

Sealing Men From Destruction

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The book of Revelation tells us that there will be plagues which will fall upon the great majority of mankind at the close of the world's history. But it also tells of some who will be sealed from destruction.

SEVEN terrible plagues are to sweep over this world just before the end of time. Everyone who has read the account of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, will doubtless remember that before the last plague fell on the Egyptians, God told His people to put a peculiar mark on their door post, that He might protect them from the fearful consequences of this last plague. So we shall find by a study of the prophecies, that before the seven last plagues are poured out upon this world, God will send a special sealing message to every country, and place His mark on His true followers, that they may be protected from these terrible plagues.

This is plainly set forth in the book of Revelation. "After these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:1-3.

This prophecy brings to view a special work-the sealing of "the servants of our God in their foreheads" The prophet sees an "angel ascending from the east," who bears "the seal of the living God," with which this sealing work is to be accomplished.

In prophecy an angel preaching a message to the people of the world, is a symbol of a people or movement that will deliver that message to men. The work of preaching God's truth has been committed to men, and not to angels. Therefore, we know that this angel who is commissioned to place the seal of the living God in the foreheads of His servants, is a symbol of a special message which will sweep over the world in the last days and which will place the seal of God in the minds of His people.

A LAST-DAY PREDICTION

How do we know that this prophecy refers to the last days? There are three things that show this:

1. The position which this prophecy of the sealing work occupies in the book of Revelation. The sixth chapter of Revelation describes the opening of the first six of the seven seals. This chapter closes with the sixth seal, when the signs in sun, moon, and stars appear as heralds of the coming of Christ. (Revelation 6:12-14; Matthew 24: 29, 30.) The last verses of the sixth chapter record some of the events which happen in connection with the coming of the Lord-the rolling together of the heavens as a scroll, the islands and mountains moving out of their places in the last great earthquake, and the wicked fleeing to the rocks to hide themselves from the face of the coming King. (Revelation 6:14-17.) The opening of the seventh seal, which records the silence which will reign in heaven, while Jesus and all the angels are absent on His return to the earth, is described in the eighth chapter. (Revelation 8:1.) The very fact that the sealing work described in the seventh chapter, is thrown in between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals, which deal with the closing scenes of the earth's history, is a sure proof that this sealing work refers to some last-day movement.

2. In the execution of legal documents, the putting on of the seal is the finishing touch. It is usually the last or the completing act in the transaction. So the sealing of God's servants with His seal will be a last-day work. It will mark the finishing of His work in the earth.

3. The falling of the stars, as predicted in Revelation 6:13, was fulfilled that great meteoric shower of November 1, 1833. The very next event under the sixth seal will be the departing of the heaven as a scroll, in connection with the return of Jesus. (Revelation 6:14.) So this last-day sealing work must take place between 1833 and the end of time. According to this prophecy of Revelation a special message which would place the seal of God upon His people was to arise sometime after 1833, and sweep over the whole world before Christ's Second Coming.

Every soul today should be deeply interested in this prophecy; because it applies to the very time in which we live.

This sealing work, according to the prophecy, should constitute some special movement which God is now carrying forward in the earth. So the question comes, Where is this great sealing message that was to arise after 1833 and sweep over all the world? What is this divine seal by which that message will be distinguished from every other movement? Where can we find the seal of the living God?

THE USE OF A SEAL

A seal is always in connection with some law or enactment that demands obedience, or upon certain documents that are to be made legal, or subject to the provisions of the law.

There is a last-day prophecy which will help us to locate God's seal. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him." Isaiah 8:16,17. When Christ's disciples are looking for His appearing, the special work of God will be to "seal the law." among His disciples. The seal of God will be found in connection with His law. Then if we want to find His seal, we must look into the law of God or the Ten Commandments; for that is the only document which God ever wrote Himself. But how are we to recognize His seal when we look into His law?

REVEALS AUTHORITY

A seal is something that reveals the authority of the law making power. When the President of this country places his official seal on an executive order, it puts behind that document all the power of the highest office in this republic. In 1 Kings 21:8, we read that Jezebel "wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal." These letters expressed the authority of King Ahab. A seal is an instrument by which men impart the full weight of their authority to a document or an order. It is used to render valid or authentic the laws or the enactments of the person or the power that may promulgate them. (Esther 3:12; 8:8.) Then the seal of God must be something in His law which reveals God's authority as the great Lawgiver of heaven.

Three things are required to constitute a seal. For example: In Esther's time the law was sealed by the signet of Ahasuerus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire. His seal contained three things: (1) His name-Ahasuerus; (2) his distinguishing title-king; (3) the territory over which he had jurisdiction -Medo-Persia.

THE DISTINGUISHING TITLE OF GOD

So we must look for something in the law which contains three things. The name of God, His distinguishing title, and the extent of His dominion. Now we are led to ask, How is the true God to be known from the false? What is the distinguishing characteristic of the living God of heaven?

Let us turn to the Bible. "All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens." Psalm 96:5. Creative power is the distinguishing attribute of the true God. All false gods are singled out as "the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth" while the true and the living God is pointed out as the One who made the heavens and the earth by His mighty power. (Jeremiah 10:10-12.) The call to worship the true God is to worship Him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:7.) When the people of Lystra were about to worship Paul and Barnabas and Jupiter and Mercurius, the chief gods of the Romans, the apostle told them to "turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." Acts 14:15. When he pointed out the true God to the idolatrous Athenians, he told them of the "God that made the world and all things therein." Acts 17:24. When we worship Jehovah, we know that we are worshiping the right God, because He is the Creator. This is His distinguishing title which separates Him infinitely and eternally from every other so-called god in the universe.

FOUND ONLY IN THE FOURTH PRECEPT

Now we inquire, in what precept of the law do we find the distinguishing title of God? Let us look at the Ten Commandments. The first three commandments contain the names "Lord" and "God," but these precepts would not point out the true God to an Idolater; because the heathen calls his idols "lord" and "god." The apostle says, there are "gods many, and lords many." 1 Corinthians 8: 5.

Passing the fourth commandment for the moment, we note that the fifth also contains the words "Lord" and "God," but does not define them. The remaining five precepts do not contain the name of the Deity. There is nothing in these nine commandments which points out the distinguishing title of the true God. You could not take these nine precepts and convince the idolater that he is worshiping the wrong god. Any heathen could claim that these were the commandments of his god, and so far as these nine precepts go, you could not disprove his claim. Thus without the fourth commandment, the Ten Commandments would be like a cheek with the payer's signature torn off-null and void, so far as it pertains to enforcing the worship of the true God.

But, let us now consider the fourth commandment. In this precept we are told to keep the seventh day, because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." This shows us that these commandments are the requirements of the One who created all things. No idol or image or any other object in heaven or in earth is the being who here demands obedience. The God of this law is the great Creator, who gives life to all created beings; hence all are under obligation to obey Him. Then this Sabbath commandment is the one which reveals God's right to rule, and sets forth His authority as the great Lawgiver of heaven.

Thus we have seen that this Sabbath precept is the only one which contains the distinguishing title of the true God. This is the one which convinces the heathen that he is worshiping the wrong god. With the fourth commandment in its proper place in the Law, no idolater can claim that this law is the law of his god. The Sabbath command puts behind this law all the power of the great Creator. Therefore it must be plain that the seal of God is the true Sabbath of the fourth commandment

FIVE SURE PROOFS

1. As a seal reveals the authority of the person using it, so the Sabbath commandment reveals the authority of God as the great Lawgiver.

2. The Sabbath precept is the only commandment in the law which contains the three essentials that constitute a seal. The second, third, and fifth precepts contain the name; but only in the fourth do we find His distinguishing title, Creator, and the extent of His dominion, "heaven and earth," or the universe.

3. The mark impressed upon the sealing wax by the seal is always some device that distinguishes the owner of the seal. In Revelation 7:2, we have the expression, "the seal of the living God." The term "living God" is used to point out the true God in contrast with the false gods, who do not possess life. (Acts 14: 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9) The seal of God, then, is some mark which distinguishes the true God from all false ones.

From the Bible we have shown that God's servants appeal to the great facts of creation as a proof of Jehovah's superiority over all other gods. Creative power is a sign of His eternal Godhead. (Romans 1:20.) Now, since the fourth commandment is the only one in the Decalogue where He reveals Himself as the Creator of all things and, therefore, as the only living and true God, then it is plain that in this Sabbath precept He has placed His seal. God has set apart the Sabbath as a memorial, or reminder, of creation, a sign which points out the true God, the Creator. Therefore, the Sabbath of creation, the seventh day, is the seal of the living God.

A. A seal is a mark of identification. Your seal or signature enables the banker to identify your checks. The archer's mark or brand on an ox or a horse shows to whom it belongs. So the keeping of the true Sabbath is a mark that identifies the worshiper of the true God. Every time we keep the seventh day, we show that we are worshiping that true God, who made the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested the seventh. This is the very reason for which God asks us to keep the seventh day. (Exodus 20:8-11.) Thus the Sabbath is the distinctive sign that points out the true God (Ezekiel 20:20), and Sabbath keeping a distinguishing mark that proclaims its observer a worshiper of the true God. Unless we keep the seventh day Sabbath, there is no service by which we can show that we are worshipers of the true God, who made the heavens and the earth. So when God desires to place His seal upon His servants, He offers them His sign, or mark, the seventh day Sabbath.

5. Four times in the Bible the Lord expressly calls the seventh day Sabbath His sign or seal. "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the Lord that does sanctify you." Exodus 31:12,13.

"It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:17. "Hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you that you may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 20:20. "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." Ezekiel 20:12.

In old Babylonia every man carried his seal, which served him when he wished to sign his name. When the knights of old rode into battle, covered from head to foot in armor, they were identified by the coat of arms borne upon their shield. Since in those days few of them could write, they executed documents by affixing to them an impression of their sign, or seal. Their seal was usually engraved upon a signet ring, and from this ancient method of affixing the name to a document by the use of the signet, we have today the word "signature." When you seal anything, you affix your sign to it. In drawing up legal papers, it is a common custom to place some blank lines at the bottom with the word "seal" after them. Here the names of the persons involved are to be signed. If the persons cannot write, then they make their mark. Thus we see that an individual's seal is his sign, or mark.

In Romans 4: 11 the words "sign" and "seal" are used synonymously. The word "seal" in Revelation 7:2 is rendered "sign" in Wycliffe's Translation, 1380, and also in the Douay Version, 1609. The four texts quoted above, which call the Sabbath God's sign, are equivalent to saying four times that it is God's seal.

A SIGN OF REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST

The seventh day Sabbath is not simply a sign of the old creation, but it is also a sign of Christ's power to save us from sin in the new creation. (Ezekiel 20:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17, A. R. V.) Sabbath keeping is a sign of our acceptance of God's power working through Christ for our salvation from sin. (Hebrews 7:26.) The Sabbath, then, is a sign that Jesus Christ is Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. On God's part the Sabbath is the seal of His authority, the signature of His saving power, the token of His ability to sanctify those who acknowledge His sovereignty by observing it. On man's part it is a sign that he has chosen Jehovah to be his God, a mark that he is a worshiper of the Creator and the only true God, and a token of his acceptance of Christ's power to save and sanctify him.

The seal is to be placed in the forehead. (Revelation 7:8.) What is meant by this? Obtaining the consent of the mind to an intelligent acceptance of allegiance to God in the observance of His Sabbath, or seal. What is the first word of the fourth commandment? "Remember." With what do we remember? The mind. So when we remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, then the seal may be placed upon our foreheads.

THE SABBATH TO BE RESTORED

No deed or mortgage is worth anything unless it has a seal. If you write a check, then tear off your seal or signature, it is null and void. This is what the man of sin has attempted to do with the law of God. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law." Psalm 119:126. The fourth commandment has been disregarded by Christendom. Men are not keeping the seventh day, as God has commanded in this fourth precept of His law. God's own day, His true Sabbath, or seal has been torn out of the law and

another day, Sunday, the first day of the week, has been put in its place. Thus the law has been made void, and in the last days God will carry forward a special work, which will restore to the law this seal, which has been taken away. (Isaiah 8:16,17.) The broken law will be bound up, and the seal, or the true Sabbath, placed back where it belongs.

The work will be accomplished by that great sealing message of Revelation 7:1-3, which was to arise after 1833 and sweep over the world before the end of time. This message will place the seal of God in the minds of His true servants. The prophecy calls for a great Sabbath reform movement in the last days. A special class of people are to arise, who will be distinguished as a separate and peculiar people by the keeping of the seventh day Sabbath. Where is this sealing message that marked people, and that Sabbath reform movement?

THE PROPHECY FULFILLED

This prophecy is fulfilled in the message of Sabbath reform being carried to earth's remotest bounds by the great advent movement which has come up since 1844:

1. It has come up in these last days, this side of 1833, as specified In Revelation 6 and 7

2. It bears the impress of the seal of the living God. It has the right mark. Its believers keep as the Sabbath the seventh day, or Saturday, as specified in the fourth commandment, which we have shown by five solid proofs to be the seal of Jehovah.

The keeping of this seventh day distinguishes these people from every other people in the world. Just as soon as a person begins the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, as enjoined in the fourth commandment, a mark of peculiarity is upon him. He will be watched and his course commented upon. He is distinguished from all those around him. The keeping of the true Sabbath is indeed a mark of distinction in these last days.

3. This advent movement came up in the right way to fulfill the prophecy. The angel with the seal came from the sun rising. (Revelation 7:2, A. R. V.) The sealing message was to come up like the sun-weak and powerless at first, but constantly to gain in strength, until its enlightening Influence would sweep over all the world.

So this message of a Sabbath reform arose about seventy-five years ago, in weakness and obscurity. At first it did not attract much attention; but it has increased in strength from year to year until now it is attracting the attention of the whole earth. Men can no more stop its progress than they can stop the sun from shining. From its birthplace in a remote corner of the New England states, the message has spread to every nation in the world, to the extreme points of all continents. Its messengers are in Alaska; they are at Cape Horn', and they are all the way between these two extremes. They are in Norway, the land of the midnight sun; they are down at the Cape of Good Hope, the very southern point of Africa; and all the way between. They are scattered along the borders of the Arctic Sea, in northern Russia and Siberia, and they are down in the southern part of India. They are at work in the northern part of Japan and An the Island groups of the South Pacific.

And wherever the message goes, a separate people are being called out to keep the true Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This return to the Bible Sabbath is not a manifestation of fanaticism; It is the very work of God for to-day, In putting His seal or mark on the honest in heart, that they may be ready to stand In the time of trouble.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

PERSONS who died many years ago keeping the first day of the week, did not go down with the mark of the beast upon them. The message warning against the mark of the beast is not applicable to the people of past ages. The people who receive the mark of the beast will be punished with the unmingled wrath of God, in the pouring out of the seven last plagues. (Revelation 14:9,10; 15:1.) Therefore, this message is applicable only to those who live just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

The reception of the mark of the beast is not the mere observance of Sunday as the Sabbath. Thousands have kept that day, honestly believing that they were doing God's will; and God will save them, because they lived up to what light they had. Thousands are keeping Sunday today in both the Catholic and Protestant churches, believing that in so doing they are obeying the Bible. These honest souls, who are following the Bible as far as it has been made plain to them, stand accepted before God, because of their honesty, even though they are keeping the wrong day. But God is even now sending to the world the special message of Revelation 14, to enlighten them on this important matter, and to help the honest in heart to make a right decision for HIM.

FEARFUL ISSUES COMING

The world will soon be brought face to face with a fearful signs. The powers Of earth will decree that all, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond" shall submit to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, by the observance of the false Sabbath. (Revelation 13:16,17.) All who refuse to observe the Sunday Sabbath will be punished by the civil law, and it will finally be decided that they should be executed. (Revelation 13:15.) On the other hand, God requires obedience to the Ten Commandments, enjoining the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, and His unmingled wrath is threatened against all who transgress His precepts. Every soul must choose whether he will obey God or follow the beast power. When this issue has been clearly set before the people, then whoever shall turn from keeping the seventh day and thus tramples upon God's law in yielding obedience to the man-made Sabbath, enforced by a manmade law, in opposition to the truth of God, receives the mark of the beast. When it has been made plain that Sunday keeping rests entirely on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, then he who persists in keeping that false Sabbath, thereby accepts the sign of allegiance to this papal power, which he chooses to obey instead of God.

DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?

God has sent this message against the mark of the beast to prepare you for the coming danger. He asks you to take your foot off His holy day (Isaiah 58:13); so to remember His Sabbath as to receive His seal in your forehead (Revelation 7:3), and thus to honor Him, as the Creator of heaven and earth. (Revelation 14:7.) He asks you to keep all His commandments (Revelation 14:12), and to cease to recognize the “mark” of that power which claims to speak for Christ, yet is really opposed to His gospel.

Some may say, “It makes no difference which day you observe, so long as you observe one day.” But do not lose sight of the real issue. This is not a question of days. It is a question of obedience or disobedience, loyalty or apostasy. Obedience is the most important thing in the Christian life. “To obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22. It is the highest form of worship. Your attitude toward this Sabbath question will show whether you are a worshiper of God or a follower of the beast.

God says, “the seventh day is the Sabbath,” and commands its observance. The Catholic Church can “Keep holy the first day of the week.” This brings you face to face with the issue. Whom will you obey? Whom servant will you be? Will you follow Christ in the keeping of the true Sabbath? Or will you follow Antichrist in the keeping of the counterfeit Sabbath? The difference between Sabbath observance and Sunday observance is the difference between being a servant of God or a servant of the Roman Catholic Church; the difference between receiving the seal of God or the mark of the beast.

GOD’S FINAL CALL

The Sabbath question will be the last great test which will decide the destiny of man. It will divide the world into two great classes, the obedient and the disobedient. Every soul must choose to receive either the seal of God or the mark of the beast. There will be no neutral ground. All will worship the beast, except those who receive the seal of God (Revelation 13:8), and only those who receive the seal of God will get the victory over the mark of the beast. (Revelation 14:1-3; 15:1,24) When Christ comes in the clouds of heaven, there will be only two classes. The obedient, with His seal on their foreheads, who will meet Him with joy; and the disobedient, with the mark of the beast on them, who will meet Him with “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” In which class will you be? Remember that whichever mark you decide to receive will determine in which clan you will be found in that day. Will you obey God’s law in the keeping of the seventh day and thus is the sign of loyalty to the Creator? Or will you yield obedience to that apostate power, in the keeping of the first day a man made substitute for God’s true Sabbath, and thus receive the mark of apostasy.

A CHOICE TO MAKE

Two ways are before you. One way is marked out by Jesus, the way of obedience. You can follow His example in the keeping of the commandments of God, and receive His seal in, your forehead. Your name will be written in the Lamb’s book of life and you will be protected from the seven last plagues. (Daniel 12:1) Then when the conflict is ended you will pass in through the pearly gates into the golden city of our God, to live in those beautiful mansions which Jesus has prepared for those who love Him. Revelation 22:14.)

The other way is marked out by Anti-Christ, the way of disobedience. You can continue to keep Sunday in the place of the seventh day; but a willful and persistent violator of the fourth commandment in the face of light, will result in the reception of the mark of the beast. This will bring the unmingled wrath of God and everlasting punishment down upon your head, and the irreparable loss of an eternal home in the kingdom of God.

Now, which way will you take? You are even now traveling one or the other of them two ways. To what will your present path lead? To the unmingled wrath of God? Or to an entrance into the eternal city? May God help you to make a wise choice.

Those who receive the seal of God will be protected from the plagues (Ezekiel 9: 6), while those who receive the mark of the beast will be punished with these plagues. (Revelation 16:4.) Will you not choose, then, to receive the seal of God? God does not want you to suffer this terrible punishment, so in mercy He has sent you this message to point out the way of escape. Oh, be wise and accept this message, that you may be saved in that day! It is God’s last message to men and if you reject His last call, what hope is there? If you refuse to heed this warning, you cannot escape the plagues, any more than a man can escape drowning who falls into the sea and has not learned to swim. “A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple man passes on and are punished.” Proverbs 22:3. “O that they were wise, that they understand this, that they would consider their latter end!” Deuteronomy 32:29. “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you. That I have set before you life and death. Blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” Deuteronomy 30:19.

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