



## Three Angels, One Message Presentation Nine: The Mark of the Beast and the Seal of God

God has given to us one Source of authority, the Holy Bible; not church “tradition” or the theories of men. All beliefs must be tested against Scripture. II Timothy 3:15, 16; Acts 17:11. For that reason, God must warn against any system that attempts to put forth teachings that go against the Sacred Word. Satan has used the papacy to do this very thing, even claiming the power to tamper with God’s holy law and change His day of rest, the Sabbath, as well as nearly every truth revealed in Scripture. Bible prophecy predicted this “falling away” of the Church and addresses it in no less than 7 prophetic portrayals of the papacy.

Prophecy predicts a return to the methods used in the Middle Ages, the use of force to coerce the conscience. This is implemented through the improper alliance of Church and State, the “fornication” which compels nations to “drink of the wine” (false teachings) of her “wrath” (the severe penalties inflicted against dissenters). This is what took place in the Middle Ages, and this method of enforcing religion through legislation will be “copied” or “imitated” before time closes. This is the “image” (an “image” is a “copy” or “likeness”) of the “beast” of which prophecy speaks.

The third angel warns with a “loud voice” (“mega-phone”) against the beast, its image and its mark. The “mark of the beast” is a symbol, not a literal mark. Just as the “beast” is a symbol representing the historical papacy, so likewise the “mark” is also a symbol. Don’t be misled by “literalistic” interpretations; the “mark of the beast” is not a bar code or tattoo. It is clear that it must have something to do with “worship,” since that word is used no less than 8 times in Revelation 13 and 14. What would be a “mark” of the papacy’s authority in the realm of worship? What is the testimony of the papacy? “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, September 1, 1923. These are shocking words!

The “mark of the beast” will be placed in the “forehead,” representing one’s thinking, indicating that some deceived people will actually think that they are doing right in keeping Sunday, or in the “hand,” representing one’s actions, referring to those who don’t believe it in their heart, but go along with it for convenience. No one has the “mark of the beast” today. But when Sunday observance becomes mandated by law, anyone who then knowingly chooses to disobey God’s commandments which uphold the seventh-day Sabbath and keeps Sunday will receive the “mark of the beast.” It’s best to choose to love and obey God now, and keep His Sabbath holy! It will bring a great blessing!

Just as the “beast” has a “mark,” so also God has a “sign” or “mark.” It also is a symbol representing loyalty and allegiance. Throughout the Old Testament God spoke of “signs” and “marks” in the “forehead” and in the “hand.” These were associated with obedience to His law and allegiance to His kingdom. See Exodus 13:8, 9; Deuteronomy 6:5-8; Ezekiel 9:4. He said, “Seal the law among My disciples.” Isaiah 8:16. The “seal” of God will be placed in the “forehead,” only, because those loyal to God in their heart will also act out their love by willing obedience.

It is clear that the “seal” of God is His Sabbath. The Sabbath commandment, which contains the classic components of a seal, identifies Who it is that has given the Ten Commandments. His name (the Lord), title (Maker) and territory (heaven and earth) are contained in the fourth commandment. The first angel brought to view the importance that we should “worship Him Who made heaven and earth and the springs of water.” Revelation 14:7. The third angel builds on this by warning against receiving the “mark of the beast” (willful defiance against God’s law in keeping Sunday instead of God’s holy day), and by identifying those who accept and embrace God’s last day message by

saying, "here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus." Only by having "the faith of Jesus" and being empowered by His Spirit can obedience be possible.

Satan hates the Sabbath because it identifies God as the Creator; because it teaches salvation by grace through faith (we "rest" or "trust" in His salvation); because it demonstrates His power to change our hearts from being "void and without form" (like the earth before God improved it) into something "good." The Sabbath is about spending time with God, building a relationship of love and trust with our wonderful Creator! The story of Planet Earth began with a test concerning two trees. It will close with a test between two days. The choice we make will demonstrate our loyalty, either to God or to Satan. Jesus invites us today to accept Him as our Savior, His Word as our Guide and His Sabbath as our sign of allegiance. This loving God has done everything for us. He invites us today to follow Him, not in a "legalistic" way, trying to earn His favor by our works, but as a response of appreciation for all He has done for us. How can we refuse Him?