

What Is the Mark of the Beast?

If the seal of God is the sign of allegiance to the Creator—a spiritual mark upon those who surrender to His Spirit and obey His commandments—then the mark of the beast must be its antithesis: a counterfeit sign of loyalty to a man-made authority that exalts itself against God.

In Revelation 13, the prophetic vision grows dark. A beast arises from the sea, representing a union of political and religious powers (Revelation 13:1–8), followed by another beast from the earth, which exercises its power to enforce worship. It performs signs, deceives the world, and commands all to receive a mark “*on their right hand or on their foreheads*” (Revelation 13:16). This is not merely about economics or politics—it is a question of worship and authority.

This mark represents enforced worship that substitutes human tradition for God’s law. What part of God’s law has been almost universally set aside among Christians? It would be the fourth commandment, the only one that begins with the word “*Remember*.” This is the commandment that identifies God as the Creator and Lawgiver, and as we’ve already studied, it is truly the “seal” of God’s law and of those who have entered into covenant with Him.

Throughout history, Sunday observance has been exalted by ecclesiastical power in place of the seventh-day Sabbath commanded by God. In fact, the church of Rome claims that this is a sign of her authority to change the requirements of God! Daniel 7:25 predicts that this “*little horn*” power would “*intend to change times and law*.” This change isn’t just about adjusting the day—it’s a bold attack on a direct requirement of God, and changes the entire meaning of the Sabbath: from a sign of God’s redemptive Grace to a sign of man’s authority.

While the seal of God is placed only upon the willing—those who follow the Lamb by faith and are transformed by the Spirit—the mark of the beast is imposed through coercion. It comes not through conviction, but compliance. It is enforced **by law** as Revelation 13:15–17 describes, through political pressure and the threat of exclusion or death.

This issue will not always remain in the shadows. A time is coming when every person will be called to choose: to honor the commandments of God or submit to the decrees of man. In that moment, the real question will be clear—Whose authority will you recognize?

In the last great conflict, the trumpet is sounding once more—announcing the verdict of God’s last judgment. God’s faithful are being sealed, and the kingdoms of the world are becoming the kingdoms of Christ. (Revelation 11:15) Which side will you be on? Will you choose His seal and stand against the enemy’s mark? Will you stand with God’s remnant and add your voice to the proclamation of these three angel’s messages?

ANCIENT WORLDS *of the* BIBLE

Study Guide 15

by Pastor Daniel McFeeters

Mark of the Beast & Israel’s Message for the World

Travel to Jerusalem, and you will likely hear the sound of the shofar echoing through the streets on Friday evening, announcing the approach of the Sabbath. Throughout the pages of Scripture, the sound of the *trumpet* or *shofar* carries an unmistakable gravity. It is not a casual note—it is a summons. In the camp of Israel, the shofar’s blast called the people together, stirred them to action, and awakened them to the presence of God. It echoed across the wilderness as a signal that something sacred—or something urgent—was unfolding.

The prophets understood this. “Blow the trumpet in Zion,” Joel cried, “sound an alarm on My holy mountain.” The trumpet was a divine alarm, not only to warn of judgment, but to awaken hearts to repentance, to prepare the way for mercy. Its voice pierced through complacency, calling God’s people to remember who they were, and whose they were.

Jesus, too, sounded such a warning. Standing in view of the magnificent temple—glorious in stone, gilded in gold—He made a prediction that must have seemed unfathomable: “Not one stone shall be left here upon another.” Yet just a few decades later, those words were fulfilled with chilling accuracy. The Roman legions stormed Jerusalem, and the temple—once thought immovable—was reduced to rubble.

Archaeologists have uncovered a large stone near the southwest corner of the Temple Mount. On it is an inscription in ancient Hebrew: “To the place of trumpeting.” This was the spot where a priest once stood to sound the warning to the city—a final call before Sabbath, or before siege.

That stone remains a silent witness. It testifies that God’s warnings are never empty. He speaks before He acts. He pleads before He judges. And even now, the trumpet is sounding again—not from a temple mount, but through the pages of prophecy, calling us to discern the times and prepare our hearts.

Are we listening?

A Triple Warning

Trumpets have often been used to sound a warning—especially warnings of God’s judgment. In fact, the book of Revelation speaks of seven “trumpets” that herald judgments falling on the earth through successive periods of history (Revelation 8–11). Each trumpet carries a divine warning. But as earth’s final events approach, the last and most urgent message isn’t symbolized by a trumpet blast—it’s communicated through the voices of three angels, flying in the midst of heaven (Revelation 14:6–12). This is God’s final call to the world.

The first angel proclaims that the hour of God’s judgment has arrived. This is the same judgment hour that we studied in lesson 12, pictured in Daniel 7 and 8. It’s a message for “*every nation, tribe, tongue, and people*,” calling humanity to worship the Creator. The language echoes the Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:11: “*Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.*” In the context of judgment, the call to remember the Creator becomes a call to be faithful to His commandments.

The second angel announces the fall of spiritual Babylon. Who is Babylon? The passage implies that they lead the world into confusion and false worship. It is a conglomeration of the corrupted version of Christianity who have forgotten the true worship of the Creator, who are not only teaching false doctrine but through their illicit relationship with government are forcing others to follow it. This echoes the story in Daniel 5, where King Belshazzar defiled the sacred vessels of the temple, drinking wine and praising false gods. That very night, a mysterious hand wrote his judgment on the palace wall—*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*. Babylon fell, and God’s people were delivered (Daniel 5:30–31). In Revelation, Babylon again collapses under divine judgment, clearing the way for God’s people to be freed.

The third angel delivers the most urgent warning of all—a warning of judgments to fall on those who worship the beast and receive its mark. This is God’s answer to the crisis of Revelation 13, where the dragon and the beasts enforce false worship through deception and coercion. Those who remain loyal to God will face intense trials, just as the three Hebrews stood faithful on the plain of Dura when all others bowed (Daniel 3:16–18). In the end, a remnant remains—described in Revelation 14:12 as “those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” These are the ones who endure.

Who, then, are these angels? While it could be easy to imagine brilliant heavenly messengers, Revelation 14:6 says that they “preach” the gospel. Only human beings, Jesus’ followers, are commissioned to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20), indicating that these messengers are really God’s last-day followers described in Revelation 14:12. Like the demon-possessed man who was healed by Christ, they are able to share their testimony of Christ’s transforming grace, giving power to their end-time message of redemption and warning. Will you be among that number?

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

SCRIPTURE: Read Revelation 14:6-12 and Revelation 13:11-17

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those[fn] who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” – Revelation 14:12

REFLECTION: The three angels’ messages are God’s final call to a confused and divided world. In what ways have you heard the “trumpet” of warning in your own life? How is God calling you to prepare—not only for the final conflict, but to live faithfully in the present?

EXPERIENCE: Is there a time in your life that you had to choose to be faithful to God despite opposition from peers or family members? Do you think God was using it to prepare you for the larger, end-time decisions described in Revelation?

QUESTION: Why is worship such a central issue in the final crisis? What does Revelation reveal about the kind of worship God desires—and how does it contrast with the counterfeit worship promoted by the beast?

QUESTION: The Sabbath is described in Scripture as a “sign” between God and His people (Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:20). How does the Sabbath deepen your understanding of God’s authority, character, and grace? Why do you think this commandment has become such a focal point in prophecy?

QUESTION: Revelation describes two marks—one given by God, the other by the beast. Both marks reflect a choice of allegiance. What are some practical ways you can show loyalty to Christ today in preparation for the challenges of tomorrow?

RESPONSE: What is one specific step you can take this week to align more fully with God’s will and reflect His seal in your life?

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