

## Sabbath School Lesson #11 – God’s Seal or the Beast’s Mark? – 9-15 June 2018

**C**hrist would have us have God’s seal and avoid the beast’s mark. “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints” (Revelation 15:3). Men who reject God’s seal will know that they sold themselves to Satan to work his hellish will, lured by his lying promises of earthly gain and honour. Sin will appear in its true light.

Sunday: God’s Sign Identifying His People – After Jesus had healed the man born blind, He found him and said to him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” and the man said, “Who is He, that I might believe on Him?” In like manner, when the commandment “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” is preached, men might say, Who is this God, that we may worship Him? God has provided beforehand the answer to this question. He says, “I gave them My Sabbaths, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify 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.” The true God is the God who sanctifies, and delivers from the bondage of sin. He delivers and sanctifies by His creative power, which is made known through the Sabbath. Satan has done everything that he could do to hide God and His power from men. The Sabbath, God’s memorial, he has made the busiest day of the week, the day on which, it seems most inconvenient to rest from labour.

Monday: The Beast and False Worship – Revelation 13 talks of the leopardlike beast, which speaks great things and blasphemies and makes war with the saints. “This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy” (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 439). Unlike modern Adventism, our Adventist pioneers understood that the false worship instituted by the papacy is more than sun-day worship but is founded on the god of the sun anchored in the false doctrines. A few quotes from James White (1821-1881): “As fundamental errors, we might class with this counterfeit sabbath other errors which Protestants have brought away from the Catholic church, such as sprinkling for baptism, the trinity, the consciousness of the dead and eternal life in misery” (James White, *Review and Herald*, 12 September 1854, Par 8). “Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away the personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and of sprinkling or pouring instead of being “buried with Christ in baptism,” “planted in the likeness of his death.” but we pass from these fables to notice one that is held sacred by nearly all professed Christians, both Catholic and Protestant. It is, The change of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment from the seventh to the first day of the week” (James White, *Review and Herald*, 11 December 1855, Par 16). “The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, the trinity, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors” (James White, *Review and Herald*, 7 February 1856, Par 26). “The inexplicable Trinity that makes the Godhead three in one and one in three, is bad enough; but that ultra Unitarianism that makes Christ inferior to the Father is worse” (James White, *Review and Herald*, 29 November 1877). To our Adventist pioneers, trinity is false worship of Catholicism. Our new Adventist theologians acknowledge that Adventist pioneers rejected the trinity, and would today not join the Adventist church: “Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs. More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the trinity” (George Raymond Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993). This trinity false worship was prophesied: “The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organisation would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure” (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 204).

Tuesday: The Seal of God – To be sealed, we must depart from iniquity. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let

every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Timothy 2:19). The Lord commands a halt on destruction until His people are sealed (Revelation 7:2, 3). “Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads – it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved – just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already” (Ellen G White, *Faith I Live By*, p. 287). To those that are to be sealed, sin must “become exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13). Even others’ sin must grieve those that are to be sealed. “The Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (Ezekiel 9:4). We must no more be indifferent to sin. To be sealed is to be settled in the testimony and the law of God; when we both know and love it, then the Lord will declare: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples” (Isaiah 8:16), and “never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalms 55:22). For every doctrine we must appeal to “the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). For the law of God is the one unerring rule by which all doctrines are to be tested. We must be settled in the truth so “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14). The law and testimony represent “the hope of the gospel” in which we are “grounded and settled, and be not moved away from” (Colossians 1:23).

Wednesday: The Mark of the Beast – Revelation points to the beast and her mark. “In chapter 13 (verses 1-10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire” (Ellen G White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 439). The third angel warns that no man should receive the Mark of the Beast “in his forehead, or in his hand” (Revelation 14:9). We have already identified the beast as the papacy. The best way to discover its mark of authority is to ask the papacy directly. Notice this statement from a catechism: Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept? A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority (Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, third American edition, revised, edn., p. 174). The forehead represents the mind, and the hand is a symbol of work. “On the hand” and “between the eyes” are consistent symbols in Scripture for a person’s thoughts and actions (Exodus 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18). A person will receive the mark of the beast in his forehead by choosing to believe that Sunday is a holy day in spite of Bible truth. A person will be marked in the right hand by keeping Sunday laws for convenient reasons. Sunday is not yet the mark until Sunday Law.

Thursday: The Sabbath as the Seal – “But the seal of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord” (Ellen G White, *Review and Herald*, 13 July, 1987, Par 6). The first angel calls all to worship God who “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7). The call to worship specifically refers to the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence. And wherever, in the Bible, His claim to reverence and worship, above the gods of the heathen, is presented, there is cited the evidence of His creative power. “All the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens” (Psalm 96:5). “To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things ... Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: . . . I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isaiah 40:25, 26; 45:18). Says the psalmist: “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves ... O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalms 100:3; 95:6). And angels who worship God in heaven state, as the reason why their homage is due to Him: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things” (Revelation 4:11). Sabbath keeping is a sign of loyalty to God, for God says, “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” (Ezekiel 20:20). And the reason given is: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17). By Sabbath keeping, shall the world “discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not” (Malachi 3:18).