

**Palisades Community Bible Church**

**Online Sunday School**

**The Mark of the Beast**

January 17, 2021

Hi, Christian. How are you feeling? Are you feeling as if 2021 is going to be wonderful? Will it be sunshine and lollipops?

I gotta admit, I'm really disappointed. The winner, or loser of an election is NOT the issue. But, if we cannot conduct an honest election....that both sides can trust...our nation has a very dim future. What if the Super Bowl was decided this way? But, then, we've already learned that the Book of Revelation identifies the earthly powers in the last days, and America IS NOT LISTED.

Can we be watching the end of America fast approaching? Will our children live under a socialist regime? What will our grandkids face? Are we not witnessing America's enemies self-identify....right on national TV....and, aren't they citizens?

Our founders sought God's leadership and His providence as they forged this nation. They pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor in order to make a place that would provide lasting religious freedom for the generations that followed them. Today, we have a generation that lacks knowledge and respect of God, understanding of America's values, and what alternative government is knocking at our door.

**“America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we lose our freedoms it will be because we have destroyed ourselves from within” – Abraham Lincoln**

So, what is the next step – after a fraudulent election, I mean? The next step is tyranny. We only have to study recent history to know! It will be gradual, but so has what we've been watching. If you think that closing down certain businesses while selected businesses are allowed to be open, isn't tyranny, you're not paying attention. If you don't recognize that shutting churches is tyranny, you don't know your constitution. Aren't we adult enough to make our own decisions? Soon, we'll be governed in every aspect of our lives.

**“When the government owns healthcare, they own everything in your life.”  
Ronald Reagan.**

OK, tyranny is coming. It's pretty much here. What comes next? In the next four years, you're going to be amazed at how many of our freedoms are eliminated....one at a time....quietly....but taken away.

One of the things that Revelation explains is the “mark of the beast.” That is a specific identifier that must be worn on the body in order to buy and sell. We'll look at this in a bit, but let's look closer at what has led up to this. Why does evil continue to have its way? It's twofold: people choosing evil, and God allowing the wicked to experience the consequences. Here, Paul is explaining what brings on the ‘Wrath of God’ on a people:

**Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because **God has made it plain** to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that **people are without excuse**.**

Note that none of us can make an excuse! **1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.** No matter how great the test, unwavering faith in Christ IS POSSIBLE. Therefore, the breaking of these commandments is NOT without God's severe judgements. It is by knowledgeable choice. (Exodus 20):

- **3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.** (Employment, money, house, car, vacations, pets, power/status, fame, sports/entertainment heroes, school/education, kids' sports, etc.)
- **4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve**

**them.** (man-made things, images, animals, that you love more than God....and, are willing to pay for!)

- **7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.** (Whether individually, or as an organization, posing as a servant of God, but denying the TRUTHS of God.)
- **8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** (That got blown away when I was a kid. Remember two services on a Sunday? Remember Wednesday night services and choir rehearsals? We can barely get to ONE service per week, and it’s just as easy to watch a TV evangelist instead! How many kids’ sporting events, etc., are on Sundays?)
- **12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.** (Remember, in the 50s and 60s, how parents and their “square ideas” became laughable and rejected....and, it just became the popular, enduring, thing?)
- **13 “You shall not murder.** (just look at the number of people killed at the hands of corrupt elected officials. Look at how many killers go free for a host of reasons.)
- **14 “You shall not commit adultery.** (The silver screen turned this taboo on its head, starting in the 20s and onward. The social ‘norm’ for pre-marital dating includes sex. Alternative sexuality has become normalized.)
- **15 “You shall not steal.** (Most of our legal system has transitioned from justices based on evidence to what your lawyer can help you get away with. It doesn’t help that laws, in the past several decades, have been written intentionally vague and hard to apply. Crime is blamed on poverty, not morality, etc.)
- **16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** (Not a lot of our elected officials are honoring their oaths of office, these days.)
- **17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”** (Keeping up with the “Jones’ . Political leaders taking, and vowing to take, what they should be protecting, etc.)

So, from individuals, all the way up to our high Federal officials, we see that these Commandments are summarily discarded. As sin has run rampant through our homes, businesses and government, our nation, as a whole, has become repugnant to God. **Genesis 18: 20 And the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”** You know the story; God did not find any faithful people in those cities, and destroyed them.

**Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for **images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.****

The “American Dream” has become perverted by the unfaithful to be an accumulation of the greatest amount of self-fulfillment possible....no matter HOW it’s done.

**Romans 1:24 Therefore **God gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.**

How many young people have followed cravings and addictions that are destructive, and because of the kids’ dedication to these acts, their parents have had to just take their hands off the situation? In other words, the kid became “of age” and chose his/her path, and the parent could no longer make a difference. So it is with God and man. God has made Himself known, and we are without excuse. Therefore, as with the parent, God has come to the heart shattering position of.....

**26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. **Even their women** exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.**

“Even their women...” Consider these words carefully. Women tend to be far less driven to immorality than men. The purity and morality of women in a society is like the “canary in the mine.” If the canary drops dead, it’s because the air in the mine is dangerous to breathe. The miners must get out, or die. The death of the canary saves the lives of the miners. Paul is saying; it’s gotten so bad that even their women are deviants, perverts and reprobates! The immorality of the women (a deadly sign!) has not even turned the society from its wickedness!

Also, I wonder what kinds of “due penalty for their error” (v 27) was visited upon the men who “committed shameful acts with other men...”? Broken homes? Disease? Remember “Herod the Great,” who was tyrant over the region of Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the time of Jesus’ birth? History records that he had syphilis (which drove him insane), and an infection in his ‘privates’ that was infested with maggots.

Though he was a pagan, Surely, Herod would have benefitted from a Godly marriage; **Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.** No, history records that he had 9 wives, and who knows how many men “friends”, as was their custom.

**Romans 1:28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.**

“...they invent ways of doing evil...they do what ought not to be done.” God has given godless, depraved, wicked people over to their sinful lifestyles of choice.

**Isaiah 59: 1 Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not**

**hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.**

Sin is seductive. We think we can handle ‘just a little bit.’ But, that little bit becomes more, then more, and we are soon controlled by it. Righteousness, on the other hand, frightens those who live in sin. Righteousness causes an abrupt HALT to wickedness. It’s more comfortable and natural for the lost to follow wicked leaders. Yet, the Christian body is called to be salt and light in a wicked society.

How can Christians expect God to do, in our place, what He has called us to do? Our job is to take the Gospel into all the earth. Expecting that God will do it is like the father telling his child to clean his/her bedroom before being allowed to play. Then, when the child doesn’t do it...the father cleans it while his kid goes off to play! You and I KNOW that is an abomination of parenthood. Why would we expect God to act in a way that is contrary to Himself? Jesus said;

**Matthew 28:18-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

**Acts 1:8 “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”.**

Why has Jesus given us this duty? Why can’t He just save everybody? Well, consider the bean plant. Should God miraculously create every single bean that must be planted, after every generation of beans? No, He put within the genetic code of every bean the ability to “reproduce after its kind. That is what we Christians are to do; reproduce after our kind. How did you become a Christian? Someone led you to Christ.

I’ve known a couple since the 80s. I watched their kids grow up. When their oldest was in high school, he began acting out and bringing home failing grades. Dad discovered he became tangled with kids selling pot in the lunch room. The son confessed that he was out of control and needed help. The dad took a 12 month leave of absence from work and devoted that time to his son’s home-based education and rehabilitation. Dad literally spent an entire year, one-on-

one, getting his son straightened out. I've never seen such courage and love as that. Dad LED his son into a successful life...and sacrificed a LOT to do it.

When a people who have knowledge of God turn away from Him, they have no excuse. God allows them the free choice of eating from the trough they have chosen. But, when the Christians who serve their once Godly nation by being full-time bystanders....what is God to do with them? Shall He judge ONLY the wicked, and not those who are called by His name - who are not active in their faith?

Take two nails; one just a bare steel nail and the other a galvanized nail. Wrap them in a wet towel and keep it wet for a couple of days. When you open it, the bare steel nail will be rusty. The galvanized nail will look new. That is because the zinc coating protects the steel nail from corrosive elements. That is what the faithful Christian Church does for a nation. Our Godly influence is intended to 'coat and protect' the land with Gospel of Christ....instead of being stuffed back inside the church building by state run institutions, social engineers, protesters against Christmas displays, employers, elected officials who take our rights, etc.

One other point; the protective zinc coating is "sacrificial." It takes the punishment of the elements, preserving the vulnerable steel underneath. Enduring the elements, it eventually erodes, but ever so slowly. WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE USED, AND USED UP, in spreading and preserving the Gospel! What good is the zinc, if it's not on the nail? Who can use just a few flakes of zinc to build a house? The protective, sacrificial zinc must be bonded to the vulnerable steel nail. It is the nail that is used in building. It is the zinc that gives its life so the nail can endure. The zinc, in isolation, is useless.

**2 Chronicles 7: 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**

Yes, we Christians must turn from our wicked ways and not go back to them. In the context of how we started, with the perversion and degradation of our nation, we must NOT participate in that which is ungodly. Discern for yourself whether you should have certain things in your, and your family's life. If it's causing sin, get rid of it! If you're in doubt, pray about it and/or talk with an older, wiser Christian. If you're still in doubt, get rid of it!

Talk with anyone who has been liberated from an addiction; booze, drugs, immorality, infidelity, etc., and they will tell you; “Get rid of it!”

Consider Jonah; what was his response to God calling him to go to Nineveh?

**Jonah 1: 1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord**

So, God saw that Nineveh was besieged by sin and in need of repentance. Jonah was called to go, but he ran from God! You know the story of the days and nights Jonah spent in the great fish’s belly and, then, he turned to God in obedience. Once Jonah did go to Nineveh, the missionary trip was a great success. The King of Nineveh called on all the people to honor God, first and foremost. Then...

**Jonah 3: 10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.**

Do a study on God ‘staying his judgement’ on a nation, and it is always halted by REPENTANCE. Unless our nation repents, as did Nineveh, we are going to dine on the crops we’ve planted.

So, what will come next? I believe the mark of the Beast will be next. Americans may have to put some physical “mark” on our bodies in order to buy and sell in the next phase of the destruction of America.

In the mid 90s, I was working as a consultant to a large international technical company. I was in Holland; training managers, and a VP showed me a brand-new device called a cell phone. However, since he was head of the futuristic development team, he had in his phone a small computer chip. This chip contained all his financial information, which was updated minute by minute through a connection with his bank. He could walk into a store, make a purchase, and never deal with cash or a credit card. The purchase was automatically deducted from his account and he got a statement emailed to him daily. Not bad

for 25+ yrs ago. Are you buying your gas, groceries, etc., this way, now? How long before technology like this is the only way to buy and sell?

Reading the Book of Revelation in the 1970s left me wondering just how some of the things it spoke of might come to pass. As technology progresses, the realities become much clearer.

**Revelation 13:16 And the second beast required all people small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark—the name of the beast or the number of its name. 18 Here is a call for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and that number is 666.**

How long will it take? Good question. We see how long it took to turn Roe v Wade into absolute unfettered freedom to murder a child right up until its head is free from the birth canal. We see how long it took for porn to be delivered directly into our homes via postal mail, cable, then computers, then smart phones. We see how long it took to outlaw the rights of small businesses to be able to refuse service, if it violated their fundamental beliefs. We see how long it took to legally force religious healthcare institutions to provide abortifacient drugs. We see how long it took for most “Christian” organizations to start performing homosexual weddings, and even ordain homosexual ministers. We see how long it took to legalize gay marriage, marijuana, etc.

So, it’s moving very fast. If you don’t see it, you’re not looking.

I believe it’s the duty of every Christian, and every Christian church organization to recognize the times and prepare for what is coming. We must be about the Father’s work with haste and diligence. This means praying, yes, but we are not to hole up in our buildings. We are to mix with society and make a difference.

Look around, in the circles you travel, at the people who need Christ. How many have you spoken to? How many have you witnessed to? How many do you invite to meet with others who love Christ? How many do you invite to our church?

Out of these “lockdowns” come opportunities to minister to others in ways we have not experienced, before....if we take our eyes off ourselves and put them on

those who need the Gospel. How many people have you met for the first time in the past 10 months who are willing to talk with you?

**John 4: 35 “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months until the harvest’? I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ripe for harvest. 36 Already the reaper draws his wages and gathers a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together.”**

**Lord, Jesus, we are leaving “uncertain times” and heading directly into very certain times. Put upon the heart of each of us our role, our job, our calling. We are called by your name so that we are ready to accomplish that which you have laid out for us to do. Let us not falter in doing well for your name’s sake. Cleanse us from sin that we may serve with all loyalty and diligence....never ceasing to pray.**

**Amen**