

# Do You Have the Mark of the Beast or the Mark of God?

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Recorded on April 27, 2019

If we look at the Bible in general, probably one of the sections of scripture that has been subject to some of the most speculation, of any area of the Bible—not only in the church of God, but in popular Christianity in general—is the subject of the mark of the beast. If you think about that subject, there have been books written on it, it's been addressed in movies and commentaries, and all sorts of articles and such. When that subject gets addressed, oftentimes the entire focus is on, you might say, the more speculative matters of the issue.

We know Revelation 13 tells us that at the end time, the mark of the beast is going to be used to stop people from buying and selling—those who are not in line with the beast system at that time. Oftentimes the whole focus on this subject centers around that and the speculation as to how that might play out. That's often been true in the church of God as well. If we put our focus on that type of thing, we miss a much more important spiritual lesson that this subject teaches, and from a spiritual perspective, is much more valuable than all the speculation associated with it.

If we focus on the speculative issues, oftentimes our emphasis is exclusively on an end-time, tribulation, day of the Lord timeframe. We tend to look at it from a fall holy day perspective. We think of it solely as a very end-time subject. What we're going to see today is, if we look at the greater spiritual lesson behind this subject, we're going to see that the Bible has a much broader application to the subject of the mark of the beast, and there is a greater spiritual lesson that is behind it that is much more important than the speculation surrounding it.

Ironically, if we understand the greater spiritual lesson, it very much ties into the meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread that we just finished keeping. We silo this subject, thinking it's a fall subject, an end-time, day of the Lord, tribulation subject, and it is—it certainly has its important applications there—but if we just focus on those aspects we miss a much greater spiritual lesson that ironically ties into the Days of Unleavened Bread. We'll see that as we go through this sermon today. If you would like a title for this sermon, it's:

Do You Have the Mark of the Beast or the Mark of God?

That title will make a lot more sense as we go through this message. We're going to look at the mark of the beast, but not from the focus that's typically applied to it. We're going to look at it more from a perspective of the greater spiritual lesson behind its symbolism.

Let's turn over to Revelation 13—not a surprise that we start here. As I'm sure you know, this chapter is very much dedicated to addressing the beast. You'll also notice—particularly if you have a New King James translation of the Bible, that puts the subheadings in it—that in the middle of the chapter, right before verse 11, another subheading has been added, which divides the chapter in half. If we look at this from a broad, general standpoint, there are two beasts addressed in this chapter.

The first half of the chapter focuses more on a political empire that dominates the world at various times throughout history. In the second half of the chapter, it focuses more on a religious system associated with this empire—you might say, the leader of that religious system. In the first half you can be looking at the political empire or maybe the leader of that political empire, and in the second half it refers to another beast, and this is more of a religious system. We're going to start off in verse 11, looking at the religious system, and what I want you to notice as we go through this, is it's this other beast—this religious system or religious leader—that causes people to take this mark. I think that's an important distinction as we go through this.

**Revelation 13:11** *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. (NKJV)*

It's not hard to figure out the symbolism here. The Bible uses the symbol of a lamb to refer to Christ and a dragon to refer to Satan. Obviously, what is being said here is, he has a righteous appearance to make him seem Christlike, but he speaks like Satan—he speaks evil. So you can see the dichotomy here.

12) *And he exercises all the authority of the first beast [this first beast is what's addressed in the first half of the chapter] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

13) *He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.*

14) *And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.*

15) *He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

16) *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,*

17) *and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

18) *Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. (NKJV)*

This mentions that this mark is going to be used to persecute those who are not in line with the beast system, specifically mentioning buying and selling. Oftentimes, all the

focus and the speculation centers around how they will actually carry this out. What physical mechanism will be used to do this? Just to give you an idea of this—and this won't be our focus today at all—throughout my lifetime I've heard a variety of speculations on this subject. Years ago, it was thought it might be a tattoo like the Nazis used on the Jews in World War II, or later, as technology developed, it was speculated it could be a barcode, and barcodes became a popular idea. More recently people have speculated that there's a GPS tracking chip associated with this. If you notice the examples I've given, the speculation has changed based upon the advances in technology. We have no idea how many years into the future this could play out and what technology might be in use at that time, and we can speculate all we want to and probably still get it wrong. We probably won't know until it actually happens.

There's a much more important lesson in all of this that really has nothing to do with speculation. If you notice, I pointed out that it is a religious system that causes people to take this mark. It mentions the mark is on the forehead and on the hand. We're going to see today, as we go through this sermon, the spiritual significance of what this means. Also notice this mark is used as a differentiation between people. From the beast's standpoint the mark is used to identify who that system is going to persecute, who is not in line with the system, who is going to be excluded from buying and selling, and even killed, if they are not in line with the beast's ideology. Notice, that from a general standpoint, that's how this mark is utilized.

Let's also notice that it's not just the beast that uses this, as a way to differentiate between people, there is also a mark that God uses to differentiate between people, in terms of who receives His wrath and who doesn't. Let's look over in chapter 14 and verse 9. We're going to break into the middle of a context because our focus is going to be specifically on the mark of the beast.

**Revelation 14:9** *Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand ...*

Notice the imagery of the forehead and the hand. We're going to see the significance of this as we go through this sermon.

*10) he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. 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 ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (NKJV)*

This mark is used as a way to differentiate people. It's used by the beast to determine who they are going to persecute, who they feel is not in line with the direction they are trying to go, but it's also used to distinguish people from God's perspective. His

perspective is that people who have this mark are going to be recipients of His wrath. In both cases it's used to distinguish people from each other. As I mentioned, when we look at this subject, we typically tend to have a tribulation, day of the Lord timeframe in mind, focused on the speculation, and as a result we isolate this subject of the mark of the beast to just a very end-time application. What we need to notice is that several times in the Bible, it speaks of this in a much broader context, than just that of the end time. We need to see the larger significance, the spiritual point behind this whole subject. Turn with me to Revelation 20, and we'll start reading in verse 4.

**Revelation 20:4** *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. [Once again, the forehead and the hand are emphasized.] And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

*5) But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

*6) Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (NKJV)*

Notice we're talking about those involved who are being included in the first resurrection—that was made very, very clear in this section of scripture. But how are they described? They're universally described as those who had not received the mark of the beast. Think about that. Those included in the first resurrection aren't just the people who live in the very end time, around the tribulation, day of the Lord timeframe. We can very clearly prove from the Bible, that included in the first resurrection, is everybody who has lived from creation, from Adam and Even in the garden, all the way down to the return of Christ, who were offered the chance to be a firstfruit and to receive salvation, and who successfully endured to the end, and made it to the Kingdom of God. That's who is included in that group.

It's very easy to prove. Just look at 1 Thessalonians 4 (we won't take the time to turn there), where Paul identifies two groups, identified in the first resurrection, and it's not just those who were alive at His return. It's the dead in Christ. They arise first. We can go through Hebrews 11, and numerous other chapters in the Bible, and clearly see that the first resurrection is all of the firstfruits from creation up until the return of Christ, who have successfully made it into the Kingdom of God, who are included. Yet they are referred to, as a group, as those who would not receive the mark of the beast, and this is not the only time they are referred to this way.

Let's turn over to Revelation 14. The scriptures we're going to look to, that are going to make a specific reference to the mark of the beast, are going to be in chapter 15, but we need to start in chapter 14 to clearly establish the context of who we're talking about here.

**Revelation 14:1** *Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.*

2) *And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.*

3) *They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. (NKJV)*

Notice it says these folks were redeemed from the earth—these are former human beings. Let's notice what's covered here in verses 4 and 5.

4) *These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*

We know clearly who this is talking about—these are the firstfruits, they've been redeemed from the earth, they are resurrected human beings that have made it to the Kingdom of God.

5) *And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. (NKJV)*

Every one of these firstfruits was included in the first resurrection; they've already been resurrected because of the blowing of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11, and they are now before the throne of God. In the first resurrection, it's not just a matter of being resurrected and meeting Christ in the air, and coming straight back down to the earth; they actually go up to be presented before God the Father, and there is a timeframe that plays out before they come back down to the earth to start the Millennium. (I won't go through all the details of that particular subject; if you want to research it, there is a sermon on the Pacific website I gave several years ago [May 24, 2015], on Pentecost; it's called "The Wave Sheaf and the Two Wave Loaves", which goes through all the details of that particular subject.) Notice here where it specifically identifies this group, before God's throne. These are the resurrected firstfruits; all these are included in the first resurrection. With that in mind, let's go over to chapter 15, because we need to establish exactly who we are talking about before we read the reference in chapter 15. We'll start in verse 1.

**Revelation 15:1** *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

2) *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. (NKJV)*

We won't take the time to go through Revelation, chapter 4, but if you go through Revelation 4, there is a description there of the throne of God the Father, and one of the

things you'll see mentioned in that description is a sea of glass, described as the area before His throne. Notice these folks are all standing on that sea of glass, before the throne of God, as we just read in chapter 14. Let's just finish the thought and pick up in verse 3.

*3) They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*

*4) Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested." (NKJV)*

Those seen here, and in chapter 14, are all those included in the first resurrection—all the resurrected firstfruits. How are they described? As all those who had the victory over the beast, over his mark. Notice we're referring to all of them as those not receiving the mark of the beast. Obviously there is a greater application to this concept than just this issue of the tribulation and day of the Lord timeframe, and the issue of buying and selling; there's a much broader concept at work. Yes, it certainly has its specific applications to the end time; don't get me wrong, I'm not denying that at all. That's an important focus there, but it's not what we're going to address today—that's a subject for another time. That certainly has very valid applications. What I want you to see is that this subject has a much broader application; those whom we're referring to, the firstfruits in general, are those who haven't received this mark.

What we need to realize first of all is that the concept of the beast is not just an end-time, day of the Lord, tribulation concept. A very easy way to see that is to look at the book of Daniel. We won't take the time to go through it, but if you look specifically at Daniel, chapter 7, you'll see multiple beasts being described, rising up out of the sea. The Bible even identifies these as empires that are a part of this beast system throughout time. We won't go through the details of identifying all of these, but just realize that there are several specifically identified in the Bible. They start off with Babylon in Daniel's time, Medo-Persia comes next, Greco Macedonia follows that—you have this succession of empires throughout time that are also considered a part of this beast system. With that alone we know this doesn't just apply to the very end time, to our tribulation, day of the Lord period. This is a broader concept, because we're also talking about the influence of this system during Daniel's time, in the Old Testament, even before Christ came, so obviously there's a much broader application here.

We also need to realize there's even a broader application when we look at the power behind the beast, and we look at what this mark means, that applies even more broadly than that. We need to realize the connection between Satan himself (who is the power behind this system) and this religious system to totally appreciate what this mark is about and the spiritual lesson that it teaches us. Let's go back over to Revelation 13 and this time I'm going to start in the first part of the chapter, in verse 1. We're going to notice two things as we read through this. One is the symbolism that is used to describe the beast and the other is the power behind it.

**Revelation 13:1** *Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. (NKJV)*

We're not going to go into all the details of how you can apply these heads and horns to various physical empires. What I want you to notice is the symbolism of seven heads and ten horns because that will be interesting in a moment.

2) *Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. (NKJV)*

Notice that the power was given by the dragon.

3) *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.*

4) *So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (NKJV)*

Notice this beast is described as having seven heads and ten horns but it also tells you the power behind this is Satan. Satan gives it its authority and what does this beast do? It causes individuals to worship the dragon, who is the power behind it. That tells you they are worshipping Satan. We don't have to guess who the dragon is, the Bible clearly tells us who it is. Let's also notice the symbolism the Bible uses to describe Satan himself. We are going to see it exactly matches the beast. Turn over to chapter 12 and we'll look at verse 3.

**Revelation 12:3** *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. (NKJV)*

Satan himself is described with the same symbolism—seven heads, ten horns. As we saw in chapter 13, we can certainly apply the heads and horns in those cases to physical empires, but we're not going to go through that subject today. What I want you to see is the direct connection between Satan—as the power behind it, how he is described—and the imagery of the beast, and how they match. Just to show that the Bible tells us very clearly who the dragon is, switch over to verse 7 of chapter 12.

**Revelation 12:7** *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,*  
8) *but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.*  
9) *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (NKJV)*

We don't have to speculate as to who the dragon is; it tells us very clearly here that this is Satan. What we need to understand is, even though we've had these various empires throughout history that we can identify—we put them together from Daniel and other parts of the Bible, where we can identify various empires that stretch a long section of history, that we would call the beast or different resurrections of the beast—we also need to understand that Satan is the power behind them. His beast causes people to worship the dragon, to worship Satan and his whole system, his way of sin.

We need to understand this whole connection, because, as I specifically pointed out before when we first started addressing this subject, in Revelation 13 there are these two different beasts discovered. There's the political empire being addressed as it dominated the world at various times, and there's also the religious system—which has a leader—and it is the religious system that causes people to take this mark. We also have to understand this is all directly tied to Satan, and when we clearly understand what this whole symbolism of the forehead and the hand is about, and what that really shows us, we can see the connection, not just with the physical empire, but with Satan's whole way of life and his whole philosophy. Once we clearly understand this, we can see how this whole concept directly connects with the Feast of Unleavened Bread that we've just been keeping for the past week. We're going to see this more clearly as we start putting the whole puzzle together.

Now let's switch gears for a moment. I titled this sermon, "Do You Have the Mark of the Beast or the Mark of God?" Let's also notice that there is a mark of God talked about in the Bible, and God uses the same type of imagery—putting it on our forehead and on our hand. If we look at how this comes from God and the spiritual meaning behind it, then we get a lot more insight as to what the mark of the beast is, and the spiritual lesson behind that. As I pointed out with the mark of the beast, this is basically a mark used to distinguish between people. From the beast's point of view, this is identifying who its system is going to persecute—who is not in line with it, who they're going to exclude from buying and selling, and target to be killed. But I also mentioned that God uses this same mark to distinguish who is the recipient of His wrath. Let's also notice that God marks people on the opposite side of the equation, and His mark is also used to distinguish between people. Let's turn over to Revelation 9, and let's start in verse 1.

**Revelation 9:1** *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.*

*2) And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.*

*3) Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

*4) They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. (NKJV)*



We're going to come back to that concept.

- 5) *And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*  
6) *In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.* (NKJV)

This is one of the trumpet plagues that comes as a part of the day of the Lord. This is the day of Yehovah, this is the day of God's wrath upon mankind. He said specifically they could torment only those who don't have the seal of God on their foreheads. In other words, those who have the seal of God would be excluded, they would be protected from this. They would not be receiving this wrath. We noticed before that the mark of the beast singled out who was going to receive God's wrath; these are those who are excluded from God's wrath. Notice where the seal is. It's on the forehead—that's an interesting connection. Turn over to Revelation 7 and we'll see a similar reference, again noticing the connection with the forehead.

**Revelation 7:1** *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.*

2) *Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea,*

3) *saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."* (NKJV)

We have this similar imagery, which is protecting people from receiving God's wrath, and it mentions the forehead. As I mentioned earlier, the mark of the beast is specifically described as being on the forehead and on the hand. We can understand the greater significance of this if we notice how God tells us, several times in the Old Testament, how we should essentially mark ourselves with His law, with His way of life, and we're going to see it specifically mentions putting it on our forehead and on our hand. Let's turn over to Deuteronomy 6, verse 1. It's a section of scripture that teaches God's laws, His statutes, His judgments, passing them on to the future generations, to one's children—that's a lot of what is addressed here. Notice how this is covered, and in particular the latter part of passage where it says to write these.

**Deuteronomy 6:1** *Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess,*

2) *that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*

3) *Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'* (NKJV)

- 4) *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*
- 5) *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*
- 6) *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.*
- 7) *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

Now notice verse 8:

- 8) *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.*
- 9) *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*  
(NKJV)

Notice he speaks specifically of God's laws, His judgments, His statutes, all that He teaches Israel—where does He want you to write that? On your forehead, as frontlets between your eyes—on your forehead—and on your hand. What He's saying is, your thoughts and your actions. He's saying, I want you to internalize this, write it on your heart. If it's on your forehead, you're thinking about how you look at life, and if it's on your hand, how you take action. Incorporate it into your life, writing it on your heart. You will see this is stated several times in the Bible, not only of God's law but even in regard to His holy days, and specifically the holy days that we just finished keeping this past week. Turn over to Deuteronomy 11, verse 16.

- Deuteronomy 11:16** *Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,*
- 17) *lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*
- 18) *"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* (NKJV)

Once again, here is the imagery showing that we should take God's laws, His statutes, His judgments, His whole way of life and thinking, and where do we want to put these? On our forehead and on our hand. It's how we think and how we act. That's basically the same thing as writing it on our hearts, but a little more specifically. This reference isn't used just for God's law in general, it's also specifically mentioned in regards to the holy days, and again, the holy days that we just kept this past week. Turn over to Exodus, chapter 13—we'll start in verse 6—and notice we are specifically talking about the Days of Unleavened Bread.

- Exodus 13:6** *Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD.*

7) *Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.*

8) *And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.'*

9) *It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.*

10) *You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.*  
(NKJV)

Notice that same imagery of, on our forehead and on our hand—in our thoughts and in our actions. Here's the greater spiritual lesson in regard to the mark of the beast. We started off looking at the mark of the beast and we noticed in Revelation 13 how it was described. The religious system associated with this causes people to take this mark and it's on their forehead and on their hand. Then we look at God's law, and where does He want us to write that? On our forehead and on our hand. God wants—His laws, His way of righteousness and pursuing His thoughts, His actions—to be in our heart; something that we internalize, that reveals how we think and how we act.

The opposite of this is Satan's way. It's his mark of essentially putting his way of sin and rebellion on our foreheads and on our hands. It's a spiritual issue. I'm not denying for a moment that in the end time, when it comes to isolating people from buying and selling, there will be some physical mechanism that's used to carry that out, but the spiritual lesson of this is which way of life we are pursuing, and what we are writing on our foreheads and on our hands, in our thoughts and in our actions, in how we pursue our life and the decisions that we make.

This all ties in very directly to everything that we've been focusing on for this past week. Think about it; in the weeks prior to the Days of Unleavened Bread, what were all of us doing? Cleaning our houses, going through our cars, our spaces at work, and trying to find all the leaven, to clean it all out, to get the crumbs out, and get it completely removed because we know leaven pictures sin. It represents Satan's whole philosophy and way of life, and we're trying to get that out of our lives. So we go to extensive efforts to try and clean all of it out and remove it. Not only do we do that, we purposefully, for the whole week of the Days of Unleavened Bread, abstain from eating leaven. We go to great effort, not only to get it out of our house, but to remember that when we are at work and are offered muffins or donuts or cookies, we don't make the mistake of eating some. When we're out driving around, running errands, we don't pull into McDonalds or some place, and get something wrapped in bread and eat it—we remember to abstain from it.

But we didn't just stop there. There's also the focus of not just doing away with and abstaining from leaven for seven days, we also make a point of eating unleavened bread. This is a symbol of taking in God's ways. It's not just rejecting Satan's way of sin, it's taking God's laws, His judgments, His statutes, His holy days, His whole way of thinking and His way of life, and internalizing it. We typically don't think of it in these

terms but what have we been focusing on? Rejecting the mark of the beast and trying to take on the mark of God.

We're trying to take God's ways and write them on our forehead and our hand, and do everything we can to resist having Satan's ways. One of the lessons that we learned from the Days of Unleavened Bread is that leaven can be deceptive. It can sneak in on you. You can wind up slipping up and taking part in something ungodly, just like leaven can sneak in if you don't take the effort to stop it. You can make dough and not even leaven it, but if you leave it out, exposed to the air, yeast spores will get into it and it will wind up being leavened. It's not just something you take action to do; if you don't take action to prevent it, that's what will happen. It will naturally pull you in that direction.

We have this same thing with sin in our lives. It's not just an issue of choosing to sin, if we don't actively work to make sure we are pushing it out of our lives, we'll slip up. We'll go down that road and not even consciously realize it. We have to realize that in the choices that we make, in carrying out everything we've been focusing on this past week, throughout the rest of the year and throughout our lives, we're not just choosing to push out the mark of the beast, and of Satan's whole way, and take on God's mark, we're literally choosing whose children we are. As the Bible tells us, we can be children of God or we can be children of Satan, and it depends on what choices we make and what way of life we are pursuing.

Turn over with me to John 8 and we'll see this.

**John 8:42** *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*

*43) Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.*

*44) You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

*45) But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.*

*46) Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?*

*47) He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." (NKJV)*

Christ made some very bold statements here; He said, you are of your father the devil. He's basically telling them they're Satan's children. Realize the contrast He is making, that if God were your Father, if you were the children of God versus the children of Satan, this has nothing to do with who created you. This is not saying in any way that Satan is responsible for their existence or brought them into the world—that's not the concept being addressed here at all. The concept is whose way of life they are pursuing, who they are obeying, who they essentially worship through their actions. But also notice the deceptive nature of this, because, with the audience He's talking to, they

don't pause and say, yes, we worship the dragon and we're proud of it—that's not where they are coming from. They are claiming, no, we are children of God and Abraham is our father. If you look further in this chapter and in the preceding verses, that's what they are arguing, that we worship the God of our fathers and we're righteous. Christ is telling them, no, you're not; you are of your father the devil and you're following his way of life. You're taking his thoughts, his actions, and you're writing those on your hearts and on your foreheads and on your hands, in how you live your lives.

This is an important lesson for us, not only in how we resist the mark of the beast, but the whole subject of sin—how we approach this in our lives and how deceptive it can be; how we can get sucked into this, not even realizing what's taking place because it's not a conscious effort or something we're trying to pursue. If we're not actively fighting and resisting this, just like the dough that can be left out exposed to the air, the leaven gets in it and starts spreading through it. It tells us how we have to work to resist this. It's an important lesson, but just notice this contrast of children of God versus children of Satan, and how it's connected with the choices we make.

Also notice it mentions that Satan was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. We're going to look at that in a minute. What does "from the beginning" mean? We're going to touch on that too. Turn over to 1 John 3, and notice again this theme that we can be children of God or children of Satan, depending upon the choices we make. This has nothing to do with who brought us into the world because God is obviously the Creator.

**1 John 3:1** *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

2) *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

3) *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

4) *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*

5) *And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.*

6) *Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*

7) *Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*

8) *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.*

Again, we have this "from the beginning" statement; we're going to look at that here in a minute.

8 continued) *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested ... (NKJV)*

In other words, for this purpose, Christ came to earth as a physical human being to die for mankind, but notice the purpose stated.

8 continued) ... *that He might destroy the works of the devil.*

9) *Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*

10) *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. (NKJV)*

Notice this concept that we can be children of God or children of the devil. This is not about who created us, this is about who we're following and whose way of life we're incorporating, writing it on our hearts, putting it on our foreheads and on our hands—whose mark we are essentially taking. That's all about what choices we make in our lives and how we're living our lives—whether we're actively resisting sin to get that out of our lives, and actively trying to write God's law on our hearts, our foreheads, and on our hands. I mentioned we're going to come back and look at what “from the beginning” means. Notice in verse 8,

8) *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.*

Again, that “from the beginning” statement.

8 continued) ... *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested ...*

We're reading here one of the major reasons why Christ had to come to earth:

8 continued) ... *that He might destroy the works of the devil. (NKJV)*

One of the fundamental purposes of this was specifically to deal with Satan himself and his effects upon mankind. This isn't the only time this is stated in the Bible.

Turn over to Hebrews 2 and we'll see this mentioned again. We're going to read from verse 14 to the end of the chapter. There's a handful of reasons—things that were accomplished by Christ coming to earth, in His physical life, as the sacrifice for mankind; I often frame it as God is the ultimate multitasker. In other words, when He does something and carries out a plan, it's usually not just for one purpose, it's not just one thing He's accomplishing, oftentimes there's a whole handful of things He's accomplishing. That's what we'll see here. There's a handful of things that were accomplished with Christ coming to earth as a physical human being. What I want you to see here is that it specifically states several times that this plan was about specifically addressing Satan himself and his effects upon mankind. Verse 14.

**Hebrews 2:14** *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same,*

Now “He Himself” is Christ, and we're talking about why would Christ come to earth as a physical human being.

14 continued) *that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ...*

In other words, addressing Satan himself.

15) *and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

16) *For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.*

17) *Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

18) *For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned earlier, God is the ultimate multitasker. When He does something, there's oftentimes a handful of purposes that are accomplished. That was true as well with Christ coming to earth. It wasn't just to die for the sins of mankind, He becomes a faithful High Priest. He actually becomes more merciful as a result of this. We won't take the time to go through chapter 5, but it says He learned obedience by the things He suffered. The Greek word for "learned" is *manthanó*, which means to increase in knowledge. There was an enrichment for Him in this process, but again, one of the stated purposes here is to address Satan himself and his effect upon on mankind.

The reason I mention this is it gives us some clues when we think about what "from the beginning" means. We read a couple of verses that referred to Satan being a liar and a murderer from the beginning. What exactly does "from the beginning" mean? Obviously it doesn't mean from the very moment he was created, because he was not created as a liar and a murderer. He was not created evil, he was created as a righteous angel. Let's turn over to Ezekiel 28 and notice that. We'll start in verse 11.

**Ezekiel 28:11** *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,*

12) *"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

13) *You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

14) *"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.*

15) *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. (NKJV)*

This is specifically referring to Satan, and notice when he was initially created he wasn't a liar and a murderer. He was created as a righteous angel. He served directly at the

throne of God the Father. He was a cherub that covered, right there at God's throne, so he wasn't created evil. Later he decided to rebel and turn against God. We can't give out a date as to when any of this happened. We know there was a significant period of time from the time he was created until the Genesis account picks up and we have him in the Garden of Eden trying to deceive Eve. We have no idea how big of a timeframe we are talking about, in between these events, so we can't give a specific date. All we can do is look at biblical clues. Where in this process, in between these two events, does he go bad and rebel, and go off on his own? We can't nail down any specific time but we can look at some biblical clues.

There is a common assumption typically made that is seen in commentaries and in popular religion, and I even heard it stated numerous times in the church of God all my life, and I'll plead guilty—I've been guilty of saying it myself numerous times—it's an assumption that is based on a misunderstanding of a particular scripture. The assumption goes like this: There is one thing we know absolutely for sure and that is that when Satan rebelled it was after the creation of the earth. That scripture, the proof text that everyone uses to back this up, is always Job 38, verse 7.

Let's turn over to this scripture and look at it. What we're going to see is the key to understanding this verse is understanding the terminology used. We first have to understand who is being referred to in these terms before we can interpret and apply them. Let's start in verse 4. This is a section of scripture where God has taken Job to task for all of the statements of how unfair God has been. God is basically walking Job through, showing him how powerful He is and how insignificant Job is, to get across the concept that Job should not be questioning God.

**Job 38:4** *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? [God is obviously referring to the creation of the earth.] Tell Me, if you have understanding.*

5) *Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?*

6) *To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone ...*

Here's the key verse:

7) *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (NKJV)*

As I said, the dogmatic claim is made that we know absolutely for sure that Satan's rebellion was after the creation of the earth because verse 7 is the proof of that. Here's how the logic of the argument goes: It says all the sons of God were together—they are singing and shouting for joy, and this refers to the angelic realm, to all the angels—and if all of them are doing this, obviously it would have to have been prior to the rebellion, because after the rebellion, one third of them rebelled against God, so they wouldn't all be shouting for joy and happy about what God is doing. That logic only works if the terms we have—*morning stars* and *sons of God*—are generic terms that would refer to



all of the angels, in either circumstance. The problem with the argument is, they do not. They are specific terms that specifically and exclusively refer to righteous angels who are following God, and by definition would exclude those who rebelled against God.

Notice it says, *all the sons of God*. If you use a Bible search program (I use [PC Study Bible](#), but if you don't have that, you can do the same kind of search online at [biblegateway.com](#), where you can do word searches and look up scriptures), and if you type in the words "sons of God", ten scriptures are going to come up throughout the Bible; five in the Old Testament and five in the New, and if you read all of them you're going to see a very, very clear trend. This term is used just as we saw previously in 1 John and in the book of John, speaking of the children of God and the children of the devil; these labels have nothing to do with who created them, but signify to whom they are obedient—who they follow. The righteous angels are described in a similar manner; "sons of God" specifically refers to those who are obedient to God. Let me show you some examples of this. Turn over to Job 1, verse 6.

**Job 1:6** *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. (NKJV)*

Notice there is a distinction made between the sons of God and Satan—he is an additional thought. The sons of God and Satan came. The reason he is added in that way is he doesn't meet the definition of one of the sons of God. These are the righteous angels that are obedient to God, then Satan came also. Let's look over in chapter 2 and verse 1; we'll see this stated again.

**Job 2:1** *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. (NKJV)*

Once again, we have the sons of God, and then the statement, *and Satan came also*. He's an addition because what we're going to see is this term, *sons of God*, can be used to apply not only to spirit beings such as angels, it can also be used to refer to physical human beings. But in every single case it's a term of distinction that shows those who are in obedience to God, as opposed to those who are not. Turn over to Genesis 6 and we'll see this there as well.

**Genesis 6:1** *Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,*

*2) that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

*3) And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."*

*4) There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (NKJV)*

5) *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

6) *And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*

7) *So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."*

8) *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (NKJV)*

Notice here the contrast; first of all, if *sons of God* was a generic term that applied to all of mankind because God created them, then the contrast between sons of God and daughters of men wouldn't really make any sense. It would be a meaningless contrast. I am not going to go through all the technicalities of this section of scripture because that's a whole other subject all by itself, but what we're told here is the sons of God are a line of people who are still trying to obey God and trying to follow His way of life. The "daughters of men" is talking about those who don't, and the intermarriage between them, resulting in exactly what God warned Israel, through Moses: Don't marry the pagan nations and don't take on their ways, because what's going to happen is you're going to adopt their culture, you're going to take on their ways, and you're going to worship their gods, and it's going to turn you away from God.

Notice what is discussed next. Mankind becomes totally evil and God has to wipe mankind out. We're not going to take the time to go through the five references in the New Testament (as I mentioned, there are five in the Old and five in the New) but if you will go through them, here's what you're going to see: Statements like, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. Those who are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. We are sons of God through faith in Christ. Or you'll see statements in which the sons of God and the sons of this age are being contrasted with each other. My point is, in every single case, you're going to see *sons of God* as a term that refers to those who are being righteous and trying to be obedient to God. It's not a generic term that applies across the board.

If you look back in Job 38, verse 7, where it says, the sons of God all did this, that's an exclusive term that specifically refers to those in obedience. The phrase *morning stars* works exactly the same way. I won't take the time to turn there, but if you look in Isaiah 14:12, you'll see Satan, prior to his rebellion, being referred to; it mentions Lucifer there, but if you look in Hebrew, it's *Heylel*; "Lucifer" is a Latin term. It then refers to him, in the New King James, I believe, as "son of the morning". If you look at other translations, it refers to "day star" or "star of the dawn". In other words, before his rebellion he's a star that is a source of good light. If you look in Revelation 9, he's now a fallen star. It doesn't refer to him as a source of good light.

If you go to the book of 1 John, one of the things you'll see is that righteousness is associated with light, whereas sin and rebellion are associated with darkness. You would never refer to demons as morning stars because they are not a source of good light, they are a source of darkness. So you see the issue, that this term is specifically

referring to all the sons of God, and that the morning stars are the righteous angels. It works either way; either prior to or after the rebellion, it's just as accurate. The use of that terminology actually suggests (and I'm going to say suggests because I don't think you can conclusively prove this from that scripture alone) that his rebellion was actually prior to this. The author of the book of Job has already used this term twice, prior to chapter 38, to distinguish between the righteous angels and those who rebelled against God. Using it again, the same author suggests the same thing.

To look at another clue, there's another interesting term, if you look in the New Testament; it's the term "foundation of the world". If you do a word search on that, what you'll find is there are ten different times, ten different scriptures where that's used. You'll find a very clear trend in the majority of times that this is used. These are normally references to Christ being slain from the foundation of the world, or references that tell you that the plan of salvation was in place from the foundation of the world; there are references to the Book of Life, or other things of that nature. It doesn't give us a timeframe of foundation of the world, but from this reference it's talking about this plan being in force. To give you an example of that, turn over to Revelation 13, and we're going to read specifically verse 8. We spent a lot of time in this chapter today but this is one scripture we skipped over.

**Revelation 13:8** *All who dwell on the earth will worship him [in other words, worship the beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (NKJV)*

This is referring to Christ being slain from the foundation of the world. Obviously this doesn't mean that Christ literally was slain or died from the foundation of the world, because He wasn't slain until he came to the earth as a physical human being and was crucified. This is telling us from this reference, foundation of the world, the plan was in place—this was going to have to happen. It was already part of God's plan. Let's also notice what is also stated as being planned for from the foundation of the world, because that helps us come back to this whole issue of "from the beginning". Turn to Luke 11, and we'll start reading in verse 45.

**Luke 11:45** *Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."  
46) And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.  
47) Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.  
48) In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs.  
49) Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,'  
50) that the blood of all the prophets which was shed **from the foundation of the world** [speaker's emphasis] may be required of this generation,*

*51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. (NKJV)*

He's saying that the prophets were slain from the foundation of the world as well. Think about the implications of this. What this means is, when the plan was in place that God would send the prophets into the world to preach, He knew they were going to be sent into a hostile, violent world, where it would not be just their messages that would be ignored or resisted, they themselves would be violently murdered just for teaching the truth. Think about what this means. Turn back over to John 8; let's notice, when Christ made the comment, you are of your father the devil, why He said that. What we're going to see here is He specifically made that statement because the people wanted to kill Him simply for teaching the truth.

**John 8:37** *"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*

*38) I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."*

*39) They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*

*40) But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.*

*41) You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."*

*42) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*

*43) Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.*

*44) You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (NKJV)*

Notice that when Christ said, you are of your father the devil, the specific reason He said that was because they wanted to murder Him just for teaching the truth. To further paint this picture, let's look at what the world would look like if Satan were not a part of the equation. We can't look back in time historically and have any feel for that, because, ever since creation, he has always been a part of the equation. We can look at the prophecies of the Millennium to get a picture of what it would be like without him. Mankind, without Satan in the equation, is certainly capable of sinning. Zechariah 14, all by itself, clearly proves that—there will be nations that will refuse to come and keep the Feast, and God will have to cut off the rain to punish them for their disobedience.

What else is very clearly told to us about the Millennium? The scriptures you probably hear quoted at every Feast of Tabernacles are from Isaiah 2 and Micah 4. It's described as a time when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, they shall beat their swords

into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and they will not learn war anymore. In other words this is a timeframe in which Satan is not in the equation, and even though mankind will certainly be capable of sinning, there won't be this brutal violence of just murdering people for no reason. That is going to be out of the picture.

Compare that to what it will be like when Satan returns—Revelation 20, verses 7 through 9. What happens? He stirs up a war, and now nation again takes up sword against nation. The millennial scriptures tell us what the world would look like without him in it. Mankind is still capable of sinning but you don't have the brutal violence that we see in our world. My point is, when we look at not just the plan of salvation and the coming of Christ, which was in place from the foundation of the world, it was also noted that the prophets would be murdered within this same timeframe, thus anticipating Satan being involved. It's no surprise then, when we read in 1 John 3 and Hebrews 2, that part of the plan for Christ to come to earth was to address Satan himself and his effect on mankind.

Just to look at this overall subject, as I mentioned from the beginning, we tend to look at the mark of the beast as a subject that is often focused solely on speculation, so it does not convey the broader spiritual principle. We also tend to silo it as just an end-time, day of the Lord concept, not necessarily relevant to our lives today (unless of course we live to see the final resurrection of the beast). If we do that, we miss the greater spiritual principle behind all of this. I think we would all agree that in our world today, the beast is not yet dominating the world scene. We anticipate that happening before the end, but we don't have it today in our lives. That doesn't mean the subject of the mark of the beast is not relevant to our lives.

We choose every day, by our own actions, which mark we are putting on ourselves, whether we are taking God's law and His way of life and putting it on our forehead—in our thoughts and in our minds, on our hands and in our actions, in how we live our lives—or whether we're taking the mark of the beast and allowing Satan's way of sin to get imprinted on our foreheads and on our hands, thus directing our thoughts and actions.

As we go forward this year, let's not forget the lessons that we learn through the Days of Unleavened Bread. You probably never thought of it in these terms, of the mark of the beast, but what did we do all this past week? We focused on getting sin out of our lives, getting Satan's way of rebellion completely out of our lives. And not just that, but also taking in God's ways, eating unleavened bread. What we're choosing, even though we typically don't think of it in these terms, is rejecting the mark of the beast and taking on the mark of God, writing God's ways on our foreheads and on our hands. As we go forward this year, let's make sure we make a diligent effort to resist the mark of the beast and take on the mark of God.