

The Mark of the Beast

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Introduction.

The Mark of the Beast is a subject in the bible that provokes a lot of interest. There has been a lot of speculation as to what the mark actually is. Some suggest that the mark is a computer chip that is to be put under the skin while others say that it is the supermarket bar code. These two suggestions are just speculation and guesswork rather than a conclusion based on an examination of the Bible. The warning against receiving the mark of the sea beast is the most fearful warning in all of scripture. God would not give such a fearful warning and then leave us in the dark as to what the mark actually is. As we will see the Revelation gives clear indications as to the nature of the mark of the beast so that no one will be misled.

In the second half of the book of revelation we find a number of counterfeits. Revelation 12-22:5 focuses on Satan's endeavors to deceive the world and to urge them to side with him. Satan is going to place in motion a massive counterfeit of the true God and his salvation activities.

Counterfeit trinity. Chapters 12 and 13 introduce the major actors in the scene of the second half of Revelation: the dragon (Rev. 12) and his two allies - the sea beast (Rev 13:1-10) and the earth beast (Rev 13:11-17). Together they make up a satanic trinity as an antithesis to the Trinity of the Godhead.

Counterfeit seal. Before the final crisis, God's people are sealed on their foreheads (Rev 7:1-3). While the faithful receive God's seal, their enemies receive a symbolic mark on the hand or forehead known as "the mark of the sea beast". (Rev13:16-18). This mark functions as a counterfeit of the seal of God

Counterfeit message. Revelation 14:6-12 reveals three angels proceeding from God with a threefold gospel message urging the inhabitants of the earth to repent and worship the living God, announcing the demise of spiritual Babylon, and warning against any association with her. Revelation 16:13-14 portrays three demonic unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the satanic trinity with a false gospel to the inhabitants of the earth. They are a counterfeit to the three angels of Revelation 14. Like frogs these false preachers catch their prey with their tongues. They urge the inhabitants of the earth to believe a false gospel and to worship the satanic trinity, and to accept the counterfeit seal known as the mark of the beast.

Counterfeit city. Revelation 17 describes a massive end time counterfeit world wide religious system called Babylon the great. This religious system is described as a prostitute that dominates the religious, secular and political powers of the world. It is a counterfeit to the New Jerusalem which is the bride of Christ the lamb.

This bible study focuses on the counterfeit of the seal of God - the mark of the sea beast. "A mark (charagma) on their right hand or on their forehead". The Greek word '*charagma*' signifies an imprinted or engraved mark, and also a graven image (cf Acts 17:29) charagma was a technical term for the imperial stamp on commercial documents and the royal impression on Roman coins. The word was also used for branding animals. However, no evidence indicates an ancient practice of placing charagma on a person (for instance, for branding the slaves with a mark, the word stigmata was used; cf. Gal 6:17). This suggests a symbolic mark of belonging to the satanic trinity (Dragon, beast and false prophet). The seal of God on the foreheads of God's people (Rev 7:1-4) and the mark of the worshippers of the satanic trinity denote the distinction between the two groups at the time of the end.

G5480 charagma. Thayer's Greek Definitions 3rd ed:

- 1) a stamp, an imprinted mark
 - 1a) of the mark stamped on the forehead or the right hand as the badge of the followers of the Antichrist
 - 1b) the mark branded upon horses
- 2) thing carved, sculpture, graven work, of idolatrous images

Revelation 13:16-18 "He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a mark [*charagma*] on their right hand or on their forehead. 17 Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast—that is, his name or his number. 18 This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast's number, for it is man's number, and his number is 666." NET

There are 2 things brought to view here. (1) The mark which is the name of the beast (2) the number of his name 666. All humanity will be forced to receive this name.

Revelation 15:1 “Then I saw another great and astounding sign in heaven: seven angels who have seven final plagues (they are final because in them God’s anger is completed). 2 Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and [those who had conquered the beast](#) and [his image](#) and the [number of his name](#). They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps given to them by God.” NET

Those people who are saved from the great tribulation are said to have gotten victory over 3 things. (1) The beast, (2) his image, (3) and the number of his name 666. So the number of the beasts mark/name is 666. But just what is the name/mark of the beast?

In Rev 14 just before the second coming of Christ God sends a warning to the earth against receiving the mark of the beast. This is the most fearful warning in the entire bible. After the message has been preached to the entire world it produces two groups of people.

The Proclamations of Three Angels Messages

Revelation 14:6-12 “And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." 8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality." 9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and [receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand](#), 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the [mark of his name](#)." 12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the [commandments of God](#) and their faith in Jesus.” NASB



These three messages go to all the world. One group of people who listen to and act on the warning who do not receive the mark of the beast are described as those who keep the commandments of God. These stand in contrast to those people who worship the beast and receive the mark of the beast’s name. In Rev 14:12 Jesus is referring to the Ten Commandments specifically. We know this because the ark of the covenant containing the ten commandments is seen in heaven. In Rev 15:5 those people who gain victory over the beast and his mark are seen in heaven where the tabernacle of the testimony is located. The testimony is the ten commandments as indicated below.

Revelation 15:5 “After these things I looked, and behold, the [temple of the tabernacle of the testimony](#) in heaven was opened.” NASB

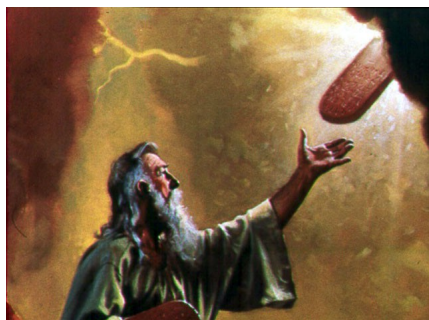
Revelation 11:19 “And the [temple of God which is in heaven](#) was opened; and [the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple](#), and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.” NASB

‘*After these things*’. That is after he had seen the Gods people victorious over the beast standing on the sea of glass. John sees the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven. This temple is the New Covenant

heavenly sanctuary where Jesus is the High Priest (Heb 8:1-5) and it is called the tabernacle of the testimony. When Moses was on Mt Sinai God gave him the ten commandments written on stone tablets. The ark of the covenant is Gold covered wooden chest that contained the ten commandments.

Deuteronomy 10:3 So I [Moses] made an ark of acacia wood and carved out two stone tablets just like the first ones. Then I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. 4 The Lord then wrote on the tablets the same words, the Ten Commandments,

Exodus 31:18. “And when he [God] had made an end of speaking with him [Moses] on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”.



These verses tell us that “the testimony” is the ten commandments. And Rev 15:5 tells us that the Ten Commandments (the testimony) are in heaven in the temple of God where Jesus is the High Priest. Therefore the ten commandments have not been abolished but are a part of the new covenant and the observance of them is a major factor in obtaining victory over the mark of the beast. It is of interest to note that in the Old Testament God instructed His people to bind His laws on their foreheads and on their hand. Note the following verses.

On the hand and on the forehead.

Exodus 13:6-10 “For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to the Lord. 7 Bread made without yeast must be eaten for seven days; no bread made with yeast shall be seen among you, and you must have no yeast among you within any of your borders. 8 “You are to tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 It will be a sign for you on your hand and a memorial on your forehead, so that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. 10 So you must keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.” NET

Deuteronomy 6:6-8 “These words I am commanding you today must be kept in mind, 7 and you must teach them to your children and speak of them as you sit in your house, as you walk along the road, as you lie down, and as you get up. 8 You should tie them as a reminder on your forearm and fasten them as symbols on your forehead.” NET

Deuteronomy 11:18 “Fix these words of mine into your mind and being, tie them as a reminder on your hands, and let them be symbols on your forehead.” NET

God instructed Israel that the law of God was to be written on the forehead and the hand. According to Revelation 13 this is where the mark of the beast is placed. This is a clear indication that the mark of the beast is a counterfeit law set up in opposition to the law of God. The evidence indicates that the mark of the beast's name has something to do with NOT keeping the commandments of God. It also has to do with worship, as those who receive the mark of the beast's name are worshipers of the beast. This indicates that the mark is a religious phenomenon because it has to do with religion and worship and is in contrast to the commandments of God. The mark of the beast's name is said to be put on the forehead or the right hand of the beast's worshipers. This stands in contrast to the worshipers of God who at the same time in history are said to have the name of God the Father written on their foreheads.

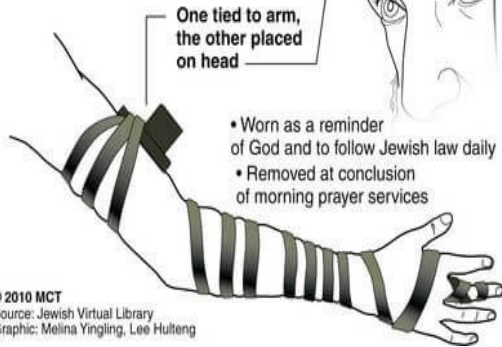
Pictures of the Phylacteries/Tefillin worn on Jewish men to remind them to follow God's law daily. This indicates that the Mark of the Beast that is put on the forehead and the hand is a counterfeit of the law of God. The mark is put on the forehead and on the hand to remind the followers of the beast to obey the counterfeit law of the beast that involves worship.

Morning prayer

Phylacteries, called tefillin in Hebrew, are worn by observant Jewish men each weekday morning during prayer.

A reminder

- Two small leather boxes contain verses from the first books of the Bible; boxes are attached to leather straps



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Source: Jewish Virtual Library
Graphic: Melina Yingling, Lee Hulteng



You may have seen a Jewish man wearing a little black leather box strapped to his forehead and his arm.

Phylacteries comes from the Greek Phylakterion meaning “Amulets”. These **little hollow boxes** are known in Hebrew as ‘**tefillin**’ – a word closely related to the Hebrew word for prayer – ‘tefillah’. The little boxes contain several scroll parchments with scripture verses written upon them – specifically the four passages which explicitly mention wearing the tefillin. The scriptures verses placed inside the leather boxes are Exodus 13:1-10; Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Deuteronomy 11:13-21. (*Zondervan Study Bible notes on Matthew 23:5*) 1.

The commandment to wear the tefillin containing the commandments, comes directly from the prayer called ‘the Shema’ from the Torah.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (Deuteronomy 6:8)

The Hebrew word for ‘hand’ applies to the entire arm. Observant Jewish men observe this commandment by literally binding the Torah on **the arm and the forehead every day** before praying the morning prayers. The orthodox prayer book teaches that the tefillin should be positioned on **the right arm and the forehead**.

*... He commanded us to place them on the **arm opposite the heart**, and on the **head opposite the brain**, so that we should submit the soul which is in the brain, as well as the desires and thoughts of our hearts, to His service ... (Siddur HaRav) 2.*

Notice in the photo of the Jewish man on the right he is wearing the tefillin on his left arm while on the drawing on the left the tefillin is on the right arm. Jewish men today wear the tefillin on the non dominant arm.

Revelation 13:16-18 “He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a [mark on their right hand or on their forehead](#). 17 Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast—that is, his name or his number. 18 This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast’s number, for it is man’s number, and his number is 666.” NET

Any Jewish Christian who read the book of Revelation would immediately recognize the Mark of the Beast as being a counterfeit of the law of God involving worship. Jesus and his disciples who were all Jewish wore the Tefillin on their right hands and foreheads during times of prayer, just as they wore tassels on the corners of their garments.

Revelation 14:1 “Then I looked, and here was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000, who had his name and his [Father’s name written on their foreheads.](#)” NET

It is interesting to note that the reference to the mark/name of the sea beast and the number 666 is followed by the vision of the sealed saints having the name of the Father written on their foreheads which is a reference to the tefillin. This suggests that a contrast is intended between the beast's name and the Lord's name. Neither are literal marks on the skin but are indications of the spiritual condition and loyalty's of the people who receive them.

Revelation 7:1-4 “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so no wind could blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, who had [the seal of the living God.](#) He shouted out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given permission to damage the earth and the sea: 3 “Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees until we have [put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.](#)” 4 Now I heard the number of those who were marked with the seal, 144,000, sealed from all the tribes of the people of Israel” NET

The two groups of people in the last days are shown as religious groups. One group are the worshipers of God who have the seal of God's name on their foreheads and are described as “keeping the commandments of God”. The other group are worshipers of the beast who have the mark of the beast's name on their foreheads or right hands. Given these facts it is impossible for the mark of the beast to be an electronic computer chip or a bar code. The mark or name of the beast is a counterfeit of the seal of God or name of the Father. A counterfeit is an exact replica of the thing being counterfeited. If the mark of the beast's name is an electronic chip then the seal of God's name must also be an electronic chip. God is not going to send angels from heaven to put electronic chips under the skin of His people. Also the same is true of the so-called 666 bar code. God is not going to send angels from heaven to put bar codes on his people.

One way to find out what the name/mark of the beast is would be to find out what the seal/name of God is. In the bible names are always indicative of character. In the New Testament sealing always signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit in human hearts.

Eph 1:13-14 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with [a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,](#) 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.” NIV

Eph 4:30 “And do not grieve [the Holy Spirit of God,](#) with whom [you were sealed](#) for the day of redemption.” NIV

2 Corinth 1:21-22. “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set [his seal of ownership](#) on us, and put [his Spirit in our hearts](#) as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” NIV

Therefore the sealed person is God's possession and is distinguished from other people. The two last day groups are sealed / marked with a name. One group will have God's name in their foreheads indicating that they have the character of God. According to the Apostle Paul the purpose of the Spirit of God is to make a christian able to obey the law of God.

Romans 8:3-4: "For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that [the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us,](#) who do not walk according to the flesh but according to [the Spirit.](#)" NET

The Mark

A person who is sealed with the Holy Spirit will desire to obey the law of God. The worshipers of the beast on the other hand have the character of the beast and is shown by rebellion against God, which is outwardly manifested by an unwillingness to observe all of God’s commandments, and by the persecution of God’s people. This persecution is manifest by not allowing God’s people to buy or sell which ultimately ends in the death penalty. The seal / mark has two aspects. An inward reality of character and an outward sign of worship. The worshipers of God must be clearly seen by the worshipers of the beast in order for economic sanctions and finally the death penalty to be placed on them.

The Mark of the beast – placed on the forehead and the hand.
 The Law of God – placed on the forehead and the hand by the Holy Spirit.

The first four commandments of the Testimony that involve the worship of God as found in Exodus 20, are compared with the counterfeit commandments and lawlessness of the Antichrist as found in Revelation 13.

The Trinity.
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Satanic Trinity
 The Dragon, Beast and False Prophet.

I I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery 3 “You shall have no other gods before me.	I <i>(Revelation 13:4,8)</i> “they worshiped the dragon because he had given ruling authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast too, saying: “Who is like the beast?” and “Who is able to make war against him?”
II “You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, 6 and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.	II <i>(Revelation 13:14-15)</i> He told those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had been wounded by the sword, but still lived. 15 The second beast was empowered to give life to the image of the first beast so that it could speak, and could cause all those who did not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
III “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold guiltless anyone who takes his name in vain.	III <i>(Revelation 13:5-6)</i> .The beast was given a mouth speaking proud words and blasphemies,... 6 So the beast opened his mouth to blaspheme against God—to blaspheme both his name and his dwelling place, that is, those who dwell in heaven.
IV “Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy. 9 For six days you may labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.	IV <i>(Revelation 13:16-17)</i> He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. 17 Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast—that is, his name or his number.

It is obvious that the mark of the beast is a law of the beast involving worship that stands in opposition to the law of God that involves worship.

Identification marks of the Mark of the Beast

1. It is a counterfeit of the Tefillin
2. It is a counterfeit of the law of God involving worship
3. It is a counterfeit of fourth of the Ten Commandments the Sabbath day of worship
4. It is Roman Catholic. (The sea beast)
5. It signifies a character that is in rebellion against God's commandments.

“It is in the final crisis that the mark of the beast will become a sign of allegiance for those who worship the satanic trinity, [Dragon, beast, false prophet] in contrast to those who worship God and obey him in keeping his commandments.

The mark of the beast in Revelation stands in sharp contrast to the seal of God. The basic function of both the seal and mark is ownership, identity, and protection. Revelation 12-14 emphasizes that “in the final crisis the commandments of God will emerge as the standard of loyalty” and obedience. The end-time saints having the divine seal are characterized as those who “keep the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17; 14:12). The mark of the beast thus seems to be a substitution of obedience to the beast for obedience to God.

It appears that the first four commandments of the Decalogue, in particular (“You shall have no other gods before Me”; “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth,” in order to worship them; “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”; and remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”), will become the test of loyalty to God in the final crisis. These four commandments concern one’s relationship with God and worship. According to Revelation 12-14, the issue in the final crisis centres on the relationship with God and proper worship. The two groups at the time of the end are identified as those who worship God verses those who worship the dragon and the beast (Rev 14:7; cf.13:8, 12-15). This explains why the sea beast’s end time activities are described as well-planned attacks on these four commandments. *The beast’s demand for worship, something that is reserved for God alone (13:4,8), is a direct attack on the first commandment: “You shall have no other God’s before me.” The raising up of an image to be worshiped (13:14-15), is a direct violation of the second commandment, and the blasphemy of God attacks the third commandment. (13:5-6). The demand for receiving the mark of the beast indicates a direct attack on the fourth, the Sabbath commandment.”*

At this point caution is necessary with regard to any attempt to limit the receiving of the seal of God on the foreheads in Revelation 7 to the observance of the Sabbath only. Observance of the Sabbath is nowhere explicitly stated as being the seal of God. Sealing in the New Testament signifies unequivocally the presence of the Holy Spirit in human hearts (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30); the sealed person belongs to God as his own possession and is distinguished from other people (cf. 2 Tim.2:19). This in no way undermines the validity of the Sabbath as the seal of the commandments of God. *The Decalogue in Exodus 20 follows the format of ancient covenant documents which were stamped with a seal of ownership and authority in the centre. In such a way, the fourth commandment functions as the seal stamped at the centre of the Decalogue. The Sabbath was thus the seal of the ratification of the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel.*

On the other hand, the Hebrew Scriptures define unequivocally the seventh-day Sabbath as the distinctive sign that distinguished the people of Israel from other peoples. The Sabbath was an external sign of belonging to the true God and the special relationship between God and his covenant people (Exod. 31:12-17, Ezek. 20:12,20). The two versions of the Decalogue given in Exodus and Deuteronomy show that the purpose of the Sabbath was to be a constant reminder to Israel of God as their Creator (Exod 20:11) and their Saviour (Deut 5:15). It appears that this aspect of the Sabbath is emphasized in Revelation 12-14. Although the issue in the final crisis is not just confined to the Sabbath, the Sabbath will evidently come to be “the litmus test” of loyalty and obedience in the final crisis. When in Revelation 14:6-12 John describes God’s final appeal to the inhabitants of the earth, he does so in terms of calling them to worship the true God, the Creator, in the context of the fourth commandment (Rev. 14:7; cf. Exod 20:11; the editors of the fourth edition of the USB Greek New Testament admit in the margins that the statement from Rev. 14:7b [the call to worship the creator] is an illusion to Exod 20:11[the sabbath commandment]). This appeal to worship the Creator God is followed by the proclamation of the two other angels who announce the fall of Babylon and warn against worshiping the beast and receiving the mark on the right hand or forehead (Rev. 14:6-11). The urging of people to worship the true God in relation to the Sabbath commandment and warning them not to worship the beast and receive his mark strongly suggests that the mark of the beast functions as a counterfeit to the Sabbath commandment. That the

receiving of the mark has something to do with the commandments of God is further confirmed with the concluding text; the worshipers of God are characterized as the ones “who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12).

The text seems to indicate that as the Sabbath will be the distinctive sign of obedience to God in keeping his commandments in the final crisis, so the mark of the beast, the counterfeit Sabbath (in contrast to the seventh-day Sabbath) will become the sign of obedience to the beast. The receiving of the mark of the beast will thus stand in direct opposition to obedience to God’s commandments. One can certainly agree with William G. Johnson that “while the non observance of the Sabbath- or Sunday- observance is not the ‘mark’ per se just now, both are integral to its end-time enforcement. The Sabbath, anciently the ‘sign’ of the people of God (Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:20), will again come to the fore to show the world those who put God first.” 3. *“Revelation of Jesus Christ” pp 414-416 Ranko Stefanovic 2002 Andrews University Press Berrien Springs Michigan.*

The seal for Paul was the Holy Spirit in the heart. Also the spirit writes the law on the heart according to the new covenant. So a sealed person is a commandment keeper. The mark and seal have 2 aspects. An internal one involving character and an external one involving worship. While those who have the mark clearly do not have the Holy Spirit there is more to it. The beast causes all to receive the mark in their right hand or forehead and as many as would not worship the image to the beast to be killed. Satan does not have the power to force people to reject the spirit of God yet he does force the mark on people. The mark has to do with worship and it will be recognized easily enough for those who do not have it to be clearly recognized by those who do have it.

Conclusion : The Seal of God involves the indwelling Holy Spirit, worship of God and the observance of the Ten Commandments. The Mark of the Beast involves the absence of the Holy Spirit, false worship and a rejection of the Ten Commandments. The Mark of the Beast is a counterfeit of the fourth commandment regarding the Sabbath. It is an international Sunday law enforced in the last days by the secular powers of the world who are controlled by a universal false religious system the bible in Revelation 17-18 calls Babylon the great.

In the last days just prior to the second coming of Christ the wicked will receive the mark of the beast. It will be because of false worship, Sunday sacredness in this case, and a willingness to murder their Christian brothers who are worshipping God correctly by observing God's Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

Reasons why the mark is not a literal mark.

- 1) The prophecy is symbolic. It uses pictures to tell a story. If the mark is literal then the beast has to be literal. That would mean that the beast is a real seven-headed ten-horned monster that arises out of the sea. Literalism is absurd in this case.
- 2) The mark of the beast is a law of a church/state concerning worship. It is a counterfeit of one of God's commandments involving worship. A literal branded mark or a computer chip does not fit this description.
- 3) A branded mark applied on the skin is figurative language not literal. The fact that the mark is also called the name of the beast and is a counterfeit of the seal of God shows that it is not a literal branding on the skin. A counterfeit by definition is an exact replica of an original. If the mark is a literal brand then that would mean the seal of God is a literal brand. God is not going to put a literal brand, tattoo or a computer chip on the foreheads of His people. Therefore the mark cannot be a literal mark but is figurative like the seal of God that it is counterfeiting.

Whenever there is a crisis involving worship that has serious consequences God gives his people two choices. One choice in leading to life the other choice leading to death. In the garden of Eden Adam and Eve were given a choice of either eating or not eating the forbidden fruit. In the days before the flood the people were given the choice of either getting on board the ark or staying off the Ark. In the days of Sodom the people had to choose between staying in the doomed city or leaving it. In Egypt the people were told in order to save the lives of their firstborn they had to apply the blood of a lamb to the lintel of the front door of their houses. If they didn't do this the firstborn died. In the days of Elijah the people were told not to halt between two opinions. If the Lord is God then worship Him or if Baal is God then worship him. In the last days when the Antichrist is enforcing the mark of the beast we will be given a choice that will decide our eternal life or eternal death. The

choice will be either to observe God's sabbath – Saturday, or the false sabbath of the Antichrist - Sunday. If we choose Saturday it signifies that we hold God's authority as supreme. If we choose Sunday it signifies that we hold the Antichrist as having more authority than God. It will be a fearful trial. But remember the words of Jesus - He who loses his life for My sake shall find it.

Sunday sacredness is not the Mark of the Beast yet but will be when the image to the beast has been formed. So what about Christian people who have been Sunday observers all of their lives and not known of the obligation to observe God's Sabbath on Saturday? Will they be condemned by God? The clear answer to that is no.

Hebrews 9:7 “But only the high priest enters once a year into the inner tent, and not without blood that he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.” NET

Writing about the Day of Atonement (Judgement) we are told that God is going to take care of the sins that His people have committed in ignorance. So we need not concern ourselves with those. However no provision has been made for willful blindness.

1. *(Zondervan Study Bible notes on Matthew 23:5)*
2. Greg Cumming <https://c4israel.com.au/articles/and-you-shall-bind-them-as-a-sign/> October 7, 2023.
3. “Revelation of Jesus Christ” pp 414-416 Ranko Stefanovic 2002 Andrews University Press Berrien Springs Michigan.

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