

## The Number of the Beast

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the Church set up, within the Roman Empire, an ecclesiastical state government which, in its constitution and its administrative system, was shaping itself upon the imperial model." This church government, then, according to this historical authority, is in fact a model, a counterpart, an image of the Beast which is the Roman Empire government.

The Britannica calls it an Ecclesiastical world empire! This image - man-designed and man-ruled church government -compelled people to worship the church! And since the church was organized into a worldly government, this was worship of the image - false worship - idolatry!

But this church became a mother, and daughter churches came out of her, in "protest," calling themselves "Protestant." And all have worldly, political Church government. "Upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots" (Rev. 17:5). Her daughters are called "harlots." Together, they are called "Babylon." They are pagan, teaching pagan doctrines and customs, cloaked in the Name of Christianity! And all nations are deceived!

Yes, human-organized Christianity, not Bible designed spiritual organism government, is the Image of the Beast. It is the pagan political counterfeit of God's government. "Come out of her," (Rev. 18:4). God help us to take this seriously!

LET GOD EXPLAIN....

# The Mark

A N D

# 666

Herbert Armstrong

Two titles are combined 'The Mark of the Beast' and 'What is 666?'

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God Almighty.” And they are gathered, finally, at Armageddon! Yet future, the Roman ruler, as the Roman Empire is again restored, along with a great religious leader - and all in the power and influence of Satan! Working miracles! All prophecies concerning them show these powers doing the same things!

Now notice the last battle of “the great day of God Almighty.” It is in Rev. 19:19-20. Here is pictured the beast - “and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which He deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that had worshipped His image.”

Compare with the two-homed beast of Rev. 13:11-17.

1. Both perform miracles.
2. Both perform them before, or in the sight of, the beast.
3. With them, both the false prophet and two-horned beast deceive them that have the Mark of the beast - cause them to receive that mark (Rev. 13:16).

Chapter 7

**The Image of the Beast**

Now this great church, which is a twofold government, deceived the people by saying they should make an image of the Beast. Note it (Rev. 13:14) - that is how this church deceived people.

What is an image? The dictionary says a “likeness,” a “copy, representation, model, semblance, counterpart.” So here is a great church saying, “Let us make a model, or counterpart, of the civil Roman Government” - for that is what the Beast is - a Pagan Government.

Jesus Christ proclaimed the Kingdom, or government of God - government by will of God and by God’s law - not paganized human government by will of man and man-made laws. His Church includes all who have and are led by God’s Spirit. Christ is its only head, and His Kingdom is not of this world!

Where, then did human church government derive its present form? “The first pope, in the real sense of the word, was Leo I (440-461 A.D.),” says the Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. 7, page 629. To him the form of government of the Roman Empire was the most marvelous thing on earth. It became an obsession. He applied its principles to the church, organized the church into a government, forming the papacy.

This church government or organization is the image of the Beast!

Says Myers’ Ancient History: “During the reign of Leo I,

## All Nations Deceived

Where else, in the Bible prophecies, do we find these same identical facts? First, note Rev. 17. Here is pictured a woman. In II Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:22-27, and elsewhere, we learn that "woman" is a symbol for church. This woman is a fallen woman - an apostate church - and a great one, called "the great whore," pictured as ruling over many nations, verses 1, 15.

In verse 3, this great false church is pictured sitting on a beast "having seven heads and ten horns." A woman riding a horse guides, controls, the horse. It does her bidding. It is well known by all who understand Bible prophecy that this 17th chapter of Revelation pictures the Roman Catholic Church ruling over the so-called Holy Roman Empire.

Notice, verse 18, she is "that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." Notice, verse 2, the inhabitants of the earth have been deceived by this great false church. Also Rev. 18:3, she has deceived all nations.

Next, notice II Thes. 2:3-4. The day of Christ - and the coming of Christ - shall not come, until there be a falling away, and a "man of sin" be revealed. He exalts himself above all that is called God. As God, he sits in a temple claimed to be the temple of God, showing himself to deceive people into accepting him AS God.

God is our Holy Father. This man, then, would claim the same title. This wicked man is to be destroyed at, and by, Christ's coming (verse 8). Notice verses 9-10: "even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs -miracles- and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness..."

Here is the head of a vast ecclesiastical empire, performing miracles and lying wonders, with which he deceives people everywhere.

### At Armageddon

This deceiving religious ruler will still be active clear down to Armageddon and the Second Coming of Christ! In Rev. 16:13-16 are described three unclean spirits. They come from the dragon which is Satan; from the beast, which is the civil Roman ruler; from the mouth of the false prophet associated with the Roman ruler.

"For," continues verse 14, "they are the spirits of demons, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of

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*There are many references to this subject in the Bible. Instead of looking at one passage only, let us see what God says this MARK really is.*

*It is unmistakably, clearly revealed and explained in the Bible! But to find God's answer, we must have before us all of the scriptures referring to this subject.*

*First, from the text universally quoted (Rev. 13:16-17), notice: the "mark" is something that will be very popular - something the majority of people will be in favor of which custom will approve as right because no man will be allowed to "buy or sell," unless he receives this "mark."*

*In this scriptural usage the expression "buy or sell" more literally indicates being able to buy - to earn a wage or salary, or to engage himself in business.*

## Whose Mark?

The "mark" is the mark of the Beast - and the "beast" is the Roman Empire. In Revelation 17 a later stage of this same wild beast is pictured, and there a "woman" - a great Church - sits astride it, guides it, rules over it. But the Mark is the mark of the Roman Empire - not the Roman Catholic Church.

That is fact number one. Keep that in mind. Now in verse 11 (Rev. 13) another "beast" is pictured. This beast had two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon.

The Bible plainly reveals this second "beast" to be the Roman Catholic Church. This Church is an ecclesiastical world Empire - a government. (See article "Papacy," Encyclopedia Britannica.)

This second beast of Revelation 13 is also pictured in Revelation 17 as the harlot woman who rode the beast. This fallen woman or Church is different from all other churches in one respect. She is organized at the Vatican as a civil Government, as well as an ecclesiastical church. Nations of the world send Ambassadors to the Vatican, at Rome, the same as they do the capitals of other nations.

This Church, just as the woman riding an animal guides and directs the animal - like, for example, a woman riding a horse - took over, exercised, wielded, all the power of the first beast - the Roman Empire. After 554 A.D., the Church did do this for 1260 years, as prophesied!

Notice, further, verses 15-16: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should

both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causes all, ... to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (Rev. 13:15-16).

Notice carefully what the above text tells us: 1. "He," - the Catholic Church that formed the Papacy and originated human civil government modeled after that of the Roman Empire. 2. "Causes" all to receive this mark. It is the Church, not the civil government, which forces this brand on people.

3. The same power which caused the martyrdom of saints.
4. It brands on the people the mark of the "beast" - that is, the mark of the Roman Empire, not the mark of the Church.
5. This mark is received in the right hand, and the forehead.

So the Mark is that of the Roman Empire, which the Roman church did cause and shall cause the western world to receive.

### **A Mark of Obedience**

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

In verses 9-11 of this chapter, those who have the mark are those who refuse to keep the Commandments of God. The Mark of the beast involves a rejection of the commandments of God, or of one of them, for if we break one we are guilty of all (James 2:10).

One class of people accepts the Mark of the beast. The other class keeps the Commandments of God.

Revelation 15:2-3: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name...."

### **Class on Whom Plagues Fall**

In Ephesians 5 Paul is telling Christians to flee fornication, covetousness, idolatry transgressing the ten commandments. Then he says: "for because of these things,"-transgressing God's Law- "comes the Wrath Of God -last plagues- upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

Chapter 2

## **The Truth Becomes Plain**

1. The "mark" plainly means the rejecting and breaking of God's Commandments. And in James 2:10-11, God says if we break only one of the Commandments, we are guilty of breaking the law - guilty of all!

and, later, the Holy Roman Empire.

### **Did a Church Government Rule Rome?**

So here we have pictured a government - a Religious government - appearing as Christ's government, masquerading as the Kingdom Of God, actually ruling the civil Roman Empire, after A.D. 554. Was there such a government? Indeed there was!

Prior to 554, Justinian had written a letter to the pope, acknowledging his supremacy in the West. And when he restored the empire in the West in 554, the popes dominated the Western Empire from Rome. The Roman Empire restored, continued until 1814 (1260 years), became known later as "The Holy Roman Empire." We read in history that the popes were accepted as the "Vicars of Christ," which means "In place of Christ." The teaching was that the Second Coming of Christ had occurred - Christ had returned to earth, as King of kings and as Lord of lords, in the person of the popes. The millennium had begun.

For the entire 1260 years, the emperors accepted the popes as such, ruling the nations with a "rod of iron" as Christ is to do when He really comes. Consequently they acknowledged the supreme religious power of the popes. The Church was organized as a Government - as a dual, two-fold government (symbolized by its two horns or kingdoms - for "horns" symbolize kingdoms also - see Dan. 7:24). It embodied Church government, and it also was a state, or civil government, always occupying a certain amount of territory over which it, alone, ruled as an independent sovereign state - in addition to actually ruling over the vast civil kingdom called the Holy Roman Empire. Even today, it is a separate, independent, sovereign state. Most nations send ambassadors to the Vatican, just as they do to the United States, or to Italy, Britain or Russia.

Notice, this second beast was to wield power over all the earth, because it was to cause the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship this first beast "whose deadly wound was healed" after 554 A.D.

In most any encyclopedia, under article "Millennium," you will read the history of this very event - of how the "Holy Roman Empire" was called the "Kingdom of God upon earth." They claimed the Millennium had arrived!

Notice verse 14: "And deceive them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Verse 13 says "he does great wonders."

Notice these three points:

1. This "beast" performs miracles.
2. He performed them "in the sight of" the Holy Roman Empire, or the first beast.
3. With them he deceived all nations.

always false!

Notice, after John saw one Beast, which we have proved to be the Roman Empire, he now sees another - a different - beast rise up. We have learned that "Beast" is a symbol for a kingdom, or government (Dan. 7:17, 23), and the term represents either the kingdom or its leader, as the case may be (Dan. 7:17, 23).

So this other beast with the two horns is the prophecy of another kingdom or government. In these prophecies, God pictures to us the earthly Gentile governments as the wild beasts whose characteristics describe them. This two-horned beast appeared as a Lamb. But actually it spoke as a dragon - its true characteristic - for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoken" (Matt. 12:34).

What does the word "Lamb" symbolize, in the Bible? The answer is, Christ (John 1:29; Rev. 17:14). And "dragon" is a symbol of Satan (Rev. 12:9, 20:2).

So here is some kingdom or government masquerading as that of Christ, or the Kingdom Of God, but actually being a government of Satan!

Christ did not set up a government (kingdom), at His first appearing on earth. After His resurrection the disciples asked Him if He would at that time restore the Kingdom (Acts 1:6); but He did not. The Church is not the Kingdom. Because some thought it was, Jesus spoke the parable of Luke 19:11-27 to show that He first must ascend to His Father's throne in heaven to receive the royal power to become King of kings, to set up the world-ruling Kingdom of God. But Satan is a deceiver, and he has deceived the world into supposing his church, and system of churches, is the Kingdom of God.

Now notice carefully Revelation 13:12: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." The first beast is the Roman Empire. Here is another government, also controlled by Satan, pretending to be Christ's government, the Kingdom of God, taking, exercising, using, employing, ALL the power of the first kingdom, the Roman Empire.

Now when? "He exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (verse 12). So, it was after the deadly wound (of A.D. 476) was healed. It was healed when Justinian brought about the restoration of the Empire in the West in A.D. 554. Consequently this religious government took over, exercised, by ruling, all the power of the Roman Empire after A.D. 554 when it was called the Holy Empire

2. The Roman Empire is the real author of this "mark." It is the mark of the beast, not the woman who rode the beast.

3. The Church caused people to be deceived into receiving this mark.

4. Satan gave this Roman Empire its seat and great authority - it is the political instrument through which Satan works, in deceiving the world.

5. Those who refuse this "mark" are prohibited from "buying or selling, "engaging in commerce, trade, or holding a job.

6. Many of those refusing this "mark" were, and shall again be, martyred because of their refusal - because they keep the Commandments of God!

7. Therefore, the inevitable and plain conclusion is that the "mark" is something enforced by the Church, originating in the paganism of the Roman Empire, which a cunning, deceiving adversary would seize on as a means of cleverly deceiving people into breaking God's Ten Commandments.

Satan is clever - cunning - a deceiver. He palms off counterfeits, which look like the genuine! Naturally he would select the one Commandment of God which he can counterfeit with a substitute - one in which by human reason alone no man could see where it would make any difference! He would select the one which would seem of least importance to the carnal human mind!

He would not try to deceive men on idolatry, profanity, or on stealing, lying, murder, adultery - though he has led people into all of these. But what Commandment could it be - what Commandment affecting a man's job, or his business?

There is only one possible Commandment - the one regarded by the largest number as the "least" of the Commandments - and that is the fourth Commandment, which says: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy ... The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Eternal your God."

No carnal mind can see, without the special spiritual revelation of God through His Word, where it makes any difference which day man observes.

Where did Sunday originate? Not with the Roman Catholic Church, but with the pagan religion of the Roman Empire! It is the day on which the ancient pagans assembled at sunrise, faced the east, (as they do Easter Sunday morning today) and worshipped the rising sun. It was Constantine, Emperor of the Roman Empire, not a pope, who made Sunday the official so-called "Christian day of rest." But it was enforced - people were caused to accept it universally - by the church!

## Why Saints Were Martyred

It was for obeying God's fourth Commandment - keeping the Sabbath - that millions were put to death. The local Council of Laodicea, in 363 A.D., passed this decree: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, resting rather on Sunday. But, if any be found to be Judaizing, let them be declared anathema from Christ."

The church caused them to be killed. When the church branded one "anathema" (a heretic), the state police of the Empire began torturing him. Unless he recanted, he was tortured until he died!

Laws became so strict no man could hold a job, or engage in business, unless he worked on Saturday and rested on Sunday. And the world will be so geared that it will be almost impossible for one to "buy or sell" except he receive this Mark Of The Beast!

This is the only commandment which was altered by the Roman Empire! In Daniel 7:25 we read the prophecy of this "Beast" and the little horn (papacy) rising up, which was to think to change "times and laws." That is, change God's law in respect to time, the time for the Sabbath!

## What Is a Mark, Anyway?

Now the "beast," in association with the Church, used force to brand the western world with their Mark. Those who obeyed God and kept His Sabbath were martyred. They were unable to "buy or sell." But God does not force anyone. God lets us make our own decision about obeying Him.

But is the Sabbath God's sign that we are belonging to Him?

Chapter 3

## God's Sign

Yes! It is found in Exodus 31:12-17: "And the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying, My Sabbaths you shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations." These generations of Israel - see "United States and Britain in Prophecy," are still going on! Now why is it a sign? Does it identify God to us? Does it identify us as His? "... that you may know that I am the Eternal that does sanctify you."

Get the powerful meaning of those words! It is a sign, that we may know that the Eternal is the true God. It identifies who God

The denomination which teaches this sent Prof. C. T. Everson to Rome, where he gained access to, and made diligent search in the Vatican archives, but he could find no crown or record of such a crown containing these words.

Furthermore, these words are in the Latin, not a Bible language. This is not a name, but a title, and it is the name of the Beast, and the number of the name of the man of the Beast we are told to count. Further, this Latin title does not apply to a kingdom, or empire, but alone to a man.

However, while "Vicarius Filii Dei" is not among the acknowledged titles of the pope (see Cath. Encycl.), he does claim to be Vicar of Christ on earth. Also, for 1260 long years the popes did reign and rule over the Beast. They were, in effect, the religious heads of the empire, ruling over the emperors, as well as over the church. And so is it indeed significant that this title, too, counts 666?

And so this number is branded on the Roman Empire, on the founder and first king of the Latins, on every Roman, and even on Mussolini. Could anything be more conclusive?

## The Two-Horned Beast

Satan has his civil government on earth. He gave it "his power, and his seat, and great authority."

He also has an ecclesiastical organization, a church as his instrument, in deceiving the world. In 2 Corinthians 11:14, we find Satan is transformed into an "Angel of Light." According to Revelation 12:9 and 20:3, he has deceived the whole world. How?

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Satan has His ministers who pretend to be the ministers of righteousness, but are actually false apostles, deceitful workers, calling themselves the ministers of Christ! Therefore they claim to be Christian ministers. They are the many, not the few, because all prophecies say it is the many, not the few, who have been deceived. Satan's main labor for six thousand years has been the deceiving of the world.

Now turn to the 13th chapter of Revelation, beginning with 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. Who, what is this "beast"?"

Chapter 5

## The Bible Interpretation

Remember, first, the bible interprets its own symbols! When men put their own interpretation on Bible symbols, their conclusions are

### The Founder of Rome

The founder and first king of Rome was Romulus. The Roman Empire was named after him. His name, the name of a man, also is the name of the Kingdom. And every citizen in the kingdom bears the same name - a Roman.

When John wrote this Revelation, telling us to Count the number of the Beast, he wrote in the Greek language. Consequently, we should look for this name, and the number 666, in this language recognized in the Bible, not in the Latin.

We are all familiar with the Roman numerals, where letters are used for numbers. All understand that I is 1, V is 5, X is 10, etc. But many do not know that the Greek language, in which the book of Revelation was written, also uses letters for numbers.

In the Greek, the language in which Revelation was written, this name is "Lateinos." It signifies "Latin man" or "the name of Latium," from which region the Romans derived their origin and their language. This word, too, signifies "Roman." In the Greek, L is 30, A is 1, T is 300, E is 5, I is 10, N is 50, O is 70, S is 200. Count these figures. They count to exactly 666!

It is indeed no coincidence that the name of the Kingdom, its founder and first King, and of each man in the kingdom, counts to exactly 666! Certainly 'The Beast' stands identified!

### And Mussolini, Too

But the same numbers also branded in Latin on the man who dominated the puny 6th head of the symbolic beast.

Mussolini called himself "Il Duce." Italians shouted "Viva Il Duce!" which means "Long Live The Chief." Everywhere in Italy was the printed sign, "VV IL DUCE." The "VV" is the abbreviation used for "Viva." A "V" is used instead of the "U" as is very commonly done. While this is a greeting, or title, Mussolini actually employed "Il Duce" as a name. It is in Latin. Let's count it.

V is 5, V is 5, I is 1, L is 50, D is 500, V is 5, C is 100, E has no number. Now let's count them, and you have exactly 666!

This number 666 is indelibly branded upon The Roman Empire! Some will ask, does not this number apply to the Pope? Some teach "the words 'Vicarius Filii Dei' are on the pope's triple crown." And these Latin words, in the Roman numerals, count to 666.

The pope does, on some occasions, wear a triple crown, but these words are not on it! We should be careful to prove all things.

is. How? Notice verse 17: "It is a sign ... for in six days the Eternal made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." It is the memorial of God's rest from creation. Always, in all parts of the Bible, God identifies Himself as Creator. How can we distinguish who is the true God, from all the false gods?

The true God created all the false gods, and that from which they are made, and everything that is. Some worshipped the sun. But, the true God, created the sun, and rules it. Some worship idols carved out of stone, or wood, or marble. But the true God created that from which they were made, and even the human beings who made them. The Sabbath is God's Sabbath, not the Jewish Sabbath. Never does the Bible call it the "Jewish Sabbath." It identifies God as the Creator.

The Sabbath was made for man. So said Jesus (Mark 2:27). It was made when man was made (Genesis 2:1-3). It was made - and it was Christ, the eternal, who made it! Therefore He is Lord of the Sabbath! It was made to keep man in the true knowledge of the identity of the true God, to keep him from idolatry! And history proves that every nation that did not keep God's Sabbath worshipped false gods, and did not know who the true God was! When Israel stopped keeping God's Sabbath, they went into idolatry (Ezek. 20:5, 11-13, 17-21).

It was for sabbath-breaking God sent both Israel and Judah into slavery!

Back to Exodus 31:17-18. It also is the sign by which we are identified as belonging to God. We belong to whom we obey - so we read in Romans! It is the sign by which we know He is the eternal... "that does sanctify you." To sanctify is to set apart for spiritual use.

### On Right Hand and in Forehead

Deuteronomy 11:18: "Therefore shall you lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a SIGN upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." Also see Proverbs 7:2-3, and Revelation 7:3-4; 14:1. There is absolute proof. The truth is very plain!

The Sabbath is God's SIGN, standing more than any commandment, for obedience. It was symbolically in the hand and in the forehead, just as the Mark Of The Beast - the pagan Sunday - was in the right hand and in the forehead!

Sunday observance - Christmas, New Year's, Easter, etc.

-this is the Mark of the Beast!

The Church did cause all under the "Holy Roman Empire" to receive this "mark," during the middle ages. Has she stopped?

Just at present she has not the power to enforce this mark on everyone. But there will be a UNITED STATES OF EUROPE - a union of ten nations. It will be a Union of Church and State - and the Church once again will sit astride "The Beast."

Now notice Daniel 7:21, 22: "I beheld, and the same horn (papacy) made war with the saints (the true church), and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came - Second Coming of Christ - and judgment was given to the saints of the most High."

The Mark Of The Beast - Sunday Worship - once again will be enforced! No one will be able to hold a job or engage in business without it. Those refusing will once again be tortured and martyred - probably by the secret police of the political state - but at the order of the Church!

Today, all nations are deceived by this paganism masquerading under the name "Christianity." Today, America, Canada, Britain - Nations of Israel - are actually in the ways of this "Babylon." God's last warning is this: "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not her plagues."

IF you are branded by this Mark, rejecting the SIGN of God, not keeping the Sabbath, you will receive God's plagues. But if you obey God, - if you are watching, praying without ceasing, you shall be accounted worthy to escape - and come under God's protection (Luke 21:36).

Chapter 4

## The Number 666

Whose Number Is It? Where shall we find that mysterious number 666? Does the pope, as some claim, wear it on his crown, identifying him as the Beast of Revelation 13? Or must we look for it elsewhere?

Here are all the scriptures speaking directly of this number: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three score and six" (Rev. 13:17-18).

### Note These Points

From these scriptures, we have the following definite points:

1. The beast has a number, and may be identified (if we have

wisdom) by this number.

2. The number is 666.

3. We are told to count this number - that is, add it up. The same Greek word is used elsewhere only in Luke 14:28: Count the cost.

4. This number, 666, is the number of the Beast. The only bible interpretation of this symbol, "beast," is a kingdom or the king who rules it, and therefore, really is the kingdom (Dan. 7:17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27). Therefore 666 must be the number of the Kingdom, or Government, or Empire, as well as that of the king who founds or rules it.

5. The expression "the name of the beast, or the number of his name" makes plain that the number 666 is the number of the name of the Kingdom or Empire.

6. The expression "it is the number of a man" shows we must also count this number in the name of the king, or ruler, over the kingdom identified as the "Beast."

### The Beast Is Not the Woman

In the 17th chapter of Revelation we find a beast, and a woman - a great, wealthy woman called "a whore" - who was riding the beast.

The Bible describes the symbol "woman" to mean a church. See II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; Eph. 5:23-27. On the other hand, "beast" is a symbol of a Kingdom, or Empire. The woman of the 17th chapter is described beyond possibility of doubt as the church which did reign over the kingdoms of the Holy Roman Empire.

Let us be consistent. The beast of Revelation 13 is not the woman who rode the beast - the beast is the Government, and the woman is the church.

The beast of Revelation 13 is The Roman Empire! This beast had a deadly wound (Rev. 13:3). That means the beast ceased altogether to exist or function as it had since 31 B.C. Yet its deadly wound was later healed, after which (verse 5) it continued to exist another 1260 years!

Those who believe the Catholic Church is the beast say this deadly wound came in 1798. But the pope was not forced into exile that year. The Catholic Church did not die, nor for one day did it cease to function. The popes did live in voluntary exile, beginning some sixty years later, as a protest against the Italian government until the agreement with Mussolini. But that could in no sense be called a wound to death. And those who teach this do not expect the Catholic Church to continue on another 1260 years.