

# SERMON 6

## The True Seal of God

(Revelation 13:16-18)

### INTRODUCTION

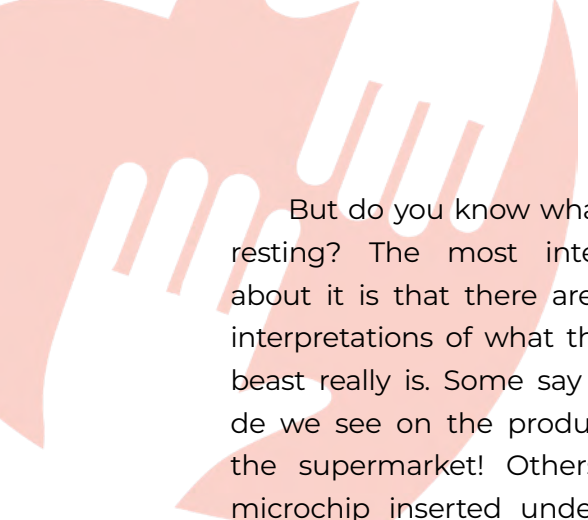
**D**o you know what Martin Luther called Satan? Luther, who had a good sense of humor, frequently referred to Satan as “God’s monkey.” You know why? Because Satan has always sought to imitate God’s works! For example, God sows wheat; Satan sows the tares (Matthew 13:24; 27-28). God invites his children to take the narrow gate and the narrow path; then Satan urges his followers to take the wide door and the spacious road (Matthew 5:13-14). God compares His church to a pure woman; Satan compares his followers to an impure woman (Revelation 12 and 17). Finally, God has a seal with which He will



seal His children, while Satan has a mark with which He identifies His followers.

### DEVELOPMENT

Dear young people, if there is one theme in the book of Revelation that has been the subject of misunderstandings, it is that of the mark of the beast. In fact, if at this very moment you take your cell phone and Google the term “the mark of the beast”, you will find at least 15 million references. It is literally impossible to read everything on the internet in relation to this topic!



But do you know what is most interesting? The most interesting thing about it is that there are thousands of interpretations of what the mark of the beast really is. Some say it's the barcode we see on the products we buy at the supermarket! Others claim it's a microchip inserted under the skin, or something even more sophisticated!

There is not enough time to list all the interpretations that have been given in relation to it; for this reason, it is of the utmost importance that we study this topic, but not in the light of Google, but of the Word of God.

## THE SEAL OF GOD

Friends, in order to understand what the mark of the beast is, it is necessary to first identify the seal of God. If we discover what the seal of God is, it will be easy for us to know what the mark of the beast is, since it will have to be the opposite.

The first direct reference that Revelation makes to the seal of God can be read in chapter 7, verses 1-4:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel

coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

If we look closely at these verses, we can discover some essential truths regarding God's seal.

- First truth: The seal of God is placed on the forehead of God's servants.
- Second truth: The sealed are identified as the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Remember the rule of interpretation that we have discussed in this series of messages, for let me repeat it: *let the Bible interpret itself*. Following this rule of interpretation, I would like us to read Revelation, chapter 14, verse 1: "Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads."

In chapter 14 of Revelations, we see again the same group that was sealed in chapter 7; however, a difference appears: While in Revelation 7 the one hundred and forty-four thousand—symbol of God's

end-time people – have the seal of God on their foreheads, in Revelation 14 the one hundred and forty-four thousand have the name of the lamb and God written on their foreheads.

Apparently, there is a contradiction, but when comparing the two biblical passages we come to the following conclusion: the seal of God is the name of God written on the foreheads of his faithful.

You might be wondering... Could it be that God's children will have their Father's name tattooed on their foreheads? First of all, you must understand that Revelation is a book that speaks to us with symbols. When the Bible, and especially Revelation, refer to God's name, they speak of nothing more and nothing less than God's character (Exodus 33:19; 34:6-7).

Therefore, we can conclude that the seal of God is the character of Jesus Christ reproduced in the lives of his faithful followers. The seal of God is the reflection of divine principles in your life and in my life! But where do we find God's principles for our lives revealed?

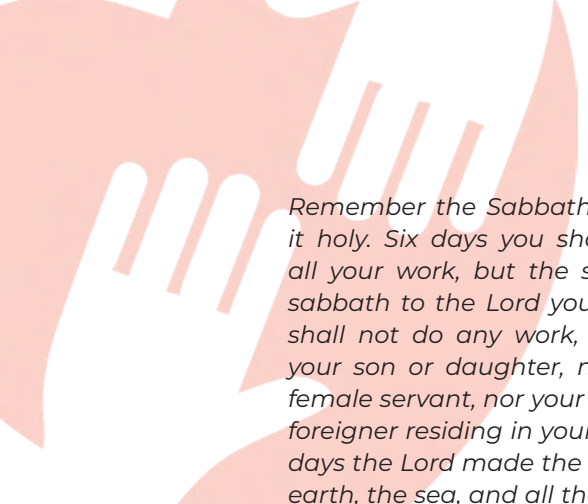
We have already argued that the Commandments are God's eternal principles. In the same way, it is of the utmost

importance to note that when the Old Testament speaks of the seal it relates it to a specific commandment. If you read the book of Ezekiel, you will realize which of the Ten Commandments is directly related to the seal of God:

- **And I also gave them my Sabbaths**, as a **sign** between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy. (Ezekiel 20:12).
- **Keep my Sabbaths holy**, that they may be a **sign** between us. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God. (Ezekiel 20:20)

Did they get it? The Sabbath, the fourth commandment of God's Law, is identified as a seal. Why? Because usually a seal serves to identify someone or something; it contains the name, attributes, authority and character of the owner of the seal. For example, every time you watch the president on television addressing the American people, if you look closely, you will notice that in front of him or behind him is the seal, the seal of the president of the United States. The seal identifies who is ruling the nation.

As we read the fourth commandment, which tells us about Sabbath observance, we notice that it identifies God as the absolute ruler of his creation:



*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11).*

The Sabbath presents us with God as the creator who rules heaven, earth, the sea, and all things in them. The Sabbath is the seal that distinguishes God's faithful who recognize His sovereignty. In conclusion, we can say that the seal of God is the character of God reproduced in those who recognize Him as sovereign of the universe. By keeping the Sabbath, we recognize God as our creator and sustainer!

## THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Being that the seal of God is the character of God manifested in obedience to His commandments. Then what is the mark of the beast? To figure it out let's read Revelation, chapter 13, verses 16-18:

It also forced all people, great and small, rich, and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or

sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

To understand what the mark of the beast consists of it is necessary to stop and analyze verse number 17. We notice that this verse seems to tell us about three different things:

- Of the *mark*.
- The *name of the beast*.
- The number *of its name*.

However, when we read these verses in other versions of the Bible, we notice that three different things are not spoken of here. Let's see how the New American Standard Bible (NASB) *translates* this verse: *"that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name..."*

Did you notice? The mark, name, and number of the beast are the same thing! These three elements tell us about the character of the beast! Therefore, the mark of the beast is nothing more than the character of the beast or the antichrist reproduced in his followers.

Remember how God's disposition is reflected in His followers? In obedience to

His commandments! Recognizing that He is the creator and owner of everything! But then, how does the character of the beast manifest itself in its followers? Simple: placing the commandments of men above the commandments of God. Allow me to illustrate how.

As we have seen, God established the Sabbath as the hallmark of His law. The Sabbath was kept by Jesus and the apostles. There is no Bible verse that teaches that the solemnity of the Sabbath has been transferred to another day of the week, do you know what most Christian churches have done? They have turned their backs on the Ten Commandments and set up another day to worship the Lord.

*The convert's catechism of catholic doctrine*, p. 50, says the following:

*Question:* What is the Sabbath?

*Answer:* Saturday is the Sabbath.

*Question:* Why do we observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath?

*Answer:* We observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath because the Catholic Church changed the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday.

They have changed the Sabbath to a day man has established! As you can

see, dear young people, the world will be divided into two groups: on the one hand, those who have the character of God and live in obedience to his commandments, and on the other hand those who have the character of the beast (the antichrist). The question I ask you is: Which of these two groups will you be in?

## CONCLUSION

*God wants the character of Jesus Christ to be reproduced in your lives.* God desires that in your lives the fruits of an existence of complete obedience be manifested! Some time ago I learned the story of Brenda, a faithful young woman who decided to live in obedience to God without caring about the consequences. She was planning her master's degree with her classmates, which would be held in about three months. Brenda was happy, she only had one class left to finish, but upon registering the class she realized that it must be taken on a Saturday; immediately she approached her teacher to ask him to allow her to take the class another day. She gave him the thorough and rigorous explanation, but the teacher denied the permission.

Brenda was unable to take the class and as a result had to wait a year before

she could graduate. On graduation day, while her classmates paraded to earn their degrees, Brenda was attending a church to preach. But you know what? Brenda recounting her testimony said: “That day many believed I would be sad, but it was the opposite. I was happy to be faithful to my God. I lost the day of my graduation, but I received the joy of living in obedience.”

Brenda is an example of what it means to recognize God as the owner and sovereign of everything; she is an example of what it means to receive the character of Jesus Christ and live in obedience. Today I want to invite you to make a commitment to be faithful to God. Ask God to reproduce in you the character of Christ and help you live a life of complete obedience!

## REFLECTION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why did Martin Luther refer to Satan as “God’s monkey”?
2. What are the popular interpretations that exist in relation to the mark of the beast?
3. What is the seal of God?
4. Why does the Sabbath relate to God’s seal?
5. What does the mark of the beast consist of?

