

The Two Marks: Part 1



SABBATH—JUNE 3



God doesn't force anyone to worship Him.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 14:12; Matthew 27:45–50; Revelation 13:15–17; Revelation 13:1, 2.

MEMORY VERSE: “I saw another angel coming from the east. He was carrying the mark of the living God. He called [announced] with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to hurt the earth and sea. The angel from the east said, ‘Do not hurt the earth or the sea or the trees until we have put the mark of God on the foreheads [top part of the face above the eyes] of the servants He owns’ ” (Revelation 7:2, 3, NLV).

THE WAR BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN is about worship, loyalty, and control. Revelation 13; Daniel 7; and 2 Thessalonians 2:3 talk about these topics. In Daniel 7, we read about the little-horn power. That same power is shown as a wild animal in Revelation 13. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 names this same religious power “the Man of Evil” (ERV). So, the little-horn power, the wild animal, and the Man of Evil are names for the same religious power. This power tries to take control of the church away from God. This power commands people to be loyal to its rules. This power also replaces God’s rules and worships Him with its own rules. This power forces people to accept false ideas about God.

God is different. He is love. God doesn't force anyone to worship Him. We worship God because we love Him, and He loves us. Only one thing will keep us from getting the sea animal's mark in the end times. A love for Jesus. This week we will study about the sea animal's mark.

PATIENT UNTIL THE END (Revelation 14:12)

As we saw in Revelation 14:7, God commands His people to worship Him because He made us. This announcement is the First Angel's Message. In Revelation 14:8, God warns His people about spiritual Babylon. This announcement is the Second Angel's Message.

The Third Angel's Message warns against worshipping the sea-animal power. The angel announces, " 'God will punish all those [people] who worship the beast [sea animal] and the beast's idol [statue; false god] and agree to have the beast's mark on their forehead [top part of the face above the eyes] or on their hand. They will drink the wine of God's anger' " (Revelation 14:9, 10, ERV).

Read Revelation 14:12. What two things from these verses do we learn about God's end-time people? Why are both things important?

The words written as "very patient" in Revelation 14:12 (NIRV) come from the Greek word "**hupomone**." By God's mercy, His people will be patient when Satan attacks them. God's people will be obedient. They will choose to die before they will disobey God. So, God will have an end-time people who are loyal to Him.

God's people will show that they worship God (Revelation 14:7) by refusing to worship the sea-animal power (Revelation 14:9). God's people will keep His commandments and the faith that comes from Jesus (Revelation 14:12). The final war in the end times will be about worship. The special test in the end times will be about the Sabbath.

Read Romans 8:1–4; Ephesians 2:8–10; and Colossians 1:29. What do these verses teach us about living by faith? What happens when we live by faith?

When we have faith, God gives us His mercy and loving favor. God's mercy changes our lives. God's loyal followers will have faith "in" Jesus. At the same time, God's people also will have the faith "of" Jesus. How are the two types of faith different? What is the faith "in" Jesus? Faith "in" Jesus means our belief in Him. We accept Him as our Savior. Faith "of" Jesus means that by faith we accept Jesus' holy life as our own. We will obey Jesus, the same as Jesus obeyed God and died for us on the cross.



The Third Angel warns against worshipping the sea-animal power.

THE WAR BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL
(Matthew 27:45–50)

Read Matthew 27:45–50. What do these verses teach us about Jesus’ experience on the cross? These verses tell us that Jesus cried out to God: Why did you leave Me alone? Why did Jesus ask His Father this question? Did Jesus really believe He was alone? How does this experience help us understand what it means to have the faith “of” Jesus?

Jesus hung on the cross. Darkness was all around Him. Jesus accepted our guilt, shame, and the punishment for our sins. At the time, Jesus couldn’t feel the Father’s love for Him. Jesus depended on His connection with God His whole life. God’s love helped Jesus get ready for the worst times, including the cross. The Savior trusted God when everything around Him made Him feel that He should doubt. When it looked as if everyone had left Jesus, did He give up? No, He continued to trust in God.

“Darkness was everywhere. It looked as if God had left Jesus forever. Jesus had accepted the worst of human suffering and pain. In those awful hours, Jesus depended on proof of His Father’s love. . . . By faith, Jesus won.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ Triumphant*, page 277, adapted.

The faith that Jesus had is a faith so deep and trusting. No demons on earth can destroy it. No bad experience can destroy this faith. When we have this faith, we will trust what we can’t see. We will believe what we can’t understand. We will hold on to God when there is little to hold on to. The faith that Jesus had is a gift that we get from God by faith. This faith will help us in the terrible times ahead. This faith helps us to worship Jesus as our All-Powerful God. This faith helps us stay patient when the sea animal’s mark is made a law and everyone on earth is forced to obey it.

At the same time, this gift of faith takes time to grow. God’s people learn how to live by faith, day by day, now. We show our faith in good times and in bad times. We show our faith when we think God is near and when we think God is far away. The Bible says, “ ‘the one who is right with God will live by faith’ ” (Galatians 3:11, NIV; also read Habakkuk 2:4). The time to get ready is now. Every test and experience in our lives can make our faith grow stronger.

Think of a hard time in your life. How did you keep your faith in God?



The Savior trusted God when everything around Him made Him feel that He should doubt.

WHEN THE FINAL TEST COMES (Revelation 13:15–17)

The special message in Revelation 13 is about the sea-animal power and its mark. Revelation 13 shows us there will be terrible times ahead. God's people won't be allowed to buy or sell without the mark. They will be hurt and attacked. In the end, a law will be made to kill them. In those awful times ahead, God will help His people. So, "God's people need to be very patient. They are the ones who obey God's commands. And they remain [stay] faithful [have the faith and holy life that belongs] to Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, NIV). One of those commandments, of course, is the fourth commandment: the seventh-day Sabbath.

Revelation 13 shows us the worst that Satan will do to God's people in his evil war against God. What is the first part of Satan's plan in his war? Tricks and lies, of course. Revelation 13 shows us a time in the near future when Satan will work with a religious kingdom on earth. This kingdom is named the sea animal. Together, Satan and the sea animal will force people to do what they want.

Religious attacks are nothing new. Cain killed Abel for worshiping the way that God told them to worship (Genesis 4:1–8). Jesus warned that more attacks against His followers were coming. These attacks will happen until the end of time: " 'The time will come when anyone who kills you will think he is helping God' " (John 16:2, NIV; also read Matthew 10:22; 1 Peter 4:12).

The sea-animal power will force everyone to get a mark. Everyone will be forced to accept the sea animal's teachings and worship the way it says we must worship.

What will happen to God's end-time people in the final test? Read Revelation 13:15–17 for the answer.

Revelation 13:15–17 tells us about Satan's final attack on God's people. Satan will start with money. No one will be allowed to buy or sell without the mark. When this rule becomes a law, most people will go along with it. Anyone who refuses to accept the mark will be told that they will be killed.

Satan gets Christians ready to accept the mark when the final test comes. How does Satan do that? Satan gets people to do things they know are wrong now and to go against Bible truth. God's love will make His people strong and keep us safe during the terrible times that are coming.



God's people won't be allowed to buy or sell without the mark.

THE ONES WHO FOLLOW THE LAMB (Revelation 13:1, 2)

Revelation 13 talks about two animals. These animals are word pictures for kingdoms and powers on the earth. Where does the first animal come from? Who gives this animal its kingdom? Read Revelation 13:1, 2 for the answer.



As always, there are only two sides in the worldwide war between good and evil.

The first animal in Revelation 13 gets its kingdom from the dragon. Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20:2 show us that the dragon is Satan. Satan is sneaky. He uses kingdoms and leaders on earth to do his work. Revelation 12:3–5 says that the “dragon” will try to destroy the “male Child” as soon as He is born. This “male Child” (NKJV) later is saved by God and taken to heaven and God’s throne. Jesus is the “male Child.” Satan uses King Herod and the kingdom of Rome to try to destroy Jesus. At the end of Jesus’ life, a Roman leader named Pilate sent Jesus to the cross to die. A Roman soldier nailed Jesus to the cross. Another Roman soldier stabbed Jesus with a spear. Roman soldiers guarded Jesus’ grave. Revelation 13:2 shows us that Satan, the dragon, will work with the kingdom of Rome to do his work. That is why Satan makes the Roman kingdom powerful.

“The dragon is a word picture for Satan. But the dragon also is a word picture for the kingdom of Rome. . . . The religious kingdom that comes after the kingdom of Rome is the Roman Catholic Church. Satan makes this religious government very powerful.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 7, page 817, adapted.

Read Revelation 13:3 and Revelation 14:4. Compare the two verses. How is what happens in Revelation 13:3 different from what happens in Revelation 14:4?

In Revelation 13:3, almost everyone on earth follows the sea animal. But in Revelation 14:4, we read that God will have a people who follow the Lamb, Jesus. As always, there are only two sides in the worldwide war between good and evil. There is Jesus’ side. And Satan’s. We must choose one side or the other. If we don’t choose Jesus, we choose Satan’s side, even if we don’t think we do that.

Jesus said, “ ‘All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person who continues strong until the end will be saved’ ” (Matthew 10:22, ICB). How do we stay strong until the end?

JESUS: THE ONE WHO GOES TO GOD FOR US
(Revelation 13:4, 5)

Read Revelation 13:4, 5. What special things do we learn about the sea animal in these verses that help us understand who this power is?

The first animal in Revelation 13 is a religious power. This government comes from the old-time kingdom of Rome and grows to become a worldwide religion during the Middle Ages. Revelation 13:5 shows us that this religious power tries to act the same as God. This religious kingdom brags that it is the same as God.

Read Luke 5:18–26 and John 10:33. These verses talk about a sin that has two parts. What is this sin, and what are its two parts?

The Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of acting the same as God. Their words were not fair, because Jesus **is** God. Jesus tells Philip, “ ‘Philip, I have been with you for a long time. So you should know me. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too. So why do you say, “Show us the Father”?’ ” (John 14:9, ERV). As God, Jesus can do everything God the Father does. So, Jesus can forgive sins.

1 Timothy 2:5 teaches us that there is only one Person who can go to God for us and get help. That Person is Jesus Christ. But the Roman Catholic Church teaches something different. They teach that their human spiritual leaders can go to God for us sinners. But that idea is not correct. Their human spiritual leaders are sinners, too. So, none of them can be our helper because they also need help! Anyone who tries to replace Jesus and His work for us in heaven is guilty of a terrible sin. No one can replace Jesus or the work He does for us. No human can say that he is God on earth. But that’s what the Roman Catholic Church says. Read these two quotes from Catholic leaders about the pope. The pope is the top leader of the Roman Catholic Church. “The pope is so mighty and excellent. he is not a man. . . . He is the same as God on earth.”—Lucius Ferraris, “Papa,” article 2 in his *Prompta Bibliotheca* (1763), volume 6, pages 25–29, adapted.

Pope Leo XIII bragged: “We popes are as powerful as God Himself. We have His job on this earth.”—*The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benzinger, 1903), page 193, adapted.



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The Sabbath connects us with the God who made us. The Sabbath will be the important test in the end times.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “The worldwide war between God and Satan started in heaven. From the beginning of this war, Satan’s plan was to throw out God’s law. That is why Satan started his war against Jesus. Jesus is the One who made us. Satan was thrown out of heaven. But he continued his war against God’s law on this earth. What is Satan’s plan on this earth? Satan tries to trick people. He leads them to sin against God’s law. Some people obey Satan. They throw out God’s law. Other people reject one or two commandments. Both choices lead to the same thing. . . . Satan replaces Bible truth with his lies. In this way, his false teachings have become part of the faith of many people who say they believe in the Bible. The final fight between Bible truth and Satan’s lies will be the end of Satan’s long war against God’s law. We are now starting this final war. This war is about choosing to obey the laws and rules of men or the law of God. We must make a choice. What will it be? Will we obey the religion that the Bible teaches? Or will we follow the lies and false teachings of humans?”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 582, adapted.

As we saw, our Sabbath worship celebrates Jesus, the One who made us. Jesus says the Sabbath is very important. He names Himself the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). The Sabbath helps us remember who we are as humans. The Sabbath shows us that every person has worth. The Sabbath helps us understand that God made us. So, we should worship God and obey Him. That’s why Satan hates the Sabbath so much. The Sabbath connects us with the God who made us. The Sabbath will be the important test in the end times.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What reasons does the sea animal give for why it has so much control and power? Can we have these same thoughts and feelings about ourselves without knowing it? If yes, in what ways can we be guilty of feeling this same way?
- ② Some people say that Satan is a joke. They don’t believe he is real. They also say that educated people are too smart to believe in this silly idea about a devil. How do you answer people who say that Satan is just make-believe? What reasons can you give them for your answer? What Bible truth can you share with them in your explanation?

“I CANNOT DO THIS!”

Hubert was very excited about the party. He and his friends decided to go to a dance club in Harare, Zimbabwe. The club served alcohol. Hubert invited many of his friends to the party. But his friend named Elder didn't show up. Hubert saw his friend later. “What happened? Why didn't you come to the party?” he asked. “I can't do this,” Elder answered. “I'm an elder.” An elder is a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Hubert heard Elder give him this same explanation before. Hubert and Elder became friends while they both taught at a high school in Harare. Hubert was 19 at the time. He was teaching for a year before going to study at the university. Elder was 25. He was an elder in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Hubert loved to go to parties and drink. But Elder did not go. Elder always explained, “I can't do this. I'm an elder.”

Hubert never met an Adventist before. He thought, “This guy is loyal to his church.” But Hubert didn't accept Elder's invitation to go to church with him. The next year, Hubert went away to the university. He kept remembering Elder and went to visit an Adventist church for the first time. The church members were friendly. The sermon touched Hubert's heart. During his break from school, Hubert went to another Adventist church while he visited his aunt. Soon, every time Hubert saw a church, he wanted to go inside. He felt that something was missing from his spiritual life.

Hubert started his second year at the university. Hubert got a gift of money to go study in Russia. He wondered if he would find an Adventist church there. After Hubert arrived in Moscow, he met Mildred. They became friends. One of their friends was having a birthday party on Saturday. Hubert went and got drunk. Mildred came late to the party, after 8:00 P.M. Hubert asked, “Why did you come so late?” “I was at church,” Mildred said. “But it's Saturday,” Hubert said. “Church is on Sunday.” “Not if you are Seventh-day Adventist,” Mildred said.

Hubert was surprised and excited to learn that Mildred was an Adventist. She saw his interest in the Sabbath and invited him to go to church with her next Sabbath. She waited for him at the bus. But Hubert felt ashamed because he was drunk. He didn't show up. He apologized when Mildred called him to ask what happened. He promised to go to church with her the next Sabbath. Mildred called him all week to make sure he would come.

A year later, Hubert gave Jesus his heart and was baptized. He called Elder to thank him for his faith and loyalty to Jesus. Today, Hubert is a happy church member, too. He says, “I thank God for leading me to the Adventist Church.”

INSIDE
Story
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



“I can't do this,” Elder answered. “I'm an elder.”

