

## CHAPTER 8

“On this map I would like you to note the country of Wales,” Mr. Dell handed a stack of papers for Jay to give to the class. “This little country has a proud Christian history. The Welsh trace their history to Galatia in Asia Minor – the very same place that received a letter from the Apostle Paul.



[http://www.ieslamarina.org/departamentos/ingles/upload-jjaviering/project0708/index-ESC\\_archivos/uk\\_colour\\_map.gif](http://www.ieslamarina.org/departamentos/ingles/upload-jjaviering/project0708/index-ESC_archivos/uk_colour_map.gif)

“The Welsh have long been known for their determination and individualism. While few people in the British Isles speak their original language or celebrate their traditions, it is estimated that over half a million Welsh can still speak in their native tongue. The Welsh are famous for their love of music. Hundreds of years ago, when most of the world chanted or sang songs only in unison, the Welsh melodies already had many different vocal parts. As Geraldus Cambrensis, a twelfth century historian, said, 'You will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers who all at length unite with organic melody.'

“Even though the UK today is very secular, the Welsh are known as a spiritual people. Visitors say that listening to the Welsh sing is an awe-inspiring experience. Some say that the caliber of their singing and the amazing blend of harmonies rival the quality of any large choir performance. Visitors relate (with a hint of awe in their voice) about visiting a Welsh pub on a 'singing night' where 'Guide Me, Oh, thou Great Jehovah' (one of their favorite hymns) is sung with enthusiasm and reverence. Imagine a sacred concert in a bar! (Not that I want you getting any ideas of visited a pub under the guise of attending a sing-fest, you know!),” Mr. Dell gave a severe scowl.

Chuckling, the students finished putting their maps into their binders as Mr. Dell picked up the Bible book. Attentively the students listened as their teacher began reading the chapter entitled:

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## Satan's Attack on the Celtic Church

As I'm sure you know, we went through two terrible world wars during this century. Yet while it is hard to see pictures of young men marching off to almost certain death and we cringe at images of malnourished and dispirited prisoners-of-war have you ever thought of yourself as a participant in a battle? The Bible gives us a descriptive word picture of our enemy. It portrays Satan as a raging lion roaming around looking for victims to devour. The devil has been perfecting his strategies for evil ever since his victory over Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. And yet his tactics haven't really changed that much over the millennia; history tends to repeat itself. That means that the wise student of history must study how the devil sought to destroy truth in the past so he can recognize deception today. Join me as we look at some of the wily methods used by Satan as he invaded the British Isles and began his assault on the Celtic Church.

If you were the devil, you would no doubt have watched with concern as Christianity swept through the British Isles. Due to the careful training given in Patrick's churches and schools, the Celtic Church could not be enticed to adopt the changes Rome was making in Europe; they followed the simple faith taught in Scripture. The devil knew that he had to weaken the Scriptural purity of the Celtic Christians either through destroying the credibility of the Bible or undermining confidence in their spiritual leaders.

Satan no doubt rejoiced as military events created instability in the British Isles. You will remember that for many years Roman soldiers maintained order in Britain. Then suddenly in AD 410 war broke out between the Goths and the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers in Britain were immediately ordered back to Rome to defend their country. Without Rome's strong military presence the Picts from Scotland and the Saxons from Scandinavia invaded England and Wales. Killing and ransacking took a terrible toll on the Celtic Church of England. Many Christians died, churches and schools were closed, Bibles were destroyed along with homes and livelihoods. Under continuous battles with the Anglo-Saxons, England slowly slipped back into paganism. Christian churches were replaced with heathen temples; superstition replaced education until the ennobling light of the gospel was nearly extinguished.

The victorious Anglo-Saxons formed an alliance of seven English kingdoms known as the Heptarchy. Satan busily plotted how to bring those kingdoms under Roman Catholic control. When King Ethelbert of Kent (AD 560 – 616) married a European princess, Bertha, the devil found a formidable ally for his plans. Bertha was well trained in Roman Catholic doctrine and the papacy knew that her marriage would be to their advantage. For 200 years the Roman Church had tried to gain a foothold in England, but the careful and thorough work done by Patrick, Columba and others made it almost impossible for the Celtic Christians to accept Rome's idols and superstition. Now, through a Roman Catholic queen, the papacy hoped to influence the monarch to introduce state laws that would give the Church greater power.

Bertha used her royal influence to introduce Roman Catholicism to her subjects. In AD 597 a bishop named Augustine, along with forty monks, landed in England. They traveled to Kent in an impressive procession. One of them carried a large silver cross for their banner while another paraded a picture of Jesus. The Celtic Christians were horrified to see fellow Christians carrying pagan symbols. They had renounced all symbols of heathenism when they were converted and didn't know how to relate to a church that blended Christianity with

paganism.

Augustine was given royal permission to repair churches and preach to the people. The pope at first intended to have Augustine destroy all the idol temples, but he changed his mind and sent a letter decreeing that the Church should lay claim to all pagan temples still in good condition. Augustine, with impressive ceremonies, sprinkled each building with holy water to “cleanse” it, then filled it with holy relics to “Christianize” it. The common people, already accustomed to worshiping in those temples, found it easy to replace their pagan worship with Christian rites. Augustine introduced special holy days - complete with feasting and colorful pageantry - devoted to the memory of Christian saints. Such celebrations helped bond the people to the new religion.

Rome's many festivals and holy days prepared the way for the church to undo much of the Celtic leaders' work. The Roman leaders, wanting to make their converts happy in their new church, began to change the Druid's pagan festivals (which interestingly they call *Sabbats*) into Christian holy days. For instance the Druid's Winter Solstice became the Christian's Christmas; the festival Ostara (named after the goddess Eoster) became the Christian's Easter. Samhain (when they honored the dead) became Halloween and All Saint's Day; and Imbolc (which was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> ) was moved to February 14th and became St. Valentine's Day. Symbols from paganism were brought into the church and given a Christian meaning. The most widespread symbol was the cross, which was borrowed from ancient Babylon and the worship of Mithra and Tammuz.

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“Excuse me, Mr. Dell,” Cory raised her hand. “One time I was looking up some stuff on the Internet when I ran across an article written by a pagan. It looked kinda interesting so I decided to read it. It was actually a lecture that the man had given called, ‘We Want Them Back’. He was complaining that all the pagan holidays had been stolen by Christians and made into Christian holy days. He said he wanted to observe Samhain, Yule, and Eoster without having to hear stories of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, or how Jesus died for our sins. He said he wanted Christians to remember that when they bite the head off a chocolate bunny that they are really re-enacting an ancient pagan ritual and that Yule logs, holly and mistletoe all came from his pagan holiday.”

“That’s an interesting angle,” Mr. Dell commented. “We don’t often think about the origins of our holidays do we? If any of you want an enlightening activity, I would suggest you do some research into the history behind many of our holiday traditions. You'll find out some rather interesting things. But let's continue...”

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As you can imagine, the Celtic church leaders watched the “Christianizing” of heathenism with concern. They knew participation in pagan holy days (holidays) and using heathen symbols in their worship would bind the loyalties of the people to the Roman Church. By mixing Biblical truth with the rituals of paganism, people would be caught in Satan's web of deception.

Soon after Augustine arrived in England, spiritual matters began to be enforced by the state. Gradually laws were put in place that eroded the king's authority and office yet which strengthened the control of the Roman Church. Just as an example, it was a bigger violation to offend a bishop or desecrating a church building than it was to insult the king.

Students of history were alarmed as they saw King Ethelbert using his governmental power to enforce the authority of the Roman Church. They knew that whenever the state enforces a

specific religion that persecution or death inevitably follow. Several Bible stories no doubt came to mind. They remembered when King Nebuchadnezzar compelled the leaders of Babylon to worship his golden image and when Darius ordered his subjects to pray to him for thirty days. In both cases, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had to spend some time in a superheated furnace (with Jesus Christ, I might add) and eighty-year-old Daniel had to spend the night in the king's "Lion Inn". I'm sure they also remembered the dreadful accounts of torture and bloodshed inflicted by Nero, Decius and Diocletian upon the pious Christians of Rome.

Now Britain was facing a similar test. Pope Gregory proclaimed Augustine as head over all Christian bishops. Augustine took this announcement to mean that he now had authority over both Roman Catholic leaders and the pastors of the Celtic Church. History shows that that declaration prepared the way for the Roman Church to gain control of Christianity in England.

At Bangor, in Wales, there was a famous training school with over 2100 ministerial students. Its leadership watched with concern as the Roman Church began to gain strength and influence throughout England. Desiring to gain control over the Celtic pastors, Augustine urged King Ethelbert to request Celtic leaders to attend meetings at Augustine's Oak. Dinnoth, the headmaster of Bangor, was one of the invited delegates.

During that council Augustine insisted that the Celtic and Catholic churches must cooperate in preaching to the pagans. The Roman Catholics accused the Celtic leaders of causing division within the Christian church by not joining forces with them. Augustine demanded that the Celtic Church observe Christ's resurrection, "Easter", on Sunday as they did.

However, while the Celtic leaders wanted Christian unity, they also knew that Jesus taught in John chapters 15 and 17 that true unity always begins with obedience to God's revealed Word. They clearly saw they must choose between unity with the papacy (while compromising doctrine) or maintaining their allegiance to the clear truths of Scripture. Dinnoth and other Celtic leaders determined to be obedient to the plain teachings of the Bible even if it meant conflict with the papacy.

Augustine was disappointed with the outcome of his first meeting and arranged a second gathering with seven representatives of the Celtic Church. Before going to the conference the Culdee delegates visited an elderly man known for his wisdom. He counseled them to delay their arrival at the meeting so Augustine and his party would arrive first. He recommended, "When you arrive, if Augustine rises and welcomes you with humility and meekness, then accept him as heaven's messenger. If he shows conceit and arrogance, it is a sign that you are to refuse to accept his authority and decline to fellowship with him."

When the Celtic delegation arrived for the meeting, they found the Roman Catholic party waiting for them. Rather than courteously rising to greet the Culdee pastors, Augustine remained in his seat. As you may surmise, the meeting did not go well. Assuming an authority he did not possess, Augustine commanded the Celtic Christians to become Romanists and worship as they did. In reply the Celtic leaders accused Augustine of pride and rejected his claims to authority. They refused to accept Augustine as their archbishop or to consent to the pope's authority over their church in the British Isles.

This lack of cooperation on the part of the Celtic leadership did not halt the ambitions of Rome, however. Rome's first four general (or ecumenical) councils had brought many changes into the European Church. Some of the changes included having a fixed date for Easter (always on a Sunday), recognition of the primacy of the Papal See (the pope was to be acknowledged as the most important leader in the church), calling Mary, Jesus' mother, "The Mother of God" and accepting the veneration of icons. Pope Gregory decreed that the changes were to be

accepted as equal with Bible doctrines.

Those who followed the Scriptures as their rule of faith could not accept such man-made laws. They refused to accept the idolatrous festivals of the pagans or allow idols to be brought into their churches. The Culdee leaders also rejected Rome's decree that their pastors could not marry.

Perhaps the biggest controversy between the Celtic and Roman Churches, however, was over the Sabbath. While Rome attempted to have all Christians keep her Sunday-sabbath, the Welsh Celtic Church absolutely refused to worship on any day other than the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible. They were offended when called "Judaizers". To their way of looking at things, they were simply obeying the Ten Commandments as God wrote them on stone with His finger. The leaders of the Celtic Church remained firm to Biblical principles and there is credible evidence that the Welsh kept the seventh-day Sabbath right up until 1115.

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Dimming the lights, Mr. Dell turned on his projector. "This is a picture of Dr. Peter Chamberlain's tombstone," explained the teacher. "He was a Welsh physician to King James. On his tombstone it says that Dr. Chamberlain was 'a Christian who kept the commandments of God and worshiped on the seventh day as his Sabbath for over thirty-two years.' That was back in 1648. From this we can see that the seeds of Sabbathkeeping were still alive in Wales just three hundred years ago."



<http://ancient-sda.com/centuries/chamber.html>

"Let me read you a modern English translation of the inscription carved into Dr. Chamberlain's tomb stone. There are some parts that are difficult to read, but most of it is understandable."

**First panel:**

*"Here lies the body of Dr. Peter Chamberlain, who was born on the (?) of May 1601, and died on the 22<sup>nd</sup>*

December; being aged 82 years 7 months and 14 days. He had two wives, by the first, Jane Middleton, had 11 sons, 2 daughters & amongst them 45 grand Children, and 8 great grand Children whereof. (There?) were living at his death three sons; viz. Hugh, Paul & John and his two daughters and 20 grand Children and 6 great grand Children.

“By the second Anne Harrison had 3 sons & 2 daughters; whereof only Ho?? was living at his death who has erected this monument in Memory of his Father.

### Second panel:

“The said Peter Chamberlain took the degree of Doctor of Physic, in several universities both at home & abroad. (???) and lived such above three score years being Physician in Ordinary to three kings and queens of England. viz. King James & Queen Anne, King Charles first and Queen Mary, King Charles second & Queen Katherine; & also to some foreign Princes; having travelled most parts of Europe, & speaking most of the Languages.

“As for his Religion he was a Christian keeping the Commandments of God & faith of Jesus, being baptized about the year 1648, and keeping the 7<sup>th</sup> day for the Sabbath above 32 years.

“To tell his Learning & his life to Men

“Enough is said by here lies Chamberlain.”

“You know,” commented Emily, “I just don’t get why Satan hates the seventh-day Sabbath so much.”

“Think of it this way,” replied Mr. Dell. “The one who writes the law is recognized as the supreme authority. In heaven Lucifer plotted and planned how to be like God. He did that by trying to undermine God’s law and replace it with a law of his own.”

“But Satan didn’t win that war – he and his angels were kicked out,” responded Jeremy. “I bet they wish they had stayed in heaven and been loyal to God.”

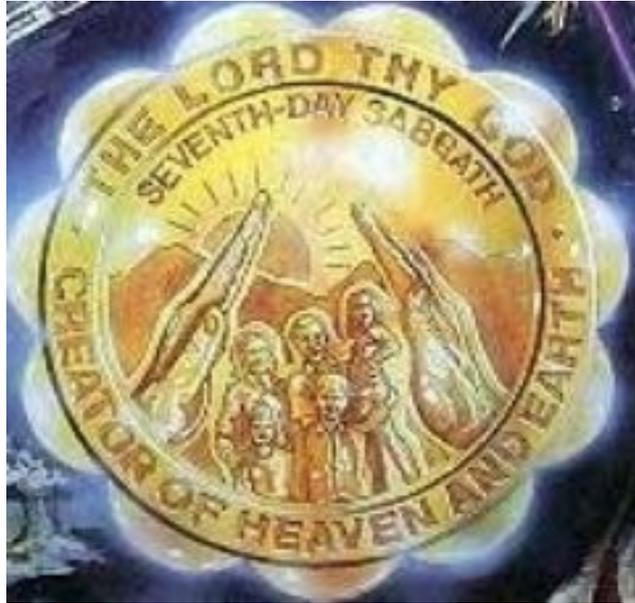
“Yes,” replied his teacher, “there has been no happiness for those poor angels since they were thrown out of heaven. Selfishness and rebellion never bring joy. Satan's only happiness seems to be hurting God by getting us to sin.”

Clicking on a folder, Mr. Dell brought up a picture of the Presidential Seal.



<http://haysvillelibrary.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/presidential-seal-2.jpg>

“You know that a head of state, like the president of the United States of America, has an official seal that has his name, title and dominion on it. Have you ever thought that the fourth commandment contains the three parts of God’s seal? First we see God’s name: ‘The Lord’; then His title: ‘Creator’; and finally His dominion: ‘the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is’.”



<http://www.theseal-of-god.com/userimages/sabbathseal.jpg>

“Class, please open your Bibles to the last book in the New Testament. Cory, would you please read for us Revelation 7:1-4.”

Cory nodded as she found the passage. “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

“Thank you, Cory. Here John shows us a picture of God's people at the end of time – the 144,000 – being sealed in their foreheads by an angel from heaven. Wouldn't it make sense that this seal will have something to do with the seventh-day Sabbath?”

“Let me read to you from *Great Controversy* p. 605, 'The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.'”

“I guess by forcing everyone to worship on Sunday Satan is trying to make up a seal of his own,” remarked Hannah as she closed her Bible.

“Exactly,” agreed Mr. Dell. “Each decision we make today is deciding whether we will receive God's seal or Satan's mark. I like what Sister White wrote in the book *Maranatha* p. 200: 'Just as soon

as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads--it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved--just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming.' To receive God's seal we need both a knowledge of the truth and also a transformed mind that acts, talks and behaves like Jesus."

Just then the bell rang and the students headed for their next class.

B.G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness* (Teach Services, Brushton, New York, 1994) Chapter 11

Vance Ferrel, *Christmas, Easter, Halloween*, (Harvestime Books, Altamont, TN, 2003)