

# The Mark of the Beast

Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

Whatever you do, do NOT take this mark! Some of the direst imprecations (curses) in scripture are spoken against those who take the mark of the beast. Without question, the unbelieving and unperceiving world will take it to their doom. Either they will be wooed by worshipping the beast into thinking it is somehow for their good; or they will take it against their better judgment due to the threat of death or slow starvation that are imposed on those who refuse it. Christians will know better, but this gift of revelation comes at high demand: Even Christians who take it will be damned forever. Don't take it!



**Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 13:16-17 ESV**

## Chief Characteristics

Whole books are written about most of these crucial components. These characteristics are summaries of what is grounded in scripture, not fabricated through speculation.<sup>1</sup> Speculation is trying to “see” more than we are being shown. What we see by Biblical revelation is real enough, but a fuller view will only come as these still distant components draw nearer.

Three major components of this part of the Last Days’ events need to be examined together. The mark of the beast has a counterpart which is exactly opposite in source and direction: the seal of God. Additionally, the mark of the beast is the monstrous “creation” of yet another bizarre creature in the beast system: the image of the beast. Since the seal of God appears before the other two in the Book of Revelation, it is fitting to begin there. Not only that but all believers should have this seal firmly in place long before the mark of the beast arrives.

### 1. The Seal of God

Amid all the worry and concern about taking the mark of the beast, scant attention is being paid to the necessity of being sealed by the Lord. There is a tremendous difference. The mark of the beast brings God’s judgements upon anyone who bears it. The seal of God ensures that His grace and power will preserve all for salvation. But the choice is ours. We can choose the beast’s mark and with it, share in his damnation. Or we can refuse the mark, live for Jesus and receive eternal salvation. Is there a middle ground? Will there be some who resist the beast and his mark, but also never turn to God and receive His seal? Some Last Days commentators believe that there will be this third category of “resistors.” Why take that chance? Join up now!



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**Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel. Revelation 7:2-4 ESV**

Lest a fear arises that you might not qualify for this seal, please note that this seal is only for the “sons of Israel” serving in the Last Days. You would have to be born Jewish to be a part of this group and even then, it is only for a select number of witnesses. However, immediately after being shown the 144,000, John was shown a “great multitude that no one could number.” These happy souls are the non-Jewish (Gentile) believers from “all tribes and peoples and languages.” Just make sure you qualify for that!

**After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Revelation 7:9 ESV**

We are not told if this great multitude received the seal. Certainly, it would not have been the same seal, since the former is a group marked for a special purpose. Suffice it to say, if we, the Gentile believers, need to be sealed, we will be. In any event, these seals are not for us to see but for God and the angels. We won't know if it is there or not. What we will know (by faith) is that we already have the seal of the Holy Spirit as our guarantee of the good things to come and that the Lord knows those who are His.<sup>2</sup> The great thing is not to lose this seal—by failing to do what Paul tells Timothy that all believers must do which is to “depart from iniquity.”<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Image of the Beast

The second beast, the diabolical false prophet, will do everything he can to persuade people to worship the first beast—the antichrist. Do not underestimate how good he will be at this. He will clearly have supernatural power and great deceptive abilities. Most of the earth will succumb to this deception, believing the lie that will lead to their doom.<sup>4</sup>

**Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people. Revelation 13:12-13 ESV**

Then, a strange thing happens. We are used to the idea of deceivers both visible or invisible. The devil is the deceiver who “deceives the whole world.”<sup>5</sup> All who serve him are themselves deceived. The deceived ones—whether evil humans or evil spirits—in turn deceive others. The false prophet is both deceived and deceiving. Now, comes the unexpected twist. This second beast creates “an image” of the first beast which joins in with the mass deceptions. What in the world is this? It is neither a human being nor a spiritual being, but an image: a likeness, a statue, or a representation.<sup>6</sup>



**And by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.** Revelation 13:11; 14-15 ESV

This image comes to life! Like a modern Frankenstein's monster, it can speak and move. It may not have a soul (how could it?), but it can receive "breath" which is the typical biblical way of transferring life.<sup>7</sup> It may be a holographic image of the beast himself, or a robot that resembles him endowed with artificial intelligence. It may also be fused with human genetic material (transhuman). That technology is close at hand, if not already on the scene. Whatever it is, it is diabolical. It will require worship of itself, as a stand-in for the first beast. Worse, this image will have the ability and authority to ferret out resisters and see to it that they are put to death.

### 3. The Mark of the Beast

Now we come to the mark. Christians have been speculating for decades, if not centuries, just what this mark actually is. There are two sides to this. This first is practical. No one in their right mind wants to take this mark, since the doom that comes with it is irreversible and eternal. It, therefore, must be identified clearly. Have no worries on that score. We will see it coming, because the mark will not be brought forward until after the false prophet and antichrist have fully assumed their positions.

The mark is to solidify their power and control. The key thing is to watch for two beasts, then watch what they do. As the unbelieving world drifts into the sleep of deception, the Body of Christ will fully awaken! For us it will be an eyes wide open time, with everyone conferring about the world-shaken events of the beast system being assembled right before our stunned attention. This is one of many reasons why it is so important that we belong to solid, Bible-based believing fellowships. Furthermore, this mark will easily be identified as that "thing" for the forehead or the hand without which "no one can buy or sell." Oh, have no fear of this. We will absolutely know what the mark is once it appears on the scene. Until then, we won't need to know anything about it except to reject it utterly and completely when faced with it.

**Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.**

Revelation 13:16-17 ESV

The other side of the speculation is about the "thing" itself. Fortunately for us, this is human curiosity, not life necessity. We love speculation! Nevertheless, it is fine to speculate, if we can at least stay civil in presenting our competing theories and don't "marry" our favorite one. Basically, the mark will be one of two "things." It may be a visible mark "on" the right hand or forehead, hence the tattoo in the upper photo. "Superimposition" is the primary meaning for the preposition used to describe it (as with the ESV quoted above).<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, the position of the mark is translated as “in” by the old King James, though not the newer Modern King James, because it can less frequently mean “in” in other contexts of scripture. So, the mark might turn out to be something placed under the skin or in the fleshy part of the hand or forehead, such as a smart chip. This cannot be settled by scripture, only by time. Maybe the Lord wants to keep us guessing. He would certainly want us to stay attentive. “Watch” and be on guard against deception are two of His favorite warnings about the times to come.

## Pre-Figured in Scripture

Every crucial component of the Last Days has already “appeared” in the Biblical prophetic narrative in the past, somewhat like a dress rehearsal for the final drama. These foreshadows are called “types” because they precede their ultimate expression (the “antitype”).<sup>9</sup> As shadows of the future reality, however, they cast a revealing light of their own.

### 1. Image: The Mark of Cain

Cain could never be mistaken for being one of the faithful remnant—he murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy. Nevertheless, to him goes the honor of carrying the first good mark placed on anyone by God. It may be true that the “mark of Cain” carries a negative connotation in our minds. That’s because it immediately reminds us of the ignominious individual associated with it and the curse that was placed upon him. Nevertheless, the mark itself was given in order to protect Cain’s life from attack, not mark him out for destruction. We could easily wish we had such a mark upon us! In a way we do. The protective quality of this mark reveals it as a precursor to the seal of God that will be upon believers in the Last Days.

**Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Genesis 4:14-16**  
ESV

### 2. Seal: Passover Night in Egypt

Another sign of a seal from God comes to us through the great events of the Lord’s Passover. The original Passover was not a memorial meal, but the protective activity of God in “passing over” the Israelites on the night that death came to all the firstborn sons of Egypt. There was indeed a meal. The faithful remnant was instructed to slay a lamb for each household, roast it and eat it. This would become the centerpiece of the memorial celebration in future years.

The mark on the doorposts with the lamb’s blood provided the “seal” that the angel of destruction needed to see in order to pass by or pass over that house. The Blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb, seals us with the promise of eternal salvation. Just as the Israelites, huddled inside their homes could not see the blood on their doorposts, so too we cannot see this Blood,



but it protects us wonderfully well all the same. God sees! And He knows just what to do—He has led His people this way before.

**For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.** Exodus 12:12-13 ESV

### 3. Image: Nebuchadnezzar's Statue

The coming image of the beast is perfectly foreshadowed by the image Nebuchadnezzar erected to his own glory. Ironically, the all-powerful, Persian ruler was inspired to do this after Daniel's correct interpretation of his dream. In that dream, the Lord showed the king that he was indeed a great ruler—the "king of kings" whose head of gold crowned the dream's statue.<sup>10</sup> So, what did the king do? He made a gold statue of himself and commanded everyone to bow to it and worship it. That will be the demand of the antichrist and his image: worship the beast, live by his mark, or die. Despite the king's arrogance and power, the Lord preserved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from dying in the fiery furnace—a visible image of the king's fury against all who would not bow to his authority. He still knows how to preserve His faithful, believing remnant.

**And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."** Daniel 3:4-6 ESV

### 4. Seal: A Forehead Mark in Ezekiel

The clearest foreshadow of the seal of God in Revelation is the seal of God recorded by Ezekiel. The prophet was shown that a terrible time of judgment was coming upon Jerusalem but hope and mercy remained. An angel was sent ahead to "put a mark on the foreheads" of those who were appalled by the abominations going on around them. This remnant of faithful believers found protection while judgments swept through the land destroying countless others. God will soon judge the world earth, but He knows how to preserve and protect those who cling to Him in faithfulness. We cannot stop the judgments from coming—they are written in the book. We can stop ourselves from falling away. Let's focus on that.

**And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but**



**touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the house. Ezekiel 9:4-6 ESV**

## Revealed by Scripture

The Bible exposes the secret plans and deceptive operations of the dark kingdom, even as it unveils the glorious realities of what our God is doing. The truths of scripture are, therefore, our rock-solid building blocks for interpreting the times we are entering. Nevertheless, for biblical information to become true revelation both prayer and the Holy Spirit are needed.

### 1. The Image Commands Worship

**And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Revelation 13:15 ESV**

Our word worship comes from the Old English word for “ascribing worth” to someone or something. The beast will demand that citizens of his empire put him first, bowing to all his demands. But it goes deeper. The beast and his image demand worship, demand that all people ascribe to him the ultimate worth of being the one they choose to live for. So, the test will come. Will believers choose to allow the beast to “give” them life by taking his mark? In that case, we would be rejecting God and Jesus. No! God willing, we will all choose to ascribe all worth to our God, even if it means losing our lives. As Jesus said, it is far better to lose our lives in this life, than lose it for the next.<sup>11</sup>

### 2. The Mark Controls All Trade

**Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 13:16-17 ESV**

The great identifier of the mark is this: Without it one cannot buy, sell or trade. The exclusive demand of this mark as the gateway to or controller of all trade with reveal it clearly enough. The mark is, therefore, the great and terrible game changer. Leading up to this point during the first stage of the tribulation, believers will be “hated by all nations” according to the teaching of Jesus. We will be persecuted, even martyred, but it will not be systematic and universal. The mark changes all that. Refusing it is a punishable crime, leading ultimately to starvation or death, unless the Lord intervenes. And He will for some. There will (miraculously) be believers still alive on earth when He returns.

Has this ever happened before in history—this absolute showdown between the Lord and the evil one over the issue of commerce? Yes, it has! In a bizarre twist the conditions were reversed. At the height of Judah’s apostacy and moral collapse, the Lord gave a stunning prophetic word to Jeremiah for him to issue at the city gates. All buying, selling and trading must absolutely cease on the Sabbath or the city would be destroyed (Jeremiah 17:27). In addition to all their other sins, the people had



disregarded the Sabbath long enough. The Lord drew a line in the sand. The people crossed it anyway and reaped the whirlwind, as Persia's armies torched their cities, savagely raped and murdered the population and carried the remaining remnant off with them to Babylon.

In the Lord's kindness, all they had to do was stop commerce for one day a week in order to survive by worshipping Him in this way. By the beast's cruelty, all commerce must cease forever for those who refuse to worship him by taking the mark. This begs the question: Why this showdown over commerce? Jesus said we cannot serve both God and Mammon. By Mammon is meant this material realm and its god. We have to choose. Indeed, we make that choice in little, unnoticed ways every day. This is a test that is obvious and practical—one that touches us at our deepest level of wanting to preserve biological life verses living for the hope that true spiritual life offers. May we choose wisely and bravely!

### 3. The Number of the Mark

**This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.** Revelation 13:18 ESV

The number of the mark is another key identifier. So far, attempts to identify it in advance by the number 666 have proven inconclusive. Giving a number to a name is called "gematria," which is the Greek practice of adding up the letters in someone's name. As the antichrist enters the world scene it may become possible to identify him by the number tally of his name. It needs to be remembered, however, that gematria is an art (at best), not a science, and usually "works" better by hindsight, than as foresight. We will likely all look back, slap our heads, and say, "Wow, of course, it meant that." Fortunately, we have many other signs to identify the antichrist by well in advance of him issuing his mark. The number will "seal the deal" giving us absolute certainty that we have the right man in our sights.

### 4. Eternal Punishment for Taking the Mark

**And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.** Revelation 14:9-12

Get ready for this. There will be tremendous pressure within and without to take the mark. Threats of death and other forms of compulsion will be applied, including the scorn and hatred of those around us who will see us as unthinking fanatics. From within may arise fears and doubts we never knew existed. Worse, we will see some that we love

moving towards taking the mark as if they are hypnotized. Some we will be able to wake up. Some we will be able to strengthen so that they too will find courage to refuse the mark. Others will be lost to us and to themselves forever. This is nothing to toy with. Read the curse below and let the fear of God give you strength to do what the love of God wants us to do. Refuse the mark!

## 5. Temporal Punishment for Taking the Mark

**Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.** Revelation 16:1-2 ESV

The choice that is coming is literally, “damned if you do and dead if you don’t.” God will punish in eternity those who forsake faith in Him and take the blasted mark. On the other hand, in this life the antichrist will starve, punish and destroy by death all who refuse to take it. But there is a further complication. It is not a simple question of life in this life or life in the next. There will even be punishments and plagues in this life for those who take the beast’s mark. Nothing could be more serious than this: Don’t take that mark no matter what!

## Other Scriptures to Study

### The Seal of Protection

They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Revelation 9:4 ESV

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. Revelation 14:1 ESV

### Punishment for the Authors of the Mark

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. Revelation 19:20 ESV

### Eternal Life for Refusing the Mark

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4 ESV



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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Dictionary defines speculation as “the act of guessing possible answers to a question without having enough information to be certain.” It derives from the Latin word “speculari” which means “to look at, view, observe” and originally indicated “close observation and intelligent contemplation.” By the late 1500s it gained the disparaging sense it carries today of “mere conjecture.” See etymonline.com.

<sup>2</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14 ESV; But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his..." 2 Timothy 2:19a ESV

<sup>3</sup> "...and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2:19b ESV

<sup>4</sup> The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 ESV

<sup>5</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Revelation 12:9 ESV

<sup>6</sup> Strong's G1504, eikōn, From G1503; a likeness, that is, (literally) statue, profile, or (figuratively) representation, resemblance: - image.

<sup>7</sup> Recall God giving breath to Adam in the Garden of Eden and Jesus breathing upon the disciples as they received the Holy Spirit for new life in the upper room (John 20:22).

<sup>8</sup> Strong's G1909, epi, A primary preposition properly meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution [with the genitive case], that is, over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the dative case) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.: - about (the times), above, after, against, among, as long as (touching), at, beside, X have charge of, (be-, [where-]) fore, in (a place, as much as, the time of, -to), (because) of, (up-) on (behalf of) over, (by, for) the space of, through (-out), (un-) to (-ward), with. In compounds it retains essentially the same import, at, upon, etc. (literally or figuratively).

<sup>9</sup> Adam is the type; Jesus, the “second Adam” is the antitype: Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. Romans 5:14 ESV

<sup>10</sup> You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. Daniel 2:37-38 ESV



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<sup>11</sup> And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:38-39 ESV