

GOD'S SEAL OR SATAN'S MARK?

The messages of the three angels (Revelation 14:6-12) contain the wonderful invitation to accept the everlasting gospel of Christ and the truths that comprise His way of life, and terrible warnings to flee from error and deception and the mixture of truth and error which can only result in religious confusion. As our Lord prepares the redeemed (Revelation 14:1-5) to enter His eternal kingdom at His second coming (Revelation 14: 14:16), the devil works feverishly to mislead and deceive the world with his errors which he attempts to mask as truth. Tragically, Jesus said that only the minority would accept the right way (Matthew 7:13,14; Revelation 13:8). Throughout history, only the minority have gone God's way.

The third angel issues the most awful warning in all of the Bible. Re-read it in Revelation 14:9-11. It actually depicts man's final day of choice on this earth. For all who choose God, the Bible says that there is a "seal"--the seal of God. For all who reject God, the third angel warns that there is to be a terrible "mark"--the mark of apostasy. What exactly are they? Why do some get one, some the other?

1. Scripture uses the word "seal" in connection with those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour and who have thus been set apart as God's own. Read Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30.

- (a) What is the reason why one is thus sealed? _____
- (b) Who does the sealing? _____

(Thus, Abel was sealed as his offering of blood was accepted by God. Hebrews 11:4. All who have ever accepted Christ throughout history in Old or New Testament times have been sealed as God's own by His Holy Spirit.)

2. The Bible also uses the seal, or the act of sealing, in another way. Carefully read Revelation 7:1-3.

- (a) Who is sealed according to verse 3? _____
- (b) Note that verse 1 says that this sealing takes place "after these things." Read Revelation 6:12-17. In connection with what time in earth's history does this sealing take place?

(Here is pictured a final sealing, as the judgment is closing, of all in whom the three angels' messages have done their work. It represents God's saying, "I approve of their immovable faith in Christ as their Saviour, and of the lives they are living as the result of the indwelling working of the Holy Spirit by Whom repentant people have been sealed since the days of Abel. They reflect in their lives My character as revealed in the ten commandments, and worship only Me, the Creator of heaven and earth." Revelation 7:13-17 portrays their experience in Christ, and their eternal reward.)

3. Right here, we come to a very significant point. Thoughtfully answer these questions.

- (a) What will one do who truly worships his Creator? Re-read the last part of Revelation 14:7, and Exodus 20:8-11. Then answer.

- (b) Of what was the eternal Sabbath to be a sign to Israel, and to us, according to Exodus 31:12-17, especially verses 13 and 17?
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(The Sabbath is truly the "seal" of the ten commandments in that it, as in all legal seals, contains name, title, and extent of rule. It points out the Author of the commandments – God, His title--the Lord Who made everything, and His rule--over everything that He created.)

4. In light of all we have studied in this series of lessons, the great test is this: Do we yield ourselves in everything to the authority of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit? Is Christ truly our Saviour? Have we accepted the ten commandments, including the Sabbath, as our way of life? Have we let God change our habits, our thoughts, our relation to time, money, life itself? Are we letting the Holy Spirit make us totally and daily loyal as we study and come to understand truth? Wouldn't all of this be involved in our receiving God's final seal, His eternal seal of approval? Is there any other way to be truly safe to save? God will allow no second entrance of sin after He ushers in His eternal kingdom.
5. Turn now to consider, by way of contrast, what the third angel means by the mark of the beast. We need first to discover what the beast is, in this particular setting, for there are many beasts in Revelation.
- (a) What is Satan himself called in Revelation 12:9? _____
- (b) How is pagan Rome represented in Revelation 12:3,4? _____
- (c) What new beast arises in Revelation 13:1,2? _____
(Compare this beast power to the little horn power in Daniel 7:20,21,25. See lesson 15. Review question 2.)
- (d) From whom does the leopard-like beast (Revelation 13:1,2) get his power? Re-read verse 2. _____
- (e) What further beast arises in Revelation 13:11? _____
- (f) What does the lamblike beast do in verse 12? _____
- (g) What is his great act in verses 16, 17? _____
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(Summary: The third angel of Rev. 14:9-11 is concerned with the beasts and the mark that immediately precede it in chapter 13. Papal Rome followed and received its power from Pagan Rome. The lamblike beast (many expositors believe this to be the United States) also exercises great power and in some way leads men to worship the leopard beast power.)

6. What then is the "mark"?
- (a) Whom does the leopard-like beast power blaspheme in Revelation 13:6? _____
- (b) What does the little horn, the same power, think to change, in Daniel 7:25? _____
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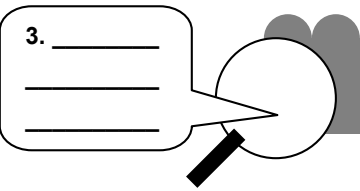
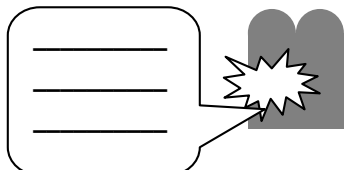
- (c) What is the mark? Review lesson 23, question 6(c). Satan, through this earthly power, seeks to remove the seal of God's authority from the ten commandments, and then seeks to replace it with a mark of his own authority. Remember, he "thinks" to do this.

Could we then say that the mark of Satan's authority is a changed day of worship? And that a great final struggle will come on earth as Satan attempts to force all men to acknowledge this mark? Revelation 13:16,17.

Just as the "seal" of God involved more than the keeping of a day, so the "mark" of the beast involves more than the keeping of a different day. It is a struggle, under the severest test, wherein is determined who will submit to the total authority of God and thus be found with a perfected character fit for heaven, or who, with clear understanding of the issue involved, will choose to submit to the one who has always opposed God and thus ally himself against God's claims, until both he and Satan are destroyed forever in the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10,14,15.)

7. When is the mark given? Answer: When the conditions of Revelation 13: 16,17 take place. We know it has not occurred, yet. But when it does, then all of the terrible curses of the third angel will be heaped on those with the mark.
8. As the third angel's message closes, what is the contrast in Revelation 14:12?

God will finally have a group of people who believe in Him fully, who are loyal to Him, and who have characters like His own, as portrayed in the ten commandments. These He will "reap" at His second coming, and take into His eternal kingdom. What is your resolve, today?

	Since 1844	In the Last Days	Probation Closes	Jesus Comes
From the Beginning, <u>TRUTH</u>	3 Angles – _____ _____ _____ _____ 1a,b. _____	2. God has a special _____ TEN Commandments 3. _____ _____ _____ 	4. _____ _____ _____ _____	8. _____ _____ – Rev. 14: 12,14-16
From the Day of Sin, <u>ERROR</u>	3 Angles – _____ _____ _____ _____	5,6. Satan has a _____ _____ _____ _____ 	6c. _____ _____ _____ _____	8. _____ _____ – Rev 14: 17-20