

The Sealing Message

During the time of the end, a special sealing work began with the proclamation of the everlasting gospel as revealed in the three angels' messages. Revelation 14:6-12. One hundred and forty-four thousand servants of God are sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads. Revelation 7:1-4; 14:1 (cf Exodus 34:5-7). Those who allow the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth receive the seal of God (John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; Ephesians 1:13), which is a sign of recognition (Ezekiel 20:20; 2 Timothy 2:19).

All the faithful believers who died in the faith of the third angel's message, keeping the Sabbath, are a part of the 144,000 and will come up in a special resurrection before the coming of Christ. Revelation 14:13; Daniel 12:2. These will be among the living saints at His coming.

As the character of God, revealed in His law, is imprinted upon their hearts by the Holy Spirit, they are sanctified in the truth. Isaiah 8:16; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17 (cf Psalm 119:142). When these conditions are fully met, then Sabbath-keeping is a sign of sanctification, as well as a sign of distinction. It identifies us as worshipers of the true God and distinguishes us from the children of disobedience. Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Exodus 31:16-18; Ezekiel 9:4-6.

The mark of the beast is a counterfeit of the seal of God. Two main apostate religio-political powers (Revelation 13:3, 4, 8, 11-17) are about to control the so-called Christian world with man-made laws in conflict with the law of God. Then those who obey God will suffer fierce persecution (the wrath of the dragon). On the other hand, those who disobey God will receive the mark of the beast (counterfeit sabbath-Sunday), and they, together with the beast, will suffer the consequences of their choice in the seven last plagues (the wrath of God). Revelation 14:9-11; 15:1; 16:1, 2, 10, 11.

A comparison between Revelation 6:12-17 and Revelation 14:14-16 (cf Matthew 13:39) reveals that the sealing message, which includes a warning against the mark of the beast, belongs to the time of the end. It began in 1844.

The Seal of the Living God

"What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption."—SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 968

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God."—The Great Controversy, p. 605.

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have the passport through the gates of the Holy City."—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 970.

"Christ, only Christ and His righteousness, will obtain for us a passport into heaven."—
Last Day Events, p. 283

"An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed."—Early Writings, p. 279.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand (RH March 9, 1905)."—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p.970.

The Mark of the Beast

"If the light of truth has been presented to you, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls my 'holy day,' you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God."—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 980.

"There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of 'the third angel' shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast."—The Signs of the Times, November 8, 1899.

"But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—'the mark of the beast.' And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'"—Great Controversy, p. 449.