



The Seal of God

Both Daniel and Revelation contain many symbols.

- 1 What are some of the symbols we have learned? (Match the two columns).
- | | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. beasts | a. church |
| 2. wind | b. kingdoms |
| 3. water | c. war / strife |
| 4. woman | d. many people |

In this lesson we are going to learn about another symbol.

- 2 What symbol did John see in the vision we read in Revelation 7?
- Revelation 7:2, 3** "Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the _____ 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, saying, 'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our _____ on their foreheads.'"

In this lesson, we are going to learn what the seal of God symbolizes and who will get this important seal. First, however, we need to review a little history.

We studied the two churches of Pergamos and Thyatira in our last lesson. Pergamos is often called the compromising church because it tolerated the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. This eventually corrupted the church and led to complete apostasy. We see this in the time of the church called Thyatira—the church of the Dark Ages.



Compromise: Giving up part of a doctrine or belief to make someone else happy

Apostasy: Completely abandoning a doctrine or belief



Let's go back in time to the A.D. 320s, to the time of the church of Pergamos. We are going to discover how this compromise happened, and how it led to complete apostasy.

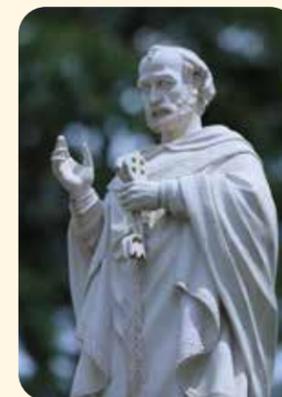
The Roman emperor at the time was named Constantine. Emperors who lived before him persecuted the Christian church. But Constantine did something very different. He actually became a Christian! At least, he called himself a Christian.

That seemed really good for the Christians, because now the terrible persecution of the Christians ended. Unfortunately, there was a very big problem with Constantine's conversion—he didn't actually repent and get a new heart from Jesus. He just took Jesus' name without letting Jesus change his life (like the Nicolaitans).

Why did Constantine want to be a Christian? He wanted to unite the pagan idol worshipers in his kingdom with the Christians. He thought that would make his kingdom stronger. But many pagans didn't want to become Christians, so Constantine promised to give many rewards to people who chose to join the Christian church.

Then lots of pagans joined the church. But unfortunately, most of these people were not any more Christian than Constantine was. They called themselves Christians, but didn't change the way they lived. They still liked worshiping their idols and they still liked believing the pagan teachings.

But many in the church liked having so many more people belong to it, since



that brought it more power and wealth. So instead of holding on to the truth, the church **compromised**. They brought the pagan idols into the church and called them saints. They also gave many of them Bible names. Now these pagan "Christians" were worshiping idols with names like Saint Peter and Saint John.

- 3 What does God's law say about worshiping idols?
- Exodus 20:4, 5** "You shall _____ make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall _____ bow down to them nor serve them."



Anyone who knew the Bible and the Ten Commandments could clearly see that bringing these idols into the church was a sin. But the Christians who had compromised with the pagans didn't want to lose these new converts. So they thought of a wicked idea that led to complete apostasy: Why not change the Ten Commandments that God's finger wrote on tablets of stone?

Remember, we learned in lesson 8 that the little horn power would "intend to change times and law" (Daniel 7:25). That is exactly what happened. The church combined the first and second commandments so that the second commandment's prohibition of idols would not be so obvious.¹

With only nine commandments, though, it would be very obvious that a change had been made. So they divided the tenth commandment into two parts so there would still be ten commandments.

Then they changed another of God's laws: the fourth commandment.¹ The pagans worshiped their sun god on Sunday, the first day of the week. As time passed, Christians started worshiping on both Sabbath and Sunday. The first decree for everyone to worship on Sunday came from the Roman Emperor Constantine on March 7, A.D. 321.²



Many years passed, and the seventh-day Sabbath was pushed down more and more and Sunday was lifted up higher and higher. Eventually, in A.D. 364, at the Council of Laodicea, the Catholic church made it illegal to keep the seventh day Sabbath.³

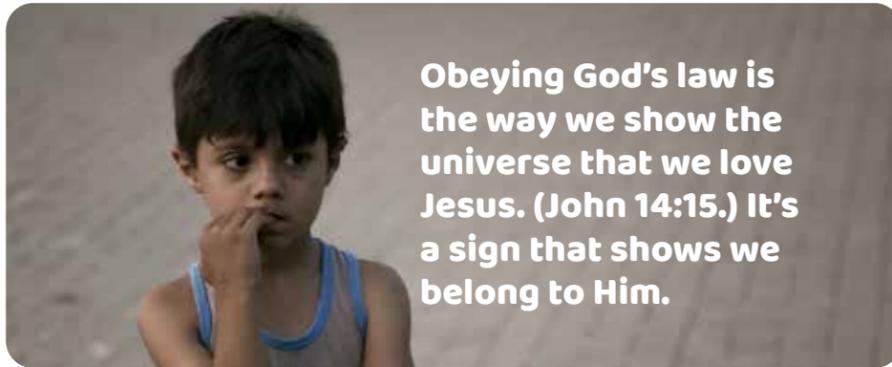
There have always been people, though, who were willing to obey God rather than men. The Waldensians were that kind of people. They really studied the

Bible, memorizing large portions of it. They did not accept any compromise with the pagans. They did not go along with the apostasy when the church tried to change the law of God.

4 Do you remember what the Bible said this little horn would do to those who stayed faithful and obeyed God?
Daniel 7:25 It would **URPTESECE** _____ the saints. (Unscramble the word.)

Many faithful Christians suffered and died, but they remained faithful. Loving God and obeying Him was more important to them than staying alive. It was more important than their houses and land, their freedom, and even life itself. For hundreds of years, they did not compromise nor apostatize.

5 Is obeying God's law important? _____



Obeying God's law is the way we show the universe that we love Jesus. (John 14:15.) It's a sign that shows we belong to Him.



Revelation talks about two marks: the mark of the beast (Revelation 13) and the seal of God (Revelation 7:1-8). We are going to study the mark of the beast in a future lesson. These two marks show the entire universe who are God's people and who are Satan's people.

Revelation 7:1-8 tells us that the seal of God is put on the foreheads of God's people right before Jesus' second coming. The seal is a *sign* (or symbol) that shows the universe who are God's people. The people who have the seal of God will be protected during a

terrible time of trouble that will happen just before Jesus' second coming.

6 Why will it be put on their foreheads? _____
 That is where your # | \ [# (% \ # % is. (Solve the code)

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
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7 What is this important seal? Thankfully, the Bible interprets itself. It very plainly tells us what that sign or seal is.
Exodus 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a _____ between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.'"



Of course, the Sabbath is not actually stamped on our foreheads. True Sabbath keeping shows what is going on in our hearts. As we obey God's law and keep His Sabbath holy, we show that we belong to Jesus. It tells everyone that we have not compromised nor apostatized.



8 Do you remember the story of Rahab and the scarlet cord? (Joshua 2, 6.) Where did Rahab put the scarlet cord?
Joshua 2:18 "Bind this line of scarlet cord in the _____."



The scarlet cord itself did not save Rahab. But it was a sign between Rahab and God's people that showed that she was on their side. If she took the cord down from her window, she would have had no protection when they conquered Jericho. Jesus' seal, the Sabbath, is a sign just like Rahab's scarlet cord.

The Sabbath commandment doesn't make sense to the world. It's obvious that peace can't exist in the world without commandments like, "Don't kill," "Don't steal," and "Don't commit adultery." But why is it important to keep the seventh day holy? Why not another day?

9 Why does God say we are to keep the Sabbath?
Exodus 20:11 "For in six days the Lord _____ the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

We keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy because God, our Creator, tells us to keep it holy. Obeying God just because He said so, even if we don't understand why, is a sign that He is on the throne of our hearts.

Let's think about what we have learned. If the Sabbath is so important to God, why do most Christians worship on Sunday? Remember, at the beginning of this lesson we talked about the church's compromise which led to a terrible apostasy. After the Catholic church tried to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, almost all Christians started worshiping on Sunday. Eventually, after hundreds

and hundreds of years, most Christians forgot that the church had changed the day and sincerely thought that Sunday was the day on which Jesus wanted them to worship. And for a very long time, people did not have Bibles, so they could not read it for themselves and learn the truth.



When we studied the first of the three angels' messages in Revelation, we learned that God is now calling people's attention back to His fourth commandment. Those people who choose to follow God's truth, no matter what, will keep all ten of God's commandments. They are the ones who will receive the seal of God. They show to the entire universe that they have surrendered to Jesus and that Jesus is now king of their lives.



When we accept Jesus as king of our lives, He gives us a new heart—a heart that wants to obey Him. We will delight to do what He wants us to do, because His law is in our hearts. (Psalm 40:8.)



10 Will you choose to let Jesus give you His seal on your forehead, and a new heart that wants to keep all of God's laws?

Answers

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. 1-b, 2-c, 3-d, 4-a | 4. persecute | 7. sign |
| 2. seal / God | 5. Yes | 8. window |
| 3. not / not | 6. conscience | 9. made |

Sources

1. Ten Commandments. (2021). Catholic Online. Retrieved April 1, 2022, from https://www.catholic.org/bible/ten_commandments.php
2. Schaff, P. (1867). History of the Christian Church (Vol. 2). Charles Scribner & Co. Page 380.
3. Hefele, C. (1997). History of the Councils of the Church (H. Oxenham, Trans.; Vol. 2). Books for the Ages. https://media.sabda.org/alkitab-8/LIBRARY/HEF_HCC2.PDF