



PROPHECY COUNTDOWN

The Deadly Mark or Saving Seal?

AN AMAZING FACT:

Facial recognition technology is a double-edged sword, and nowhere is it more ubiquitous than in China, where you can withdraw cash, buy groceries, and check in at the airport using only your face. The downside is that wherever you are in China, you are probably being watched. The country has over 700 million surveillance cameras—one lens for every two citizens! China argues that this is for the overall happiness and security of its people, yet many resent that their movements, finances, and even emotions are being monitored. Utilizing powerful supercomputers, the country's facial recognition system is capable of scanning all the faces of China's 1.4 billion citizens in just one second!

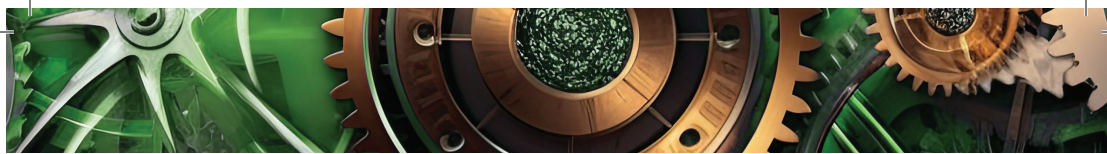
We read in Genesis that after Cain killed Abel, the Lord set a mark on Cain as an ominous warning to future killers (4:15). We also read in Ezekiel chapter 9 that the angels place a mark on the foreheads of the faithful who were to be spared from a coming judgment.

The book of Revelation makes it clear that in the last days, everybody will be marked one way or the other. The lost will have the mark of the beast on their hand or forehead, and the saved will have the seal of God on their forehead.



LESSON
15





What are these marks or seals everyone will wear in the last days? Are they symbolic or literal? According to Bible prophecy, having the right mark will have eternal consequences, so this is a subject we absolutely must understand ...



When you see a blank, use your Bible to look up the missing word and fill it in.



Who will be protected through the seven last plagues?

Revelation 7:3

Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have _____ the servants of our God on their _____.

NOTE: Those who receive God's seal on their foreheads will be protected during the seven last plagues. (See also Psalm 91:7–11.)



What is this “seal” the righteous have on their foreheads?

Isaiah 8:16

Bind up the testimony, seal the _____ among my disciples.

NOTE: God's seal is found in His law. A seal is what makes a document official, and it normally contains three principal characteristics: a name, an office, and a territory. An example of this, “Cyrus king of Persia,” is found in Ezra 1:1.



Which of the Ten Commandments contains all the elements of a seal?

Exodus 20:11

For in six days the _____ the heavens and the earth, the sea, and _____ that is in them.



NOTE: The fourth commandment is the only one of the ten that contains all three elements of a seal: (1) "The LORD"—His name, (2) "made"—His office as Creator, (3) "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them"—His territory.



What has God given as a special sign of His power?

Ezekiel 20:12 *I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a _____ between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.*

Ezekiel 20:20 *Hallow My _____, and they will be a _____ between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.*

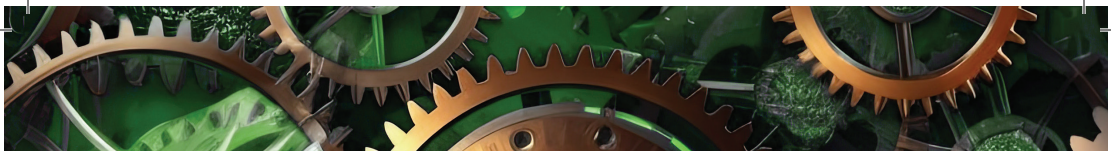
Exodus 31:13 *Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a _____ between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.*

NOTE: God states that He gave the Sabbath as a sign of His power to create *and* sanctify. It is His seal—a mark of authority. The words "sign," "seal," and "mark" are used interchangeably throughout the Bible, along with the word "token" in the King James Version. (See Genesis 17:11, Romans 4:11, Revelation 7:3, and Ezekiel 9:4.)



What does the second beast of Revelation 13 force all to receive?

Revelation 13:16 *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a _____ on their right hand or on their _____.*



What is the mark of the beast?

Revelation 14:11

They have no rest day or night, [those] who _____ the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

NOTE: Clearly, the mark of the beast is related to worship. We identified the first beast of Revelation 13 in Lesson 11. What is its mark of power and authority? The best way to discover its mark is to ask the papacy directly. Notice the following sections from Catholic catechisms:

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

"A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."¹

"Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."²

The papacy is saying that its mark of power and authority is making Sunday a holy day—a change that virtually the entire Christian world accepts. (See supplement entitled "What Important Question Does the Papacy Ask Protestants?")

1. Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957 edition), p. 50.

2. Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, third American edition, revised, n.d.), p. 174.



Is either the mark of the beast or the seal of God visible?

Hebrews 10:16

Says the LORD: I will put My laws into their _____, and in their _____ I will write them.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Whatever your _____ finds to do, do it with your might.

Exodus 13:9

It shall be as a _____ to you on your hand and as a _____ between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth.

Isaiah 59:6, 7

Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their _____. ... Their _____ are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

NOTE: Neither the mark of the beast nor the seal of God is outwardly visible. The forehead represents the mind, and the hand is a symbol of work. "Between your eyes" and "on your hand" are consistent symbols in Scripture for a person's thoughts and actions (Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18). A person will receive the mark of the beast in his forehead by choosing to believe that Sunday is sacred in spite of Bible truth. A person will be marked in the right hand by working on God's Sabbath or by outwardly keeping Sunday laws for convenient reasons—to keep a job, appease family, etc.

Although the sign is invisible to men, God will know who has which mark (2 Timothy 2:19). In a sense, each person will mark himself. If you respect and regard God's holy Sabbath, He will mark you as His own. If you regard the beast's false Sabbath, He will mark you as belonging to the beast.



How does Jesus determine if we are His servants?

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you _____.

John 14:15

If you love Me, _____ My commandments.



Does anyone have the mark of the beast now?

Revelation 13:17 *No one may buy or _____ except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

NOTE: No person has the mark now. When it becomes a forced issue, only those who have received the mark of the beast will be able to buy or sell. At that time, people who keep God's Sabbath will do so at the risk of their livelihoods (Revelation 13:17) and ultimately their lives (v. 15), while those who choose to profane His holy day and cast their votes for Sunday legislation will be marked as belonging to Antichrist. All who are loyal to Jesus and His law will receive the Savior's glorious seal, thus making them His forever. Those who try to remain neutral will be counted for Antichrist (Matthew 12:30).

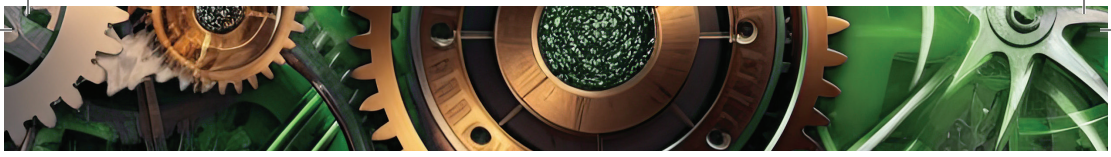


What two things does the Antichrist power attempt to change?

Daniel 7:25 *He ... shall intend to change _____ and _____.*

NOTE: Daniel 7 reveals an Old Testament description of the Antichrist power. It predicts that the beast would attempt to change God's law and times. The papacy has tried to change God's law by (1) omitting the second commandment because it condemns the veneration of images; (2) dividing the tenth commandment into two to preserve the number; and (3) shortening the fourth commandment from 98 words to just eight to avoid mentioning which day is the Sabbath.

The papacy attempted to change God's times by (1) teaching people to recognize the first day of the week as the Sabbath instead of the seventh day and (2) adopting the pagan Roman practice of beginning each day at midnight instead of sundown. God's timing for the Sabbath is "from evening to evening" (Leviticus 23:32)—from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. No mortal should ever tamper with God's sacred time or law (Matthew 5:18).



What was God's criticism of His ancient priests or pastors?

Malachi 2:8, 9 *You have caused many to stumble at the _____. ...
You have not kept My ways but have shown _____ in the law.*

Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because
you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;
because you have _____ the _____ of your God, I also will
forget your children.*

NOTE: God is hurt when His pastors are "partial" to eight or nine commandments and cause many to stumble over His command to keep the Sabbath holy. Virtually all churches admit in their official writings that there is no scriptural support for Sunday sacredness. Tragically, both Protestantism and Catholicism stand guilty before the judgment bar of God for throwing out the Bible Sabbath! God Himself gave the Sabbath as a sign, or mark, of His power to create and to redeem.

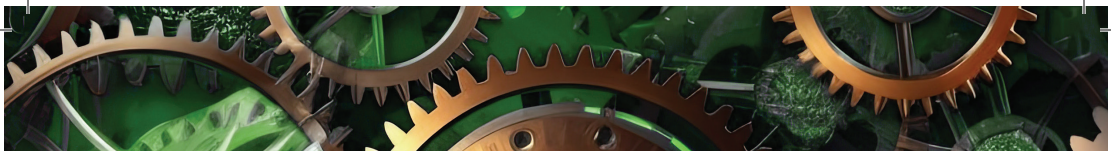


What specific commandment does God rebuke religious leaders for violating?

Ezekiel 22:8 *You have despised My holy things and profaned My
_____.*

Ezekiel 22:26 *Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy
things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, ... and they
have _____ their eyes from My _____, so that I
am profaned among them.*

NOTE: God pointedly rebukes religious leaders who say that the Sabbath doesn't matter and who claim "thus says the Lord" when it is not true. Clearly, times have not changed. God has placed the Sabbath, His great sign, in the middle of His law and begins that commandment with the word "remember." Yet many people today feel that keeping His seventh-day Sabbath is a strange thing.



What specific sin does God command His leaders to denounce?

Isaiah 58:1, 13, 14 *Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; _____ My people their transgression. ... If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your _____ on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a _____, the holy day of the LORD honorable, ... then you shall delight yourself in the LORD.*

NOTE: Because all disobedience against the Ten Commandments is sin, God also charges spiritual leaders to call Sabbath-breaking a sin and to insist that His people keep His Sabbath day holy. As with the disciples of old, our only safety is in obeying God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

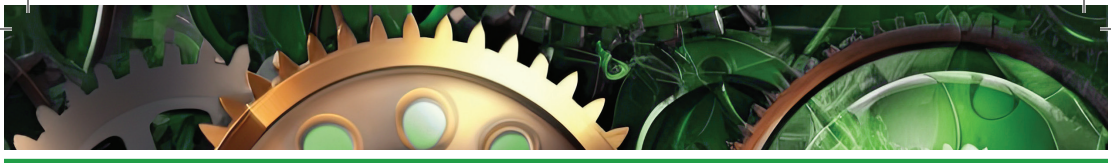


When you decide to accept Jesus and fully follow Him, what happens?

Jeremiah 6:16 *Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find _____ for your souls.*

Matthew 11:29 *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find _____ for your _____.*

NOTE: Glorious rest and peace enter your heart at conversion! The Sabbath, which means "rest," is a symbol of the rest and peace that comes from the new birth (Hebrews 4:1–10). Those who are truly born again will keep the Sabbath as a blessed sign of that rest (notice verses 4, 9, 10). No greater joy can a convert experience than the joy of fellowship with God on His holy day.



» YOUR RESPONSE

Before you can say “no” to the mark of the beast, you must say “yes” to the seal of God. Jesus is waiting at the door of your heart for an answer. Will you decide now to move under His glorious Sabbath banner as evidence that you have accepted Him as your Creator and Savior?

ANSWER: _____



FURTHER STUDY

What Important Question Does the Papacy Ask Protestants?

Protestants have repeatedly asked the papacy, "How could you dare to change God's law?" But the question posed to Protestants by the Roman Catholic Church is even more penetrating:

You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not how you can answer. You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of that day which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy the seventh day is one of the ten commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding; who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered" (Library of Christian Doctrine: *Why Don't You Keep Holy the Sabbath-Day?* London: Burns and Oates, Ltd., pp. 3, 4).

NOTES:

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