

14

Satan's Mark or God's Seal?



“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God’” (Revelation 14:9, 10).




An Amazing Fact: *An ever-growing number of countries are using Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) for a variety of purposes, from spotting wanted criminals in public areas to monitoring consumer purchasing habits. FRT has become so sophisticated that it can even identify a person’s emotions.*

The battle over worship has been raging ever since the beginning of our world.

The Bible records how Cain and Abel—Adam and Eve’s first two sons—chose to worship God in two distinct ways. While Abel demonstrated faith in God’s promise of a coming Messiah by sacrificing a lamb according to God’s design, Cain offered produce from his field, the work of his own hands (Genesis 4:3, 4). These two worship styles actually symbolize two opposing belief systems.

Abel believed in salvation by the Savior’s loving sacrifice, putting his trust wholly in God’s grace; Cain believed in salvation by his own works. That is, Cain was actually worshipping a god of his own making—a counterfeit. After God accepted Abel’s offering but not his brother’s (vv. 4, 5), Cain murdered Abel (v. 8). While Cain reaped the consequences for his crime, God, in His mercy, placed upon him a mark of protection (vv. 11–15).



At the end of time, a different set of marks will be placed upon every human being living on Earth: either the seal of God or the mark of the beast. These two marks are the culmination of the battle over worship. More accurate than any FRT, these end-time marks identify what is in your heart ...



When you see a blank, look up the passage in your Bible and write in the missing word.

1. How are you to worship God?

Matthew 15:9. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the _____ of men.

John 4:24. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and _____.

ANSWER: Scripture connects worshipping God with obeying His commandments. Jesus said to His Father in heaven, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). Worshipping in “truth” means following God’s Word. The Bible also reveals that a person can appear to be worshipping God when he is really obeying manmade laws instead. This is called “vain” worship; it’s a counterfeit.

Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” If you are not worshipping God in obedience, the Bible says you are actually worshipping the devil (1 John 3:8).

2. Who receives the seal of God, and who receives the mark of the beast?

Revelation 7:3. Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the _____ of our God on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:9, 10. If anyone _____ the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God.

ANSWER: God’s servants—those who worship Him—will receive His seal: “Seal the law among my disciples” (Isaiah 8:16); “these are the ones who were not defiled, ... who follow the Lamb wherever He goes”

(Revelation 14:4). Those with the seal of God will be His faithful and obedient people—not defiled with the apostate teachings of Babylon.

In contrast, the third angel’s message in Revelation 14 reveals that those who worship the beast will receive his mark. Remember the “authority” behind the beast is the devil (13:2). Those with the mark of the beast will be following Satan, rebelling against God and His law (16:9, 11, 21).

3. Where are people marked?

Revelation 14:1. *Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their _____.*

Revelation 13:16, 17. *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right _____ or on their _____, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

ANSWER: The Bible says that the seal of God is placed on the forehead only, whereas the mark of the beast can be on the forehead or the hand. Wicked Babylon has her identity written on her forehead (Revelation 17:5), just as the 144,000 have their Father’s name written on their foreheads (Revelation 14:1).



4. Is the mark of the beast and the seal of God a physical, visible mark?

Exodus 13:9. *It shall be as a sign to you on your _____ and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your _____.*

Deuteronomy 11:18. *Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your _____ and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.*

Hebrews 10:16. *I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their _____ I will write them.*

ANSWER: In the Bible, having God’s law “in your heart” is the same as having it “between your eyes”—both are illustrations. The forehead, what’s between our eyes, is a symbol for our thoughts (Deuteronomy 11:18; Hebrews 10:16); the hand is a symbol for our actions (Psalm 90:17; Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Interestingly, right behind the forehead is the frontal lobe, the brain’s center for decision-making. Those who ask God to “put [His] law in their minds” (Jeremiah 31:33) have made the conscious decision to follow Him. Because their hands will naturally do what their minds have chosen, their acts of worship will be sincere and based on the free will God has given. That’s the only kind of worship a God of love can accept (John 4:24).

By contrast, the devil accepts worship whether it’s voluntary or not. Some people, being deceived (Revelation 13:14), will serve the beast because they want to (hence the mark on the forehead); others, being threatened, will serve him because they have to (hence the mark on the hand). Indeed, we see that the devil resorts to force when his deceptions don’t work: The second beast “causes” people to worship the first beast (vv. 12, 16) by threatening their livelihoods (v. 17) and, ultimately, their lives (v. 15).



5. How are people sealed by God?

Ephesians 4:30. And do not grieve the _____ of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Isaiah 8:16. Bind up the testimony, seal the _____ among my disciples.

ANSWER: First and foremost, God’s servants are sealed by the Holy Spirit, the member of the Godhead who writes God’s law upon our hearts so that we may reflect Christ’s sinless image (Ezekiel 36:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Allowing the Holy Spirit to transform your character is a prerequisite for being sealed by Him.



6. What is a seal?

Ezra 1:1, 2. The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says _____ of _____: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me.

ANSWER: A seal typically contains three components:

1. The official’s name
2. The official’s office
3. The official’s territory

A seal guarantees the legitimacy of a document by identifying the official who has jurisdiction. The seal is the official’s “mark” of authority. For example, the letter in Ezra was sealed by “Cyrus” (the official’s name), “king” (his office) “of Persia” (his territory). These three combined were the mark that authenticated and authorized that letter’s contents.

God’s seal has a similar purpose.



The Seal of Cyrus

7. Where is God's seal found in His law?

Exodus 20:11. For in six days the _____ the heavens and the earth, the sea, and _____ that is in them.

ANSWER: God's seal is found in the center of His law, in the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8–11). The fourth commandment features all three components of a seal: God's name, "the LORD"; His office as Creator, "the LORD made"; and His territory, "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them."



The Sabbath command is the mark of God's authority as the King of this world and Author of all life. In the seventh-day Sabbath is found the very reason to worship God: "Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water," the first angel declared (Revelation

14:7). Keeping holy the seventh day authenticates you as a genuine subject of God's kingdom and heir of eternal life (Titus 3:7).

8. What is the mark of the beast?

Ezekiel 22:8, 26. You have despised My holy things and _____ My Sabbaths. ... Her priests have violated My law and _____ My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am _____ among them.

ANSWER: The mark of the beast is the devil's mark of authority. In this battle, he aims to get people to worship him instead of God—and what better way than to confuse them about the Sabbath command? To profane means to treat the sacred as common. Thus, God's seventh-day Sabbath is profaned by falsely teaching that the day He made holy is actually not.

That is exactly what history records the Catholic Church has done. The papacy enacted doctrine recognizing the *first* day of the week, Sunday, instead of the *seventh* day, Saturday, as the Lord's day. Thus,



the sacred was made common and the common sacred, violating God's fourth commandment. (See "Profaning the Sabbath Was Prophesied" and "How Rome 'Changed' the Sabbath Day" at the end of this lesson.)

Sunday worship is the devil's direct challenge to God's mark of authority!

9. How are people marked by the beast?

Revelation 13:16, 17. He _____ all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may _____ or _____ except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

ANSWER: The Bible prophesies that when the United States forms "the image of the beast" (Revelation 13:15)—a government copying

the papal union of church and state—it will mandate Sunday sacredness instead of Saturday. It will do this by enforcing economic sanctions and even death on those who remain faithful to God's true Sabbath (vv. 15–17).

Whether a person is deceived into this false worship (v. 14) or simply goes along with it, he will be marked. How many will forsake God in order to keep a job, feed their



family, or keep the peace at home? It will seem practical to do. But Jesus said, “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29).

10. When are people marked by the beast?

Revelation 13:15. *The image of the beast should both _____ and _____ as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

ANSWER: A nation speaks through its laws. People receive the beast’s mark only when exclusive Sunday worship becomes an enforced law. Until that occurs, there is still time to come out of Babylon. Many sincere Christians still need to hear the three angels’ messages to decide which mark to receive.



11. What are the ultimate fates of those with the seal of God and those with the mark of the beast?

Revelation 22:14. *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of _____, and may _____ through the gates into the city.*

Revelation 14:11. *And the smoke of their torment ascends _____ and _____; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.*

ANSWER: Those with God’s seal receive eternal life; those with the beast’s mark will not only experience the wrath of the seven last plagues,

but they will also receive eternal death. Compare Revelation 15:2 and 20:4 with Revelation 16:2 and 19:20, 21. Studying these passages reveals that the two marks are given just before the Second Coming.

12. How can you live through the world's fiery finish?

Revelation 14:12. Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who _____ the commandments of God and the _____ of Jesus.

ANSWER: This issue isn't about picking Saturday over Sunday to receive eternal life. The Sabbath command is spotlighted because the devil places it front and center in his war against God. The day on which you worship is an outward manifestation of your inward beliefs, a demonstration of who you love in your heart. Salvation is won in the last days just like in any other time in history—by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Revelation 14:12 is the close of the three angels' messages. Your faith *in* Jesus will give you the faith *of* Jesus, who lived a sinless life on this earth. That faith allows God to write His name on your forehead (v. 1)—it allows the Holy Spirit to recreate and seal you in the image of Christ. Surviving the world's fiery finish is simply the result of choosing to accept the everlasting gospel.



13. Will you accept Christ as your Savior so that you receive God's seal?

Answer: _____



Lesson 14 Supplemental Material

Profaning the Sabbath Was Prophesied

The prophetic vision in Daniel 7 describes four beasts, which represent nations. The fourth beast has a little horn that grows out of it (vv. 7, 8). Here are several of its identifying characteristics:

- It had “eyes like the eyes of a man” (v. 8).
- “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High” (v. 25).
- “[He] was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them” (v. 21).
- “The saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time” (v. 25).

Sound familiar? The first beast of Revelation 13 has these same characteristics (vv. 1, 5–7, 18). The prophetic time period “a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25) is equal to “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” (Revelation 12:6) or “forty-two months” (13:5). These are simply different ways of describing the Dark Ages. The beast with the little horn in Daniel 7 and the first beast of Revelation 13 symbolize the same thing—the Roman Catholic Church.

Daniel 7:25 gives us another characteristic of this power: It “shall intend to change times and law.” A quick look at the Catholic version of the Ten Commandments shows that it omitted the

second commandment and divided the tenth into two. But the most conspicuous change occurred with the only divine law dealing with time—the Sabbath command.

How Rome “Changed” the Sabbath Day

After converting to Christianity, “Roman emperor Constantine I ... introduced the first civil legislation concerning Sunday in 321, when he decreed that all work should cease on that day, ... providing time for worship.”¹ Constantine chose Sunday to appease his primarily pagan population, who worshiped the Roman sun god on the day of the sun—that is, Sunday. Then, around 363, the Synod of Laodicea legislated for all Christians to work on the seventh day but rest on the first day.²

Rome has even tampered with what constitutes a day, configuring a day to start at midnight instead of sunset, as God ordained. Today, the entire modern world runs off the ancient empire’s clock.

The Catholic Encyclopedia confirms, “The Church, ... after changing the day of rest from the Jewish Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, to the first, made the Third Commandment refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord’s Day.”³ Here’s another statement from a Catholic catechism:

Had [the Catholic Church] not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.⁴

The papacy openly admits its mark of authority to be the “holy day” of Sunday.

1 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “Sunday,” last modified April 30, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sunday-day-of-week>.

2 Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, Together with the Canons of All the Local Synods which have Received Ecumenical Acceptance*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 14 (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995), 148, https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214/npnf214/Page_148.html.

3 “Commandments of God,” vol. IV (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913), https://books.google.com/books?id=dNAbQRWE7EC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

4 Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Edward Dunigan & Bro., 1876), 174.

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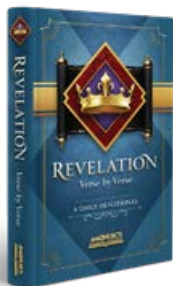
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Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:6–12

