

# The Mark of the Beast

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The book of Revelation describes an event in which a powerful political leader (known as the Beast) and an apostate religious figure (known as the False Prophet) cause the vast majority of people on earth to receive a special mark. Those who refuse will suffer great persecution and even death while those who receive this mark will suffer the wrath of God Almighty.

Just what is the “mark of the beast”? This booklet answers that question and if you’re like most professing Christians, that answer is going to shock you.

## Introduction

Nineteen hundred years ago, the apostle John was exiled to the small island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Patmos was a Roman penal colony, and most scholars believe John was imprisoned there because of the great gospel he preached - a fact that John himself confirms.

I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1:9)

The great historian Eusebius indicated that John was banished to Patmos by Emperor Domitian in 95 A.D. and released some 18 months later (Ecclesiastical History, 3.20.8-9).

While on Patmos, John was taken in vision to the very last days of man's reign on earth. At that time, he saw a special mark being given to virtually millions of people.

Just what is the "mark of the beast"? Today, there are many opinions concerning this mark. Some believe it's a computer chip that is somehow implanted in people. Others believe it's a social security card or special identification card. Still others think it's the magnetic strip that appears on the back of credit cards. It has also been suggested that this mark could be a bar code on merchandise that is scanned at retail businesses.

But is it possible to truly know what this mark is? The answer is "yes." And it's an extraordinary story that goes back to the very beginning of man's reign on earth – to a place called Eden. But before we go there, let's look at the mark John saw and specifically who is responsible for it.

## Two Beasts and a Dragon

In the 13th chapter of the book of Revelation, the apostle John identifies three principle figures responsible for imposing this mark on the world. Verse one identifies the first figure. Notice what John records.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. (Rev. 13:1)

The Bible reveals that this great beast is a symbol for a world ruling government and its leader. This government exercises tremendous influence over the world, much the same as the Roman Empire did during the first century when John saw this vision. But how does this beast (government) get its power? And what is the source of its authority? John answers this question in the very next verse.

...And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Rev. 13:2)

Notice the source of this government's power comes from a dragon. But who is this dragon? Once again, John provides the answer to this question in the prior chapter.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev. 12:9)

Based on John's words, this world ruling super power receives its authority from none other than Satan himself, the greatest deceiver in history.

## The Great Deceiver

It is important to understand that when the apostle John describes Satan, he indicates that he (Satan) deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Tragically, this is a truth that most people cannot grasp.

One of the great mistakes made by man is that he has underestimated the enormous influence Satan has had on the world. Even within professing Christianity, Satan is mocked and ridiculed. How many times have you seen T.V. evangelists prance around on stage and shout to the delight of their audience "We've got the devil on the run!"

However, before you dismiss Satan as some kind of spiritual lightweight, consider just a few of his accomplishments. God's word declares that Satan is responsible for snatching the word from hearers (Mt. 13:19), sewing tares among the wheat (Mt. 13:25, 38), and working in disobedience (Eph. 2:2). The apostle Paul labeled Satan as the one responsible for blinding the minds of unbelievers (2Cor. 4:4), and one who has to look at the world around us to see the scope of his influence.

The Bible reveals that while in the Garden of Eden, Satan seduced Adam and Eve to reject God and His law (Gen. 3:1-20). The scriptures also state that Satan moved King David to number Israel (1Chron. 21:1). He caused Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). He put betrayal into the heart of Judas Iscariot (Jn. 13:2) and was the source of Job's troubles (Job 1-2).

This once-beautiful archangel became so consumed with himself that he actually thought his wisdom was greater than that of God's. As a result, he waged a rebellion that was so filled with hate, his entire character became immersed in evil (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezk. 28:12-17).

The apostle John called Satan a murderer and a liar (Jn. 8:44), and his influence on society throughout history has been so devastating that at the end of man's reign on earth, the evil and violence he has spread will be so horrible that God will have to intervene or man will destroy himself (Mt. 24:22).

Satan, who is called the god of this world (2Cor. 4:4) and the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), has done everything in his power to destroy God's plan for mankind. He is responsible for every false religion and he is so seductive that he has even convinced professing Christianity to embrace Paganism in their worship.

The apostle Peter called Satan the great adversary and compared him to a roaring lion (1Pet. 5:8). Paul indicated that he fashions himself as an angel of light (2Cor. 11:14). As a result, man has been deceived from the beginning and that deception has not let up for 6000 years of human history.

Satan is a formidable enemy and to dismiss him as anything else is a huge mistake. Jesus Christ knew the power of Satan and the demon world and understood its potential threat. When teaching His disciples to pray, He instructed them to ask God to deliver them from "the evil one" (Mt. 6:13 NIV). Additionally, the scriptures reveal that Jesus once informed Peter that Satan desired to grind him (Peter) into powder (Lk. 22:31).

Is Satan powerful? The short answer is "yes" and he has dedicated his existence to blocking man's access to his Creator. This is the devil that will give power to the beast and that power will enable it to deceive the overwhelming majority of people on earth.

## A Second Beast

So far, we've seen that John saw a great beast rising up out of the sea. We also know that this beast represents a world ruling government empowered by "the great dragon" (Satan the devil). But John also sees a second beast. Notice what he records.

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. (Rev. 13:11)

Notice this second beast was like a lamb that spoke as a dragon. In other words, he had the appearance of being holy (lamb-like), just like Jesus Christ. But in reality, his words and his authority also came from the dragon, just the same as the first beast. John goes on to say that this second beast uses supernatural power to persuade man to pay homage to the first beast.

And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (Rev. 13:12-14)

Notice this second beast uses great miracles to convince man to worship the first beast. This is possible because man is fascinated by the supernatural. Even in the world today, magicians keep their audiences spellbound with feats that defy the imagination. However, these will look like simple parlor tricks when compared to the power displayed by this second beast. Add to that, this second beast, although called a beast, will not appear to be some hideous monster, but rather a man of God. The Bible describes Satan as one fashioning himself as an angel of light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness (2Cor. 11:14).

This second beast will be so appealing that people will conclude his miracles are evidence of God's favor. However, not everyone will succumb to his persuasiveness. Some will refuse to accept his authority and they will pay for their defiance with their lives. Notice what John says about this.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Rev. 13:15)

## A "Little Horn"

This second beast is also described in the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel. There, this beast is characterized as a "little horn" (Dan. 7:8) that "spoke great things" (verse 20). Daniel goes on to state that this "little horn" will make war with God's people and prevail against them.

And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them... (Dan. 7:20-21)

The war Daniel is speaking of is described in the New Testament as a time of great tribulation (Mt. 24:21) and is the fifth of seven seals the apostle John describes in the book of Revelation. Notice what John records about this seal.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Rev. 6:9-11)

The brutality inflicted on God's people at the time of the end will be unimaginably cruel and vicious and will not cease until the return of Jesus Christ. Notice the words of the prophet Daniel.

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom. (Dan. 7:21-22)

It is important to understand that although the persecution of God's people will be fierce, some will be protected. Jesus Himself even exhorted His followers to pray that they might be counted worthy to escape (Lk. 21:36). Additionally, the twelfth chapter of Revelation indicates that part of God's Church (personified as a woman) will be taken to a place of safety where it will be protected from Satan's wrath for three and a half years (see Rev. 12:13-17).

But clearly, there will be great persecution inflicted on God's people and this persecution will be orchestrated by a great religious leader under the direct supervision of Satan the devil.

## Changing "Times and Laws"

When describing this "little horn," Daniel makes a very interesting observation concerning something it does. Notice what Daniel writes.

And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Dan 7:25)

Notice this "little horn" "changes times and laws." But what does this mean? This may come as a surprise to many, but the way man calculates time today is vastly different from the way it is calculated in the scriptures. To illustrate this point, consider the following. God begins each day at even (sunset) while man begins the day in the middle of the night (midnight). Additionally, God begins the new year in the spring while man begins it in the middle of winter. God also concludes the week with His Sabbath (the seventh day) and although the days of the week have never been changed by man, his traditions have led most people to regard Sunday as the last day of the week. Even the number of days in each month is different than that prescribed in the scriptures.

The importance of time in God's plan cannot be overstated. Whether it's calculating God's Sabbath and Holy Days or allocating a specific period in which man will reign on earth, time is significant. Clearly, this "little horn" attempts to alter laws concerning time. But how?—and more importantly, why? As we proceed through this booklet, the answers to these questions will become clear, and those answers have a profound impact on the "mark of the beast."

## A Brief Review

We now see two beasts. First, a great political leader empowered by the devil. And second, a great religious leader, also empowered by the devil. Additionally, this religious leader uses great miracles to persuade literally millions of people to worship this great political leader and his kingdom. With this understanding, we are now ready to examine the "mark of the beast."

## The Mark of the Beast

John concludes the thirteenth chapter of Revelation by describing a special mark that is imposed on the vast majority of people on earth. Notice what John says about this mark.

And he the second beast causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or

sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.  
(Rev. 13:16-17)

Based on John's words in these verses, is it possible to understand what the "mark of the beast" is? Clearly, the mark John saw has some very interesting characteristics. Notice what these characteristics are.

- The mark was popular – all had it. (Rev. 13:16)
- The mark made it possible to buy and sell. (Rev. 13:17)
- The mark was placed in the right hand and the forehead. (Rev. 13:16)
- It was given by an apostate religious leader empowered by Satan. (Rev. 13:16)

The "mark of the beast" will also bring with it great consequences, for those who have it will suffer the wrath of God Almighty. Notice what your Bible says about those who receive this mark.

... If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. (Rev. 14:9-10)

God's wrath on those who receive the "mark of the beast" is powerful evidence of how He feels about sin. If not repented of, it will be punished. For those who have the "mark of the beast," that punishment will take the form of seven trumpet plagues described in chapters eight and nine of Revelation and culminate with seven last plagues poured out of seven vials by seven angels (Rev. 16). The magnitude of God's abhorrence for man's sin will be felt by the world in a way never before experienced. Clearly, the "mark of the beast" is something every true believer should reject with all of his or her heart. But just what is the "mark of the beast"? And is there a key to understanding this mark?

## God Has a Mark

This might come as a surprise to most professing Christians, but God also has a mark and that mark is the key to understanding the "mark of the beast." God's mark is His law. Consider what God says about His law.

...And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in your heart... And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (Dt. 6:6-8)

The word "sign" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *owth* (Strong's #226) and can be translated as a "signal," "flag," or "mark." It is the same word used in Exodus 13:9 and Deuteronomy 11:18. These verses also express God's desire for His law to be the central part of His people's lives.

At this point, it is also important to notice that God instructs His law to be worn as "a sign upon the hand" and "as frontlets between the eyes." In other words, God's law is to be worn in the hand and the forehead. These verses take on profound significance when compared to the "mark of the beast." Notice that the "mark of the beast" is also worn in the hand and the forehead (Rev. 13:16-17).

Clearly, there is a connection between the "mark of the beast" and God's law. Just as obedience to God's law is a sign that identifies His people – those who are subject to Him – the "mark of the beast" identifies those who have yielded themselves to a beast power under the influence of Satan the devil.

## God's Sabbath – A Sign

It is also interesting to note that within God's law, there is a specific commandment that is identified as a sign between God and His people. This commandment is the concerns the Sabbath. Consider what God says about this HOLY time.

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed. (Ex. 31:13-17)

God would later use the great prophet Ezekiel to once again confirm that the Sabbath was a sign between Him and His people. Notice what Ezekiel writes.

Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. (Ezk. 20:12)

Then, in verses 19 and 20, God continues to describe this sign.

I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; And hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God. (Ezk. 20:19-20)

Notice that in these verses God uses the word "Sabbaths" (plural) when describing the sign between Him and His people. This is because God created more than one Sabbath.

In addition to the weekly Sabbath, God instituted seven annual Sabbaths. These annual Sabbaths or "high Sabbaths" are identified in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. There, God instructs Moses to proclaim to Israel a magnificent plan of salvation. Notice these instructions.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts... (Lev. 23:1-2)

The Hebrew word for "convocations" in verse two is *miqra*. Literally translated, this word can mean "an assembly or calling together," "an appointed meeting," and "a rehearsal." Clearly, God is conveying to the children of Israel that He requires their attendance on these special days.

In the New Testament, God also commands His people to "not forsake the assembling of themselves together "as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). The word "assemble" used by the author of Hebrews is *episunagoge* and pertains to meeting in the synagogue. These assemblies took place on the weekly Sabbath and high days. Although many professing Christians regard going to church on the Sabbath as just one of many options available to them, the scriptures clearly state otherwise. These days truly are holy convocations and require the assembling of God's people.

## God's Holy Days

After directing Moses to instruct the children of Israel concerning His "holy convocations" (Lev. 23:2), God identifies the weekly Sabbath as the first commanded assembly (verse 3). He then outlines seven annual Holy Days beginning with the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread and culminating with the Feast of Tabernacles and a Last Great Day.

Today, most professing Christians are totally unaware of these days and the great story they tell.

Instead, Christianity embraces traditions such as Christmas, Easter, and Lent, which derive their origins from the Pagan world. The result of not honoring God's annual Holy Days, professing Christians totally misunderstand God's plan for mankind.

Although it is not the intent of this booklet to examine these annual Sabbaths in detail, a brief review is appropriate. The following briefly outlines God's plan of salvation as revealed in His Holy Days.

### The Passover

The Passover (Lev. 23:5) represents one of the most powerful images in all the scriptures. It pictures a time of great deliverance. In the Old Testament, this day commemorated the deliverance of Israel from the bondage it suffered while enslaved in Egypt. But it also looked forward to a greater deliverance.

In the New Testament, the Passover pictures the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1Cor. 5:7). Today, every year, God's people around the world keep the Passover at its appointed time (Lk. 22:14) to commemorate the death of the Savior of the World. For just as the blood of the lamb made it possible for the Israelites to escape death (Ex. 12:12-13), the blood of Jesus Christ makes it possible for man to be reconciled back to God (Rom. 5:10) and to escape eternal death (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 1:7; 1Pet. 1:19-20; 1Jn. 1:7).

Additionally, although professing Christianity wants to decide for itself which days to honor, the scriptures admonish all true believers to follow Christ's example (1Pet. 2:21). Jesus and His followers never observed Easter but rather the Passover.

### The Days of Unleavened Bread

The Days of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6-8) picture a time when the children of Israel came out of Egypt (Ex. 12). In the New Testament, these days picture God's people coming out of sin (1Cor. 5:7-8). Egypt is pictured as a type of sin, as is leavened bread. These days commemorate our fight against sin and the importance of overcoming (Rev. 3:21).

### Pentecost

The Day of Pentecost, which takes place 50 days after the Sabbath following the Passover (Lev. 23:10-22), pictures a time when God established His covenant with the nation of Israel. At that time, God gave Israel His great moral code: the Ten Commandments. Some scholars believe that God gave Moses and the children of Israel the Ten Commandments on the very day of Pentecost (Ex. 19 and 20).

This day also looked forward to the time when God would make a new covenant with His people (Jer. 31:31-34). At that time, the Almighty would write His law on the heart of those who repented and came out of sin. This new covenant was established on the Day of Pentecost 30 A.D. and is described in the second chapter of the book of Acts. Pentecost takes place during the spring harvest (a small harvest) and reveals that God is only calling a few at this time. These few are referred to as His firstfruits (Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4). Those who keep the Day of Pentecost give honor to God and His calling.

### The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24-25) pictures a time of great deliverance. Its fulfillment will take place when Jesus Christ and His servants make war with the earth and subdue all nations (Jude 14-15; Rev. 19:11-21).

### The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32) pictures a time when all the sins that Satan has perpetrated will be conveyed back to him (Lev. 16) and he will be bound up and cast into a bottomless pit for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). This day also pictures the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and looks

forward to a time when man will be reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10) and finally be “at one” with Him. Once this is accomplished, Jesus Christ will preside over God’s great millennial Kingdom.

## The Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-36) pictures God’s Kingdom on earth when Jesus Christ will dwell with man and make His tabernacle with him. It is a time when the world will be filled with peace and prosperity (Isa. 2:4; 32:18). At that time, Jesus Christ and His saints will rule from Jerusalem (Dan. 7:22) and the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

## The Last Great Day

At the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles is the last of seven annual Holy Days (Lev. 23:36). The Last Great Day of the feast (Jn. 7:37) takes place during the fall harvest (a great harvest) and pictures a time when the billions of people who were never called will be resurrected and learn about the true God. The Bible indicates this resurrection will take place after the millennium (Rev. 20:5) and is a physical resurrection (Ezk. 37).

This day also pictures a time of God’s final judgment on mankind. At that time, the books of the Bible will be opened and everyone will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:11-15). When God’s people keep this day, they show honor to His sovereignty over the destiny of the universe. It is a time that pictures the culmination of a wonderful plan and the beginning of an eternal destiny God has for His children.

## An Extraordinary Story

God’s Holy Days reveal an extraordinary story. They reflect God’s infinite wisdom and declare a great hope to all mankind. The apostle Paul once wrote that these days are a “shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:17). The point he was making was that the days which God gave to Israel looked forward to a great fulfillment in Christ and His Kingdom. In a very real sense they are the architectural drawings of the destiny of the universe. It staggers the mind to think that those who call themselves “Christian” would not want to embrace these festivals because they declare their destiny.

Today, the vast majority of professing Christians have been charmed into abandoning God’s Holy Days and replacing them with days whose symbols include jolly old men coming down chimneys and bunnies laying chocolate eggs. These days, no matter how cloaked in piety by their pastors, actually mock God and constitute a total rejection of Him and His plan.

In a very real sense, God’s Holy Days proclaim the gospel. They look to a Kingdom and its King and reveal how God’s plan for mankind will be accomplished. These days have great meaning and declare Who God is. It is little wonder that the Eternal said that by keeping His Sabbaths, “you may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezk. 20:20). The logical question is: What happens if you don’t keep His Sabbaths?

## The Sabbath from the Beginning

Contrary to what most professing Christians believe, the Sabbath was not created by God while the children of Israel wandered in the Sinai Desert, but rather while Adam and Eve resided in the Garden of Eden. Notice what your Bible says about the very first Sabbath.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. (Gen. 2:2-3)

The word “sanctified” in verse three is an interesting word. Literally translated, it means “to consecrate” or “set apart for a holy purpose.” When speaking to the children of Israel, God explained what that purpose was. He stated that it was a sign between Him and the children of Israel throughout their generations, that they may know that God had sanctified them.

When man honors the Sabbath, he is acknowledging God’s plan concerning his own destiny. God sanctified the Sabbath as a sign that man was also set apart. In a very real sense, to reject God’s Sabbath is to reject the very purpose it pictures: man being born into God’s family and becoming His literal children (1Jn. 3:2).

## The Heavens Declare the Sabbath

The scriptures make it clear that God made the Sabbath on the seventh day of creation. But the Bible also reveals that God planned His Sabbath and Holy Days even before that. The book of Genesis declares that on the fourth day of creation, God created the astronomical bodies – the sun, moon, and stars. It also indicates God’s purpose for doing so. Notice what your Bible says about this creative act.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years... (Gen. 1:14)

There are two words of great significance in this verse. The word “sign” comes from the Hebrew word *owth*. It is the same word God used when describing His Sabbath (Ex. 31:13 and Ezk. 20:12.).

The word “seasons” in this verse comes from the Hebrew *moed* and pertains to “appointed times.” These times are those God appointed as His Holy Days. This being the case, God created the astronomical bodies in part so that man would know when to honor His Sabbaths.

## A Counter-Sabbath

Clearly, God created His Sabbath as a link between Himself and mankind. This day pictures a vital part of God’s plan of salvation. It also pictures His great millennial Kingdom when peace and prosperity will fill the earth (Isa. 30:23; 32:15) and the knowledge of God will be available to everyone (Mic. 4:1-2).

With this in mind, what do you think Satan the devil desires more than anything concerning the human family? He wants man to formally reject that link. He wants man to reject God’s Kingdom and all it will bring. The “mark of the beast” is designed to do just that. It is a rejection of God’s Sabbath and all that it pictures.

What is the “mark of the beast”? This mark is a counter-sabbath. A fake Sabbath—one that looks good, one that has all the trappings of “holiness” but in effect, totally rejects God’s authority and His plan for man.

## Embracing the Mark of the Beast

Today, we live in a world where the overwhelming majority of professing Christians have rejected God’s mark and have embraced another mark. Tragically, ancient Israel also polluted God’s Sabbath and was punished for it. Notice what your Bible says about this rebellion.

But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness: they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My judgments... and My Sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. (Ezk. 20:13)

Now compare this with what God says about those who receive the “mark of the beast.”

...If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God... (Rev. 14:9-10)

These words stand as a stern warning from God Himself that He is prepared to deal severely with those who defy His great law.

## The Sabbath through History

Throughout the Bible, the great champions of faith honored God's law concerning the day He sanctified. Consider just some examples. Moses and Aaron kept the Sabbath. Ezra and Nehemiah kept the Sabbath. David and Samuel kept the Sabbath. All the prophets of the Old Testament kept the Sabbath. All the apostles in the New Testament kept the Sabbath. The New Testament Church, including Gentile congregations, kept the Sabbath. Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath. God Himself kept the Sabbath. God's Church down through the centuries kept the Sabbath. And God's people today honor (keep) His Sabbath and His Holy Days.

But it doesn't end there. Your Bible powerfully declares that God's Sabbath will be kept when He establishes His great millennial Kingdom. Notice what God says about that Kingdom.

And it shall come to pass, that... from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord. (Isa. 66:23)

## Buying and Selling

The Bible speaks prolifically about the Sabbath in both the Old and New Testaments. The scriptures not only reveal the purpose of this day but also provide specific instructions concerning how it should be kept. One particular command regarding the Sabbath is to refrain from engaging in commerce as either the provider of goods or the consumer. Notice the words of Nehemiah.

And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day... (Neh 10:31)

Later Nehemiah would display great agitation because God's people in Jerusalem showed contempt for His instructions regarding buying and selling.

In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. (Neh. 13:15-16)

Nehemiah then excoriated the leading citizens of Jerusalem for this act and reminded them that they were in captivity, in large part, due to their polluting of God's Sabbath. Notice what Nehemiah says.

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath. (Neh. 13:17-18)

Nehemiah also declared that he would personally intervene, even with force, to prevent people from trampling on God's Sabbath by engaging in commercial enterprises.

And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath. (Neh. 13:19-21)

The words of Nehemiah make it absolutely clear that God prohibits acts of buying and selling on His Sabbath. Regrettably, many who recognize the true Sabbath fail to appreciate God's instructions regarding how it should be kept. As a result, these "believers" often engage in a variety of profane activities—not the least of which is seeking out Sabbath breakers and paying them to prepare their meals. They do this despite the fact that God specifically prohibited His people from acquiring or preparing their meals on the seventh day (Ex. 16).

## Permission to Buy and Sell

The command by God through Nehemiah for His people to refrain from buying and selling on the Sabbath takes on greater meaning when you consider that those who have the "mark of the beast" will be permitted to buy and sell. Notice what John records about this mark.

And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Rev. 13:17)

Imagine how difficult it would be to function in today's world if you were prohibited from buying and selling. For many, such a fate would be life threatening. But that is exactly what is going to happen. And it isn't the first time Sabbath keepers will have been subjected to this kind of persecution. In 1163, Pope Alexander issued an edict at the Council of Tours regarding the treatment of those considered to be heretics by the church at Rome. Notice the sobering words of this edict.

Whereas a damnable heresy has for some time lifted its head in the parts about Toulouse, and already spread infection through Gascony and other provinces, concealing itself like a serpent in its folds; as soon as its followers shall have been discovered, let no man afford them refuge on his estates; neither let there be any communication with them in buying and selling; so that, being deprived of the solace of human conversation they may be compelled to return from error to wisdom. (History of the Christian Church, 1879, Mosheim)

## Sabbath Confessions

As surprising as this may be to the vast majority of professing Christians, God's seventh day Sabbath is the one commandment that is violated with impunity. This, despite the fact that the great leaders in the Catholic and Protestant world openly acknowledge that the Biblical Sabbath is Saturday. Consider the words of James Cardinal Gibbon.

You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [The Roman Catholic Church] never sanctify. (Faith of Our Fathers, James Cardinal Gibbon)

Gibbon's words are echoed by the Methodist teacher Clovis Chappell.

The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command. One will search the scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first. (Ten Rules for Living, Clovis G. Chappell)

These are not simply isolated quotes. There are virtually hundreds of confessions within professing Christianity acknowledging the seventh day Sabbath – Saturday. Consider the words of The Catholic Virginian.

...Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the seventh day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible. (The Catholic Virginian; October 3, 1947)

Where was it revealed? Certainly it was not revealed inside the scriptures! And isn't the Bible God's revealed word? The apostle Paul certainly thought so. Notice what he writes in his epistle to the evangelist Timothy.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness... (2Tim. 3:16)

Even Jesus Christ declared the importance of God's word in sustaining life. Notice what He said.

But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Mt. 4:4)

## Sunday – A Catholic Mark

Despite these powerful words and the clear declaration that God's word is unchangeable (Isa. 40:8), the Catholic church asserts that Christians should keep Sunday because it has been revealed to the church – outside the Bible.

But the real question is: By what authority does the Catholic church claim Sunday as the Sabbath? As unbelievable as this may seem, they actually answer this question in a work called The Catholic Record. Notice what it says.

Sunday is our mark of authority. The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact. (The Catholic Record, Sept. 1, 1923)

Here, the Catholic Church openly acknowledges that it alone is responsible for instituting the observance of Sunday--this, despite the fact that the scriptures make no provision for this change. Consider what this great church declares.

Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observation can be defended only on Catholic principles... From beginning to end of Scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first. (The Catholic Press)

## Sabbath Persecution

When describing the "mark of the beast," the apostle John indicates that those who refuse this mark risk death.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Rev. 13:15)

It is important to understand that persecution has played a significant role in the history of God's true Church. Even Jesus Christ warned His apostles that persecution would punctuate their "careers" as His servants.

And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake... (Mt. 10:21-22)

Jesus went on to explain that His purpose for coming to Earth was not to capitulate with the religions of man but rather to bring a truth that would be so offensive, mankind would do anything to eradicate it.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. (Mt. 10:34-36)

The apostle Paul understood the role persecution played in the Church and wrote about it in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews. There, Paul identifies great champions of faith and how they were willing to lay down their lives rather than surrender the truth God gave them. Notice the powerful words Paul uses when concluding this chapter.

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting the deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (Heb. 11:32-38)

Clearly, persecution plays a huge part in the journey of God's people. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that Sabbath keeping has been the target of greater persecution within the Christian Church than any other issue. At one point, keeping the Sabbath was actually outlawed. This took place in 363 A.D. at the Council of Laodicea. Notice the proclamation issued by this council.

Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, resting rather on Sunday. But if any man be found to be judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ. (Council of Laodicea, 363 A.D.)

Notice that those who kept the Sabbath were called "judaizers" and branded as "anathema from Christ." Here, the flames of anti-Semitism were fueled by none other than the great mother church – the Catholic church.

The desire to be distanced from Judaism as well as to attract Pagan converts may have contributed more to the embracing of Sunday than most professing Christians would like to admit. Notice the words of Carlyle B. Hannes.

Two reasons why the Sabbath of the Lord was discarded and the day of the sun worshippers was adopted: 1) There was a strong desire to avoid being identified with the Jews, whose bigotry and downfall had made them unpopular. 2) There was an equally strong desire to win the Pagan sun worshippers and gain their adherence to the church. (Sabbath to Sunday, Washington D.C. Review and Herald, 1928)

The persecution of Sabbath keepers has even worn the mask of unspeakable cruelty and violence. Consider just some of the persecution inflicted on God's Church. History has chronicled events in which Sabbath keeping Christians were forced out of their homes, imprisoned and tortured, and even executed, all because they kept the Sabbath.

In his book, *The Incredible History of God's True Church*, Ivor Fletcher recounts an event in 1661 in which Mr. John James was preaching a sermon on the Sabbath in Bull-Stake Alley, London, and was forcibly dragged from the church. After his trial, he was sentenced to be hung, then drawn and quartered. Notice the chronicle of this event.

John James was arrested and brought to trial, found guilty under the new law against non-conformity. He was sentenced to the barbaric fate of being hung, drawn and quartered.

It was said that "This awful fate did not dismay him in the least. He calmly said, 'Blessed be God, Whom man condemneth, God justifieth!'"

James was held in high esteem by many, and whilst in prison under sentence of death, several people of rank and distinction visited him and offered to use their influence to secure his pardon. His wife sent two petitions to the King, but all these moves failed to save him.

In his final words to the court he simply asked them to read the following scriptures: Jer. 26:14-15 and Psa. 116:15. In keeping with the gruesome custom of the time, after his execution his heart was taken out and burned, the four quarters of his body fixed to the gates of the city and his head set up on a pole in Whitechapel opposite to the alley in which his meeting-house stood. Such was the horrible price that some were prepared to pay for obedience to God in seventeenth century England. (*The Incredible History of God's True Church*, Ivor Fletcher)

Just as John James offered his life for the great truth he understood regarding God's Sabbath, many of God's people will have to lay down their lives rather than accept the "mark of the beast." However, the scriptures reveal a great reward for those who make that sacrifice. Notice what John records concerning these heroes of faith.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4)

## Sabbath Breaking Excuses

In the world today, Satan has convinced professing Christianity that the Sabbath was either done away or that it doesn't matter which day is kept. If you ask a Protestant minister why he doesn't keep the Sabbath, he will give you a litany of excuses. Consider just some of the "reasons" advanced by leaders in the professing Christian community as to why the Sabbath is no longer in effect.

#1

"That's the Old Testament Sabbath."

This is a very common argument but it simply isn't true. The Sabbath is mentioned 61 times in the New Testament – 51 times in the gospels alone. Jesus Christ called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath (Mk. 2:28) and never once did He remotely hint at a desire to change this command. Those who believe that

the Sabbath was only in effect during the Old Testament do not have the scriptures as evidence. Nowhere in the Bible does it say the Sabbath was abandoned by God's people in the New Testament.

#2

“It's the Jewish Sabbath.”

This is also a popular argument among leaders in the Protestant world. But once again, it is not true. The Sabbath existed long before there was a Jew, long before Abraham, or even Noah, for that matter. God calls this day the Sabbath of the Eternal and for good reason – He created this day and He sanctified it.

The Sabbath day was set apart by God before Adam was two days old. The first Jew did not arrive on the scene for over two thousand years. To call this day “the Jewish Sabbath” violates all the tenants of intellectual honesty and is simply historically inaccurate. God's words are clear. “My Sabbaths you shall keep” (Ex. 31:13).

#3

“The law was done away.”

Many leaders in the Protestant community have suggested that it is no longer necessary to honor the Sabbath because “the law was done away.” It is interesting that this argument has never been advanced for any other commandment.

For those who believe that God somehow did away with part of the Decalogue, consider Jesus' words. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:17-19)

The fact is that God's Sabbath is alive and well and stands as a memorial of creation and a tribute to God for His great creative power and plan.

#4

“The law was nailed to the cross.”

These words have been proclaimed from the pulpits of Protestant churches for so long, virtually tens of millions of people have just assumed them to be true. But the fact is they aren't true. God's law was not nailed to the cross; sin was. God's law is His great moral code that not only defines sin (1Jn. 3:4; Ro. 7:7) but also defines love (Ro. 13:10). The apostle Paul called God's law “holy” (Ro. 7:12) and recognized that it was a spiritual law (Ro. 7:14). The scriptures also declare that Jesus was manifested to take away the sins of the world (1Jn. 3:5), not to take away the law.

For those who believe God's law is no longer in effect today, consider the following question. Why would God do away with a law whose trespass necessitated the death of His own Son? It just doesn't make sense! God did not send His Son to repent for God's law. On the contrary, He sent His Son to call sinners (law breakers) to repentance (Mt. 9:13).

#5

“It doesn't matter what day you keep as long as you keep one.”

This is one of the most popular arguments used by people who observe Sunday as the Sabbath. Some have even suggested that every day should be regarded as holy because God made every day. One

leading T.V. evangelist actually begins his televised church service with the words, "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

These words are quoted from Psalm 118, verse 24 and are truly powerful. But it is critical to understand that these words do not make Sunday – or any other day – the Sabbath.

For those who believe it doesn't matter what day is kept, consider the words of the commandment.

"REMEMBER the Sabbath day, to keep IT holy." Ex. 20:8)

Additionally, consider the day Jesus and His disciples kept. When speaking about the Messiah, Luke made it clear what day that was.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Lk. 4:16)

Even the famous Methodist, John Wesley, recognized that the Sabbath was in force during the days of Jesus and the apostles and has never been revoked by scripture.

But the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, He [Christ] did not take away. It was not the design of His coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken... every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other. (The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, Sermon 25, Vol. 1, p. 221, John Wesley)

Even the Protestant world acknowledges that the Church under the leadership of the apostles kept the seventh day Sabbath. Notice the words of the work A Discourse in Six Dialogues.

The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath and spent the day in devotion and sermons. And 'tis not to be doubted but they derived this practice from the apostles themselves. (A Discourse in Six Dialogues on the Name, Notion, and Observance of the Lord's Day, p. 189)

## Why Protestants Keep Sunday

In the world today, professing Christianity has conjured up every excuse imaginable for not honoring God's Sabbath. But the truth lies outside their excuses.

Why do Protestants around the world keep Sunday? This question is answered in a work called Plain Talk about the Protestantism of Today. Notice what it says.

The observance of Sunday by Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] church. (Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today, p. 213)

As much as the Protestant world tries to distance itself from the Catholic Church, they are inextricably linked by a common belief that God's Sabbath has been replaced with Sunday. This is a fact that does not go unnoticed by the Catholic church. Consider the words of Father T. Enright.

Which church does the whole civilized world obey? Protestants call us every horrible name they can think of, anti-Christ, the scarlet colored beast, Babylon, etc. and at the same time profess great reverence for the Bible, and yet by their solemn act of keeping

Sunday, they acknowledge the power of the Catholic Church. (Father T. Enright, Catholic Priest)

The Protestant world professes to believe the Bible. Yet when it comes to the Sabbath, they reject every word the scriptures say and instead, obey the mother church.

### Sabbath vs. Sunday

What is the “mark of the beast”? It is the rejection of the one sign God said would enable man to know Who He is. That sign is His Sabbath and Holy Days (Ex. 31:13-17). God’s Sabbaths declare His infinite wisdom and love. They proclaim to all who will honor them that He has a wonderful plan for mankind. That plan will culminate with man being born into His Family as literal sons and daughters (1Jn. 3:2). God created the Sabbath and sanctified it to stand as a constant reminder that He has sanctified man for His purpose. When man rejects that day, he rejects that purpose.

What is the “mark of the beast”? Consider the comparison of the Sabbath to Sunday. Notice the chart below.

<b>The Mark of the Beast</b>	
<b>The Sabbath</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
Sanctified by God Gen. 2	Sanctified by the church at Rome
Called "a sign" Ex. 31:13	Called "a mark" Rev. 13:16
Kept on the seventh day Ex. 20:10	Kept on the first day
Worn in the forehead, hand, and heart Dt. 6:6-8	Worn in the forehead and hand Rev. 13:16
Don't buy and sell Neh. 10:31; 13:15-21	Permitted to buy and sell Rev. 13:17
Persecuted by the beast Rev. 13:17; Dan. 7:21-22	Punished by God Rev. 14:9

### A Final Thought

Today, professing Christians who embrace Sunday can shout their love for God from every housetop on earth but all they're doing is making noise. Notice the warning of the apostle John.

He that says I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1Jn. 2:4)

Later, John, who was arguably the best friend of the Messiah, would write:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not burdensome. (1Jn. 5:3)

## The Great Deception Lives

Today, professing Christianity believes it can choose for itself how to worship God. The tragedy in this thinking is that their worship is the result of a great deception—a deception that has firmly taken root in the western world.

The “mark of the beast” is here. The only question remaining is how will it be enforced? The scriptures

do not answer this question but they do state with great clarity that to refuse this mark will take immense faith and great courage.

To those who find it difficult to believe that keeping the Sabbath takes a genuine faith, try it and see how much your life will change. If you're like so many who keep the Sabbath, you will be accused – even by your closest friends – of being a religious extremist, a fanatic, an old covenant believer, a Pharisee, and a “judaizer.” And this will be just the beginning. Those who honor God's Sabbath and Holy Days have paid for their obedience with lost friends and broken families, and many have even paid with their own blood.

Today, Sunday keeping is so prevalent in our world that few have ever asked how it came to be professing Christianity's most popular day of worship. However, Father T. Enright, cited earlier in this booklet, knows the answer to this question and he provided it when making an interesting observation about the world, the Sabbath, and the power of the Catholic Church. Notice what Father Enright declared.

The Bible says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” But the Catholic Church says, “No, keep the first day of the week,” and the whole world bows in obedience.  
(Father T. Enright, Catholic Priest)

## Will you bow?