

God's Final Message

Third Angel's Message – Part 3

The New King James Version is used, unless otherwise quoted.

Third Angel's Message:

Rev. 14:9-12 - “⁹ 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, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.” ¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

We are continuing to unpack the identity and behaviour of the earth beast, as found in Rev. 13:11-18, with a particular focus on the **mark of the beast**.

Earth Beast

- j) **Vs. 15: He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast so that it could speak** – Just like God gave breath to Adam, America is given power by Satan himself to give life to this image of the Papacy. That is, the USA will be at the forefront of driving this end-time merger of church and state, and eventually influencing the nations of the world to impose a death sentence upon all who refuse to worship the beast or his image.
- k) **Vs. 15: Caused all who refused to worship the image to be killed** – Those who oppose Sunday-keeping, and stand up for Sabbath observance, will be marked out for death (*this concept is clarified below*).
- l) **Vs. 16: Receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead** – This is the mark of the beast, spoken of in the Third Angel's message in Rev. 14:9. Let's unpack the mark below:
 - i. This image is drawn from Deut. 6:6-8 where Israel is asked to bind the commandments as a sign on their **hands** and **foreheads**.

Deut. 6:6-8 – “⁶ These _____ that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your _____ and bind them on your _____.” (NIV)

This is our first clue that the mark of the beast could be somewhat **religious in nature**. Moreover, the whole section of Rev. 12-14, shows that the final crisis will centre around **worship**.

- ii. The warning against the worship of the beast and his image is followed by the words: “Here are they that keep the _____ of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). This group of commandment keepers is contrasted to

those who have the mark of the beast, thus implying that those who get the mark will be rejectors of God's law.

- iii. The call to **worship** the beast (Rev. 13:12) and his image (Rev. 13:15) is contrasted in Rev. 14 by the call to worship "Him who made the heavens and earth, the sea and the fountains of water" (vs. 7) – a clear reference to the Sabbath commandment. Thus the opposite of worshipping the beast and His image is to worship the Creator.

Notice again that the basis of our worship is God's **Creatorship**:

Rev 4:11 – "You are _____, O Lord, to receive _____ and _____ and _____; For You _____ all things, and by Your will they exist and were _____."

The Sabbath^A (see **Endnote A**) is an outward sign^B (see **Endnote B**) and weekly celebration of worshipping the **Creator**:

Gen. 2:1-3 – "¹Thus the _____ and the _____, and all the host of them, were _____. ² And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He _____ on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and _____ it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had _____ and made."

Ex. 20:8-11 – "⁸Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ **For** [i.e. the reason why we should keep the Sabbath] in six days the LORD made the _____ and the _____, the _____, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord _____ the Sabbath day and _____ it."

- iv. It is also interesting that the antichrist (the Papacy) whose mark will be enforced at the end of time is described in 2 Thess. 2:3 as follows:

2 Thess. 2:3-4 – "³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the _____ _____ is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

1 John 3:4 defines sin as: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and _____ is _____."

This shows the Papacy's ('man of sin') hatred, disdain and disregard for God's law. This indirectly supports the view that the mark of the beast has to do with law breaking.

- v. The one law that the Papacy deliberately changed and which it regards as a *mark* of its authority is the Sabbath. Note the following statements from Catholic sources:
- “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 of London, Ontario, September 1, 1923*).
 - “Protestants . . . accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship **after the Catholic Church made the change** . . . But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in accepting the Bible, in observing the Sunday, they are **accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope**” (*Our Sunday Visitor, Feb. 5, 1950. This is perhaps the most important and influential Roman Catholic journal in the USA*)
 - “**Question:** What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?” **Answer:** It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of Jesus Christ, has transferred this rest to the Sunday. **Thus the observance of Sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] Church**” (*Monsignor Louis Segur, Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, 1868, p. 213. Segur was a French Roman Catholic apologist, and later a diplomatic and judicial official at Rome*).
 - “A word about Sunday. God said: ‘Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day!’ The Sabbath was Saturday, not Sunday; why, then, do we keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday? **The Church altered the observance of the Sabbath to the observance of Sunday.** . . . Protestants who say that they go by the Bible and the Bible only, and that they do not believe anything that is not in the Bible, must be rather puzzled by the keeping of Sunday when God distinctly said, ‘Keep holy the Sabbath day.’ The word Sunday does not come anywhere in the Bible so, **without knowing it, they are obeying the authority of the Catholic Church.**” (*Henry T. Cafferata, The Catechism Simply Explained [London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1938], p. 89. Cafferata was a Roman Catholic theologian*)

So the mark of the Papacy, viz., Sunday observance, will be enforced by America, when it sets up an image to the Papacy through an end-time union of church and state (the ‘image of the beast’).

- vi. It is interesting that God’s saints too have a mark. It is called the **seal of God**:

Rev. 7:2-4 - ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the _____ of the living _____. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we

have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand^c [see Endnote C] of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.”

Rev. 14:1-5 – “¹Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his _____ and his Father’s _____ written on their _____....³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.⁴ These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.⁵ No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”

Notice it is only placed on the **forehead** (indicating belief and allegiance to God), whereas the mark of the beast is on placed on both the **forehead and the hand** (the hand signifying forced obedience without mental agreement). So the mark of the beast will be received by those who fully believe in it and have pledged themselves to the system (‘forehead’ people), as well as those who are forced along with the system, and follow it out of convenience, but don’t fully believe in it (the ‘hand’ people). The fact that the seal is only in the forehead means that only those who fully believe in God with all their minds will receive it. No ‘hand’ people who follow God out of convenience will get sealed at the end of time.

- vii. The Bible uses the words **seal** and **sign** interchangeably:

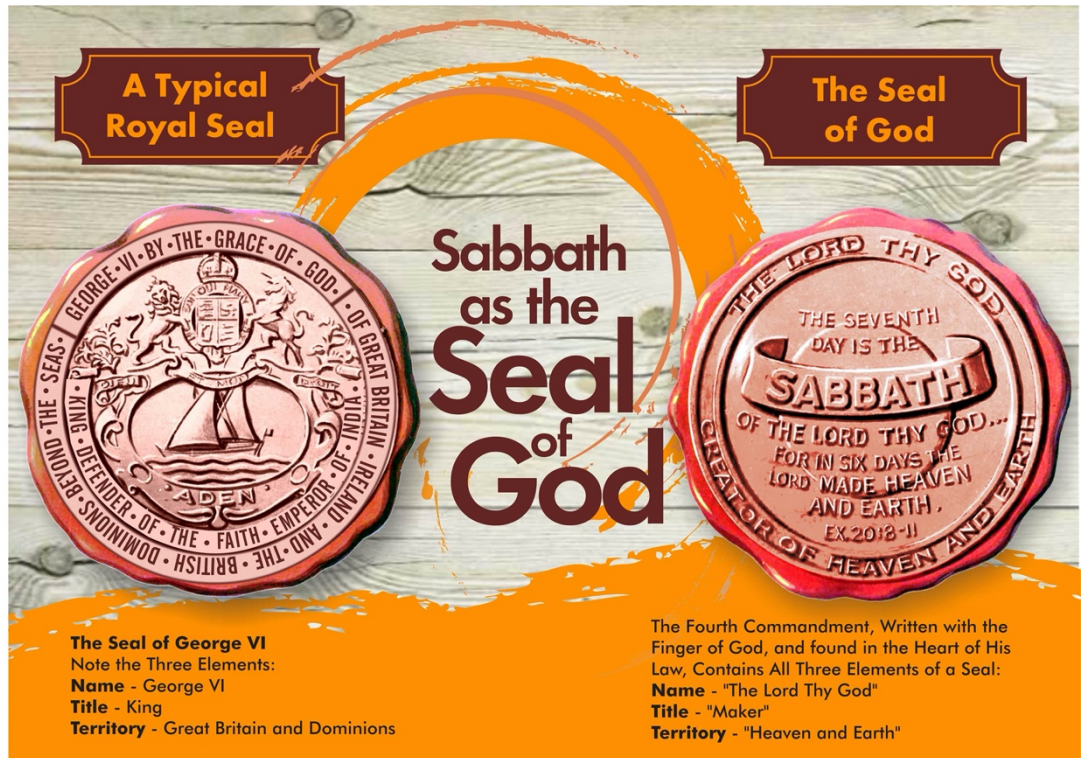
Rom. 4:11 – “And he received the _____ of circumcision, a _____ of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.”

- ix. In the context of Rev 13 and 14, we have to ask: What is God’s sign or seal, which is the opposite of the mark of the beast. From the argument above the answer is unmistakably the Sabbath which is called a **sign** between God and his people:

Eze. 20:12, 20 – “¹² Also I gave them my _____ as a _____ between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy....²⁰ Keep my _____ holy, that they may be a _____ between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

- x. It is worth noting that ancient Middle Eastern seals (and even modern day seals) contained three elements: **name, title and territory**. The Sabbath is the only commandment of all ten that contains this seal: **God’s name** [‘The Lord Thy God’], **His title** [‘Maker’] and **territory** [‘Heaven and earth’]. This seal is

embedded in the centre of God’s law and thus evidence of its authenticity and binding force.



- xi. Biblically, a seal has a number of characteristics. This helps us understand the wider meaning of the seal:

Character likeness

Rev. 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 _____ written on their _____.”

Ex. 34:5-7 – ⁵ Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the _____ of the Lord. ⁶ And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, _____ and _____, _____, and abounding in _____ and _____, ⁷ keeping _____ for thousands, _____ iniquity and transgression and sin...”

Notice in Ex. 34 that God proclaims His name by describing His character.

Ownership

Circumcision was a sign that Israel belong to Yahweh:

Gen. 17:7-11 – ⁷ And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. ⁸ Also I give

to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and _____.”⁹ And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.¹⁰ This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be _____; ¹¹ and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a _____ of the covenant between Me and you.”

Protection

Eze. 9:4-5 – “⁴and the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a _____ on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”⁵To the _____ He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and _____; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.”

Here the mark/seal is used positively as a sign of protection, just as it is for the saints in Rev. 7 and 14.

Genuineness

This Roman seal indicated genuineness, i.e. that it came from Pilate himself:

Matt. 27:66 – “So they went and made the tomb secure, _____ the stone and setting the guard.”

The following verse shows that Jesus is genuinely from the Father:

John 6:27 – “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His _____ on Him.”

All of the above concepts converge to describe God’s end time seal of His saints. The seal, as represented outwardly by the Sabbath, is the symbol of **character likeness** with the Father, i.e. His commandments are written on their hearts (and not kept legalistically). It also shows that the saints are loyal to God, proving to the world that He is their Creator and **Owner**. His seal guarantees the **protection** of their souls for eternity, and proves the **genuineness** of their spiritual experience.

- xii. Although saints are sealed throughout history by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14), there have been special seals/signs for special crises (e.g. the blood on the doorposts during the Exodus). God’s end time seal guarantees fixity of character (Rev. 22:11), and is the saints’ special protection during the seven Last Plagues.

Rev. 22:11 – “He who is _____, let him be unjust _____; he who is _____, let him be filthy _____; he who is _____, let him be righteous _____; he who is _____, let him be holy _____.”

This verse literally reads, “The one doing unrighteousness, let him do unrighteousness still; and the filthy one, let him be made filthy still; and the righteous one, let him do righteousness still; and the holy one, let him be made holy still.” These words point to a time when the destiny of each person is settled for eternity, when the door of mercy finally closes. Those who were unjust will habitually continue their unjust behaviour; and so will the righteous theirs. A person’s character at this stage is forever fixed! This declaration will take place in heaven at the end of the judgement (see Rev. 14:7) when every case will have been decided.

The very next verse (Rev. 22:12) tells us that Jesus will come to this earth and bring His reward with Him (Rev. 22:12). God’s sealing ensures that we will be on the right side when the door of mercy closes, viz., be part of those who are righteous and holy.

- xiii. So at the end of time, we will have 2 different groups with 2 different signs (mark of the beast, and the seal of God). These signs represent whose authority we accept, just like what happened in Eden. There God made a tree a test of loyalty to His authority. The issue was not really about a tree as such, but about loyalty to God. When Adam and Eve took of the fruit, they proved disloyal to God, and loyal to Satan. So the Sabbath versus Sunday issue, will not just be an issue about a day^D (**see Endnote D**). It is a test of loyalty and determines whose authority we accept in our lives – either man’s or God’s.
- xiv. God does not hold us accountable for what we did not know. You may not have known that Sabbath is on a Saturday, and may have ignorantly kept Sunday holy. Don’t lose heart! God in His mercy will not hold you accountable for what you did not know in the past, but he expects you to be obedient when new truth comes your way^E (**see Endnote E**).
- xv. No one has received the mark of the beast or the end time seal of God as yet. These are still future, and will be received after the image to the beast has been set up by the USA to enforce Sunday laws.
- xvi. As we can see from the discussion above, the mark is not a **physical** one, but a symbol of whether our allegiance is with God, or a man-made system – and this is outwardly manifested in Sabbath or Sunday worship.
- xvii. In summary of the mark of the beast, we have noticed the following:
 - The fact that it is on the hand and forehead links it to God’s commandments (Deut. 6:6-8)
 - Commandment keepers are contrasted to those who have the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:12 cf. 14:9-10)

- The Bible uses the words *seal* and *sign* interchangeably (Rom. 4:11)
- The saints too have a seal/mark in their foreheads (Rev. 7:2-4; 14:1-5)
- The Bible calls the Sabbath God's sign/seal (Eze. 20:12, 20)
- The Sabbath contains all the elements of a seal: name, title and territory – showing its authenticity from the Creator Himself
- The call to worship the beast, and receive his mark (Rev. 13:12, 16) is contrasted to the call to worship the Creator and receive His seal, the Sabbath (Rev. 14:7)
- The Papacy calls Sunday worship a *mark* of its authority
- Thus the mark of the beast is clearly a reference to Sunday worship
- Sunday versus Sabbath observance will become a key issue at the end of time, representing those who follow man-made traditions (Mark 7:9) versus those who follow what God says. These two days will expose where our loyalty lies.
- The mark is not a physical one, and will only be imposed sometime in the future

m) **Vs. 17: Cannot buy or sell** – They will also not be allowed to trade, and will most surely have their bank accounts and other assets frozen. Other penalties too will be imposed.

n) **Vs. 17-18: Number of the beast ... 666** – The practice of calculating the numerical value of words and names is called gematria, and was used in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages. This beast is Roman, and the official language of Rome is Latin, so the number must be found in the Latin language. Notice that it is the number of a **man**, and a blasphemous name at that. One of the titles of the **man** at the head of this religious system, the Pope, is **Vicarius Filii Dei** (Vicar of Christ) as attested to by a number of historical sources. Vicar of Christ, means the one who takes the place of Christ on earth. So when we put numerals to this blasphemous title, we **calculate** it as follows:

V = 5	F = 0	D = 500
I = 1	I = 1	E = 0
C = 100	L = 50	I = 1
A = 0	I = 1	Total = 501
R = 0	I = 1	
I = 1	Total = 53	
U = 5		
S = 0		
Total = 112		

Thus 112 + 53 + 501 = 666

Personal Reflection

- I am determined to receive the seal of God and not the mark of the beast
- I resolve to resist all counterfeit religion
- I accept Jesus into my life / recommit my life to Jesus

What personally stood out for me in this lesson:

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^A According to Luke 23:50 – 24:2 the Sabbath is on a **Saturday**. The day Jesus was crucified is called Preparation Day (23:54), and still remembered and celebrated by Christians today as **Good Friday**. The day after Christ’s crucifixion is called the Sabbath (vs. 54), and the day thereafter is the first day of the week, when Christ was resurrected (24:1-2), still commemorated today as **Easter Sunday**.

^B Some have argued that the Sabbath was for Israel, and therefore does not need to be kept by New Testament Christians under the new covenant. They use Ex. 31:12, 17 which states that Sabbath was a **sign between God and the children of Israel**. The difficulty with that reasoning however, is that the new covenant is also made with the **“house of Israel”** (see Heb. 8:8, 10). So why should the new covenant be kept today, but the Sabbath not be kept? Even though the house of Israel historically referred to the Jewish nation, Gal. 3:7 defines Israel – Abraham’s children – as ‘those who believe’. It is therefore reasonable to say that just as the new covenant, which is ‘for the house of Israel,’ applies to ‘those who believe,’ so the Sabbath, which is God’s sign between Himself and Israel likewise applies to ‘those who believe’.

^C The 144 000 are sealed. This is a symbolic number that suggests the completeness and vastness of the multitude of the sealed. Twelve is the number of ancient Israel in the Old Testament, and also the number representing the New Testament church, the 12 apostles. The blending of the tribes and the apostles suggests the unity of God’s church, Jews and Gentiles united as one. Thus 144 000 is a symbol of the unity, perfection and completeness of God’s church. (*Beatrice Neall, Sealed Saints and the Tribulation, Symposium on Revelation – Book I*). The 144 000 follow the Lamb wherever He goes, they have no lie in their mouths, and are virgins. This is therefore not legalistic keeping of the commandments. God has written His law in their hearts, that is, He has inscribed His character in the lives. Thus they love righteousness and hate evil (Ps 40:6-8).

^D We are surely to worship God every day, but the Sabbath is a special day that the Creator has set aside for mankind to stop all secular activities and spend time in worshipping Him. No other day was blessed and sanctified as was the Sabbath. Some may however say that keep every day as a Sabbath, not just the seventh day; but if that were the case, they would not be able to work at all, for the commandments forbids work on Sabbaths. How then would it be possible to make a livelihood?

^E Acts 17:30 tells us that God overlooks things in the times of ignorance. However, when light comes and we still choose to follow our old paths of darkness, that is when condemnation comes. John 3:19 gives us a principle of how people are condemned. When unenlightened, God does not condemn us (see Luke 23:34; John 15:22; 1 Tim. 1:13). However, when the light of truth comes across our paths, but we are still unwilling to give up our old ways of ‘darkness’; we will find ourselves condemned.