



AND because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it. (Nehemiah 9:38)

WRITE ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse. (Esther 8:8)

SET me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. (Song of Solomon 8:6)

HE that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. (John 3:33)

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, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Revelation 7:2-3)

Having lived in Iran for many years, and many more in parts of the Far East, I recognize the importance of a physical seal used by Asians to authenticate documents such as deeds and certificates. No document in Korea is considered valid without a seal of the executor, and every adult has a seal. The seal exceeds a signature or a handshake in importance. The Royal Seal of Kings, and even of individuals, was of the same importance in ancient Israel which is, indeed, part of the continent of Asia. Any representative of the King who executed documents on behalf of the sovereign with his seal did so with his express authority.

The importance attached to seals in the East is so great that without one no document is regarded as authentic. In many cases the seal consisted of a lump of clay, impressed with the seal and attached to the document, whether of papyrus or other material, by strings. In other cases wax was used. In sealing a sepulchre or box, the fastening was covered with clay or wax, and the impression from a seal of one in authority was stamped upon it, so that it could not be broken open without discovery. The signet-ring was an ordinary part of a man's equipment.

When the young Prodigal returned to his father's home after a long absence of marauding and riotous living, the old father gave him, in addition to a Robe and Shoes, a Ring. This was likely a signet ring symbolizing that the boy now had the authority of the father. The believer in Christ also acts with the authority of God when he teaches the Word faithfully and with conviction.

God uses the term 'seal' often in Holy Writ to express His concurrence with a covenant or a mission. It marks His authority as well as His people who are sealed with the very seal of God. *19 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 Tim 2:19)

I have attended churches who taught the only necessary duty of the sinner who would come to salvation was merely to make an audible proclamation he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner may not even know who Jesus Christ is at the time. How can one believe in one whom they do not know. But by coming forward and making such a proclamation, with or without full knowledge, that person is immediately added to the well-published church rolls as a member of the church. He may never darken the doors of the church again.

I am not saying that such a public profession should not be made, but I am saying that such should be made with at least a fundamental understanding of to whom the proclaimer is pledging allegiance.

All who truly believe and have made such a profession, who have been baptized and at some point demonstrated a fundamental knowledge of their obligations and privileges as a Christian, are admitted on good ground to the church. In another sense, there are genuine Christians who do have a fundamental understanding of who Christ is, and what He has done for them, who do not develop sound roots of faith because they are not nurtured by the church in Holy Scripture and may be stunted in their growth as a result, yet they are saved.

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent who wields the Seal of God and marks the elect with the Seal. Many a rough and ignorant sinner stumbles through many years of life until, one day most unexpectedly, a Bible verse, testimony, or street corner preacher utters the words that set on fire the spirit of the sinner and he is drawn to the Mercy Seat of Grace. On the other hand, many walk through the world knowing the Bible very well, but have yet to be touched by the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to possess a spiritual desire – one must base that desire on truth. Remember the words of our Lord to the Woman at the Well: *21 Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.** 22 **Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.** 23 **But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.** 24 **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*** (John 4:21-24)

All mankind have some identifying credential ever before the eyes of the Lord – either a Mark or a Seal! What is the difference? Altogether a mighty difference! At least in the days of Paul, the MARK was sometimes a means to distinguish the unrighteous from the righteous: *17 Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark** them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.* (Romans 16:17)

What of the Seal of God and the Mark of the anti-Christ? One designates the children of God and followers of Christ, and the other (MARK) designates those who will follow, or do follow now, the anti-Christ.

The Mark

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. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth 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. 15 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. 16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 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. (Revelation 13:11-17)

Those of the Preterist belief would have us believe this has already happened. It has not. There may be partial fulfillment of some of these conditions related, but never in the stark manifestation described in our text.

The comic-strip-like tracts I have seen presenting the mark of the beast as a UPC label or some other physical mark on the forehead is neither logical nor biblical. The KJV (unlike the politically correct modern versions) tell us the Mark is IN the right hand and IN the forehead. The significance of this will be related in the next few sentences.

The Seal of God

AND I beheld 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, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Revelations 7:2-3) Where are the Elect of God sealed? IN their FOREHEADS – not ON their foreheads!

The significant gems of truth hidden here is the fact that both the MARK and the SEAL are internal – IN THE FOREHEAD. The frontal lobe of the brain is the seat of logic and reason. It is the part of the brain where decisions are made. When we reject Christ and accept the Serpent as our master, it is a conscious decision which marks us an unrepentant sinner. It is a conscious decision. No one holds us down and stamps some mark on our forehead. It is a deliberate decision made in the mind and heart. Many are deceived to believe in this external branding.

Likewise, when one is drawn by the Holy Spirit accepts the authority of the Lord, he willingly assumes the Mind that was in Christ to direct his path. He makes a conscious decision as drawn by the Holy Spirit. Once sealed, that seal is permanent. Christ has never lost a soul which the Father has placed in His hands.

Which do you bear – a Mark or a Seal?