

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

BIBLE TEXT : Revelation 13:1-18; 14:9-11

LESSON 462 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Revelation 13: 1-18

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Notes:

The Bride of Christ

The children of God are waiting for a most glorious event. Jesus is coming back to take His Bride out of this world. Any of us who measure up to the instructions God gives in His Word can be a part of that Bride. When Jesus comes again, our bodies will be changed in an instant, and gravity will no longer hold us on the earth. We will rise to meet the Lord in the air. We will not be bound by the laws of nature. Those who died as overcoming Christians will also rise in glorified bodies, and together we will meet the saints of all ages at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

But for those poor people who have not prepared to meet Jesus there will be a time of great suffering. In our studies in the Book of Revelation we have already learned about the plagues that will kill half the population of the world. Still greater troubles lie ahead for those who will be left in the world.

The First Beast

The ruler who comes to power in this lesson is a horrible person. The description of him no doubt symbolizes his power and authority rather than of what his person is like. The dragon who gives him power is Satan himself, who can deceive the whole world. The Spirit of God will not be in the world to protect the people and show them the truth of God's Word. Satan will have nothing to hinder his power and deceit. He will win influence by flatteries. His purpose will be to make all men worship him.

Satan has always been an enemy of Jesus. He has tried to undermine His influence and authority. When Jesus was born into the world to become the Saviour of men, Satan put it into the heart of Herod to kill all the babies, thinking that Jesus would surely be among those killed. But God had warned Joseph to take Jesus to Egypt before it happened, so Jesus' life was spared. When Jesus was about to begin His ministry, Satan took Him into a high mountain and tried by many temptations to get Him to bow to him -- trying to prove that Satan had more power than Jesus. But each time Jesus defeated Satan. Jesus has more power than Satan -- always did have, even when He was on earth as a man. Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He proved it, too, by rising from the dead. Satan thought he had won the victory when Jesus was crucified. Now Jesus was dead and Satan would rule the world. But Jesus rose the third day, triumphant over death, hell and the grave. When John first saw the glorified Christ on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus said to him: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18).

The Deadly Wound Healed

In this vision that John saw of future events, Satan is trying to copy what Jesus did. The head of the beast was "wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:3). He was trying to prove that he had as much power as Jesus, to lay down his life and take it again. And the people of the world were deceived by it. It states that all the world wondered at the beast. They glorified him; they worshiped him. They asked, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" About now the beast thought he was very important. He had won his point. He was ruling the world. All

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 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.

people were bowing to him. He blasphemed God. He blasphemed God's Temple; he blasphemed even the people who had escaped him, been saved, and had gone to Heaven.

That would be bad enough, but another beast will come forth who will help the first beast. He will force everyone to worship the first beast, just as they should worship God. Some people today are already worshiping the devil, but in that day everyone will be forced to worship these devilish beings. Many people are more interested in seeing miracles -- supernatural happenings -- than they are, in living a holy life. Such people are easily deceived. They will see many miracles when these beasts rule the earth. The beasts will be able to call down fire from Heaven. They will even be able to make a statue talk. And anyone who refuses to worship the beasts will be killed

Political Power

God will allow the beast to rule for 42 months after he breaks the covenant with the Jews: not only in religious matters -- which would be bad enough -- but he will rule in politics and economics. There will not be any king or president who will be above him in power. He will force all the people to take his mark upon them -- either in their hand or on their forehead. No one will be able to buy or sell without that mark. It will include the rich and poor (no one will be able to bribe his way with money into favour), employers and employees, people of all nationalities, men, women and children. They probably will not be able to work to earn a living; and even those who have money will not be able to buy food or clothing with it. The beast will have absolute power.

People Numbered

Time was when it seemed it would be impossible to find every person and keep a record of him. But today everyone in the United States and some other countries must have a Social Security number in order to work. Modern computing machines can tabulate all those numbers and keep track of everyone. Other countries could put in such a system with very little difficulty. When the Antichrist (one of the beasts) takes over, it will not be hard for him to add more information to each person's card -- and then he will have all the facts he wants about every person. He would know if some person wanted to worship Jesus, and he would have that person killed at once. He is going to insist on absolute obedience from everyone.

God's Indignation

Most people will try to save themselves from suffering, so they will do what the Antichrist wants them to do. That will call down the wrath of God. God will be watching everything that is going on in the world, and when the 42 months are finished, he will send upon the earth the greatest punishment men have ever known. His wrath will be "without mixture" -- there will be no mercy. Today God often punishes the sinner for his wrong-doing, but He extends mercy, too. If the sinner will repent God will stop the punishment and forgive the sinner. We read of instances in the Bible where great sinners humbled themselves just a little, and God postponed punishment. Of course when a sinner repents and God forgives, there will never be any punishment. But when God sends punishment during the Great Tribulation, there will be no mercy.

Everyone who has taken the mark of the beast will be tormented forever in the lake of fire. They will have no rest day nor night from henceforth forever. There will be no end to God's eternal punishment. And Jesus, who had once offered them mercy, who had called, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," will see what happens to them. He will see in torment those, who spat upon Him, who crucified Him, who said, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25).

Eternally Lost

Revelation 14: 9-11

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Oh, that young people could realise the tragedy of refusing to worship God today! Some are trying to figure a way to escape during the Great Tribulation. But how do they know they will live until that time? Anyone who dies without repenting of his sins, will be eternally lost. There will never be another chance to escape the wrath of God. Forever in hell! There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The smoke of their torment will arise forever! No end! Forever lost!

The Love of God

Today the Lord is holding out His arms in love. He is calling everyone to come Home to Father's House. Think of the beautiful, comforting words: Home, Father, friends, love, food, comfort, rest, peace, joy. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, and wants to come again to take us Home with Him where we will be forever blessed. Why not serve Him? He said if there was anything more He could have done for our salvation, He would have done it. He paid the infinite price on Calvary to save us from our sins. If people refuse His salvation, they deserve to be punished in hell forever.

There is no way to avoid making a choice for Heaven or hell. Every person who was ever born into the world will go either to Heaven or to hell. Each of us has the power of choice. May we purpose that at any cost we will obey God's Word and make Heaven our eternal Home.

QUESTIONS

1. What are all true Christians looking forward to?
2. What is going to happen on the earth after the Church of the Firstborn is taken away?
3. What has Satan tried to do to Jesus?
4. Where will the beast get his power?
5. How will the beast try to copy Christ's death and resurrection?
6. Name some of the things the beast will be able to do.
7. What will happen to the people who will refuse to worship the beast?
8. What will people need in order to buy and sell?
9. What will God do to the people who take the mark of the beast?
10. How can we escape the Great Tribulation?