D. 476 and was divided into the nations of modern Europe represented by the ten horns. This point in history was after the death of Christ, after the days of the apostolic church. In those days when Rome was being divided, something would happen. In **Daniel 7:8** the prophet looked at those ten horns, at the ten divisions of Rome, and saw coming up *among them* a Little Horn which had "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

The Mysterious Little Horn: Where would this power arise? Not in Asia, Africa, or South America, but "among" the ten horns, which means out of the Roman Empire, out of Rome. WHEN would this power arise? **Daniel 7:24** tells us "after" Rome's fall and subsequent breakup in A.D. 476. This horn had "eyes like the eyes of a man." **1 Samuel 9:9** says a prophet was called "a seer" because because he sees with God's wisdom and foresight. But this Little Horn power has not the eyes of God, but the eyes of a man. This power is based not on God's divine wisdom but on merely human wisdom.

Something about the Little Horn made it *fundamentally different* from the first ten horns. **Daniel 7:24** says the Little Horn power would be "diverse" or (RSV) "different from the former ones," the former ten. The first ten divisions of the Roman Empire became the modern nations of Western Europe and are all *political* in nature. This "Little Horn" would be different or "diverse" in that it proved to be a religious power (or at least a hybrid, being part religious and part political—a religio-political entity).

Daniel 7:8, 11 & 30 emphasize that this "Little Horn" had "a mouth speaking great things . . . VERY great things." Modern translations say, "great boasts," "pompous words," *etc.* Finally, **Daniel 7:25** divulges that "He [the Little Horn power] shall speak great words against the most High." Clearly, then, God is telling us that this power—this religious power which was "different" from all the political powers of Europe, this power that arose in Rome after the breakup of the Roman Empire—would make great claims, great decrees. It would speak pompously, boastfully, even claiming infallible power to change God's Law and the day of worship!

We know the Roman Catholic Church is responsible for this predicted change for two reasons: (1) It's the only institution that COULD have done it, and (2) it ADMITS doing it! A catechism is a set of questions-and-answers used as an official training manual to instruct new church members. On page 50 in *The Convert's Catechism* we read: "QUESTION: Which is the Sabbath day? ANSWER: Saturday is the Sabbath day. Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." Again and again, in many official sources, the church brazenly *admits* changing the day!







Tradition Doesn't Count

Popular thinking says that tradition—if old and long-standing—should be honored. If that were so, then prostitution, as “the world’s *oldest* profession,” deserves great respect from all of us! But how OLD a practice is has no bearing at all on how VALID it is. *Antiquity of error* proves only that we’ve been going wrong for a long time! Besides, if a tradition’s long-standing practice is what should impress us, then it’s no contest—the seventh-day Sabbath of the Lord, going all the way back to Creation, wins hands down!

Jesus voiced Heaven’s view of man-made tradition in **Matthew 15:3, 6, & 9** and says quite plainly it is worshiping Him “in vain.”

A Question of Authority

People ask me, “Mark, what difference does a day make?” The whole issue is not a matter of *days* but a choice of *masters*. We’re not talking about mere days. We’re talking about masters and allegiance to, loyalty to, the master of our choice. In the final analysis, who is our Master? Jesus—or church leaders? Days, as such, may not be important, but the Bible is. Will we follow the traditions of misguided men or the Word of God? The choice is yours. The Apostle Peter boldly declared: “We ought to obey GOD rather than men.” **Acts 5:29**.

COMPARISON OF DANIEL'S SYMBOLIC VISIONS		
Daniel 7	Kingdom	Daniel 2
 LION	BABYLON	GOLD
 BEAR	MEDO-PERSIA	SILVER
 LEOPARD	GREECE	BRASS
 FIERCE BEAST	ROME	IRON
 LITTLE HORN	DIVIDED KINGDOMS	IRON & CLAY
 JUDGMENT	CHRIST'S KINGDOM	STONE

Examining Daniel 7:25: When God predicts the Little Horn power shall “think to change times and laws,” it must pertain to DIVINE laws—the Revised Standard Version says “the law”—of God. Man’s laws, like traffic or tax laws, change so often it’s hardly worthy of notice and wouldn’t be mentioned in the Bible. And the only one of God’s Ten Commandments having to do with time is the Fourth Commandment regarding the Sabbath. But why does the prophecy say the Little Horn would “think” to change the law? Can any earthly power *really* change that Law written with God’s own finger? No, but the Little Horn would dare to “think” to change God’s Law! That venerable English version of the Bible for Roman Catholic believers, The Douay Bible, translates **Daniel 7:25** as follows: “And he shall THINK HIMSELF ABLE to change times and laws.”

From Genesis to Revelation: The very first cardinal appointed by the Roman Catholic Church in the United States was Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. Cardinal Gibbons was always one of my heroes as I grew up in the church. He was a brilliant scholar. His book, *The Faith of Our Fathers*, sold millions of copies in America. This is what he said on page 89 of that book: “You may read the BIBLE from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a SINGLE LINE authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The SCRIPTURES enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day we [Catholics] never sanctify.”

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#12 - When Paganism and Christianity Shake Hands

1. Any claim that **God** changed His Law of Ten Commandments flies in the face of His promise that He would not “_____ the thing that is gone out of My _____.”

To check your answer, see Psalm 89:34 and Exodus 20:1-17—especially verse 1.

2. Any notion that Jesus changed the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment is contradicted by His plain words that “Till _____ and _____ pass, one *jot* or one *tittle* shall in NO wise pass from the Law.”

To check your answer, see Matthew 5:17-19.

3. T God *predicted* centuries in advance that a certain power would ATTEMPT to change His Law. F

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25.

4. Since no mere mortal could actually change divine laws, inspired Scripture says the Little Horn power would “_____ to change times and laws” of God, meaning it would *intend* to change them and *attempt* to change them.

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25.

6. T The Fourth Commandment, dealing with the seventh-day Sabbath, is the *only* part of God’s F Law that deals with the element of TIME, thus fitting the prediction of an illegitimate change of “*times* and laws.” To check your answer, see Daniel 7:25 and Exodus 20:1-17.

7. As Daniel considered the Fourth Beast’s **ten horns**, “there came up _____ them another little horn,” which means that the Little Horn power would arise among those ten divisions—thus *not* in Africa, Asia, Australia, or North or South America, but somewhere in Rome!

To check your answer, see Daniel 7:8.

8. T Jesus made plain that man-made TRADITIONS don’t count—especially those that CONFLICT F with God’s Commandments. To check your answer, see Matthew 15:3, 6, 9.

A Thought for Today

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.