

# The Mark of the Beast



*The following notes contain some of the material presented in the series "Is God for Real?"*

There are few topics in the Bible that have generated more speculation than the subject of the Mark of the Beast. Understanding this topic is of vital importance as we approach the end of time, as the book of Revelation makes clear. In the book of Revelation one of the main issues at the end of time will be over who, how and when we worship. The three angels messages of Revelation 14:6-12 include an imperative to worship God, and a severe warning against worshipping the beast and his image, and receiving the Mark of the Beast.

But what is this mark? Is it a bar code, a tattoo, or a microchip? To answer this question, we must first ask who is the beast? As we have discovered in an earlier study the first beast of Revelation 13 is the Roman Papal power. Therefore, the mark of the beast must come from this power. From reading Revelation 13:15-17 it appears that the mark of the beast is some kind of enforced religious observance at the end of time. According to the book of Revelation, at the end of time everyone will either receive the mark of the beast, or the Seal of God. Understanding something of the Seal of God can help us to identify the mark of the beast.

The Seal of God is described in Revelation 7:1-3 as being given to God's people in their foreheads, just before the return of Christ. This group, symbolising God's people, is also referred to in Revelation 14:1. There it tells us that they have their Father's name written on their foreheads. The placing of the seal, or the Father's name in the forehead is not a tattoo or a rubber stamp – rather it means in the mind, the thoughts and beliefs. The mind is where we choose whom we will worship. Isaiah 8:16 tells us that the law is to be sealed among God's disciples, and Hebrews 8:10 indicates that God wants to put His laws into our minds. God not only wants us to do the right thing in obeying Him, He also wants it to be central to the way we think. So, we have learned that the Seal of God has something to do with the Father's name, and with the law being put into our minds.

A typical seal in Bible times would be used by a ruler to authenticate documents. It would generally contain three essential elements – the name, the title and the territory of the ruler whose seal it was. Likewise, God's seal also contains these three elements. At the heart of the law of God, the Ten Commandments, we find the Sabbath. This commandment contains the three elements of God's seal, Exodus 20:11:

Name: The Lord Title: Creator (made) Territory: the heavens and the earth

This commandment also includes the Father's name, YAHWEH, (translated LORD), three times. No other commandment refers to the Father's name this often. In addition to this the Bible itself repeatedly refers to the Sabbath as a sign between God and His people; Ezekiel 20:12, Ezekiel 20:20; Exodus 31:13. The Sabbath of the ten commandments is the Seal of God at the end of time. It is a sign of loyalty to God as our creator. By keeping the Sabbath of the Lord holy, as well as keeping the other nine commandments, we testify that we belong to Him. God is calling together His people in the last days to obey His commandments, Revelation 14:12.

But isn't the Holy Spirit associated with the seal of God? Yes it is. The Holy Spirit is not the seal, but it is the Holy Spirit that does the sealing, Ephesians 4:30; John 16:13. The Holy Spirit never leads us contrary to the Word of God but rather reminds us of what is written there and guides us to

truth. The Holy Spirit is given to those who are willing to obey God, John 14:15-17; Acts 5:32. God is not going to empower people with the Holy Spirit to live wilfully in continual disobedience to His law. This issue is about loyalty and to whom we belong, and the Sabbath is the sign we belong to God. So, if the Sabbath is the seal of God at the end of time, what then is the mark of the beast? We have discovered that the beast is the Roman Papal power, so what is Rome's mark of authority? In order to answer this question, we will turn to some statements from the church itself.

"Sunday is our mark of authority... The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact." Catholic Record, 1st September 1923.

In this statement the church clearly identifies that the change of the Sabbath to Sunday constitutes a mark of religious authority. Notice another similar statement:

"Of course the catholic church claims that the change was her act... And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things." C F Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons, 28th October 1895.

When reading these statements, it is remarkable to remember that the Bible itself prophesied that a religious power would arise and intend to change times and laws, Daniel 7:25. We have already noted earlier that the mark of the beast is described in the book of Revelation as some kind of enforced religious obedience. Now we see that the church itself claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday and that this is regarded as a mark of her authority. So, the Mark of the Beasts will be some kind of enforced Sunday observance. But does anyone have the mark of the beast today? No. The mark of the beast has not yet been enforced and therefore no one has yet received it.

Revelation 13:16 tells us that this mark will be received on their right hand or on their foreheads. The right hand and the forehead simply mean in the thoughts and in the actions. People will either believe in their foreheads, or they will cooperate for convenience sake. When economic sanctions and ultimately the death penalty are threatened, many will comply and willingly receive the mark of the beast. The question is what will you choose to do? Will you choose now to worship the creator and keep His Sabbath, Revelation 14:7, or will you ultimately end up following the crowd and receive the mark of the beast? Revelation 13:8.

The issue at the end of time will be over who we worship. God has issued the most severe warning in all of scripture against worshipping the beast and receiving his mark, Revelation 14:9-11. We must choose who our God will be, and whom we shall choose to obey, Romans 6:16.

Today many Christian groups are calling for society to return to Sunday worship. There are organisations in Europe and the US lobbying for Sunday legislation. Many countries already have Sunday trading laws and there are calls for these to be enforced and broadened.

In Revelation 18:4 God is calling us out of a system of spiritual confusion called Babylon, into the light of His Son Jesus Christ. He is calling for our loyalty. How will you respond? Will you demonstrate your loyalty to God by keeping the seventh-day Sabbath holy? Why not say a prayer of commitment to God now, and He will welcome you with open arms.

*If you would like to know more about this subject, or others in the series, 'Is God for Real?' then please contact one of our staff and they will be happy to help you.*