

# Make Your Mark - Revelation 13:11-18

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[ 0 : 00 ] Open your Bibles to Revelation chapter 13. If you remember where we're at in the book of Revelation,! We have finished the church age, the raptures happened,! We have just hit the midpoint of the tribulation.

The Antichrist who set up his system at the beginning of all of this, after the rapture, the biggest catastrophe, the greatest catastrophe to ever hit planet Earth. The perfect time to solve all the world's problems.

There will be no resource problems at the time. There will be so many resources up for grabs. So many people will be in a state of panic and fear. It will be the perfect time for Satan to set up his man.

And Satan doesn't believe the Bible because he's a liar. So he gets cast down to Earth in the midpoint. He's super angry about that. It's like, buddy, if you just read your Bible, you would have known that was coming.

But he's really upset by that. And he goes to make war with Israel. And then God securely sets Israel aside in a very secure place. And then after the abomination of desolation.

[ 1 : 04 ] And then chapter 13 began to tell us, kind of gave us this snapshot, as heaven sees it, of the arising of the beast, the arising of the Antichrist. Brings us up to speed to where we are at this point, in the midpoint of the tribulation.

And we went through verse 10 last time, I believe. We are in the middle of the three woes. The first was the fifth trumpet. The second was the two witnesses.

And then the third, which is where we're at, Revelation 12, 12, the dragon comes to Earth. And so if you look there in the middle, around the red box, we're all the way down to beast and false prophet. Revelation 13. It says throughout, this chart that someone made. And yes, the beast, the Antichrist, is throughout. When the son of perdition, when he comes on the scene, it's essentially the beginning of those seven years of Jacob's trouble.

I don't know about the false prophet, though, as we're going to look at tonight. If he's throughout. But his ministry, or whatever you want to call it, really seems to take off at the midpoint.

[ 2 : 06 ] So maybe he was there as a PR guy right from the start, but it seems like tonight we're going to see that he's really going to step into his own. Remember Daniel chapter 7.

Come on, work with me. There we go. Verse 7. And this I saw in the night visions. And behold, a fourth beast or creature, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and had great iron teeth. It devoured and break in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it. And it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it. And it had ten horns. Nothing that Daniel saw could compare that he'd already seen representing and describing the kingdoms of the earth.

None of them could compare to this thing, which is to come. And he's going to be a man of great words, a man of great speeches, a man to move the masses, but a man of deception.

Daniel 7.25. And he shall speak great words against the Most High. And shall wear out the saints of the Most High. And think to change times and laws.

[ 3 : 06 ] And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times in the dividing of time. You know, what did the Lord set in motion right at the beginning? He gave us the sun and the moon for seasons and times and days.

And Satan hates God's order. He hates everything he's about. Right from the beginning, he gave us man and woman. He gave us the whole plan. And Satan hates that. And so here he's going to have a chance to finally change things and do things how he wants them.

Proverbs 30 verses 5 and 6 says, Every word of God is pure. He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

And that's not like, well, it might not be a good thing to add to his words because it might not turn out well. No, that is, you're going to be reproved and you're going to be found a liar. Don't put yourself in that position.

So tonight, as we continue on, we'll finish the chapter and we'll see what the Lord has there for us. You know, we're going to be looking at the mark of the beast and this mark that he will have all people take.

[ 4 : 13 ] So the question we ask is, what's our mark? What's the mark we want to make as we make our mark or make your mark? Satan's going to try to make his with his guy. But before that ever happens, God gives us an opportunity to make our mark.

Philippians 3.13, Paul says, Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. This is Paul saying that. If Paul says, you know, I haven't figured it all out. If someone comes along and says to you, you know, I got it all figured out.

Read my book, \$20. Like they haven't got it figured out. If Paul doesn't have it figured out, he says, I don't count myself to have like grasped all of this. But this one thing I do, I forget those things which are behind.

And I reach forth under those things which are before. That means forgetting the good and the bad. It's not like he's walking around going, let's check out my ministry record. Look at it. No, he's looking forward and going, there's so much more to do still.

I need to forget that. He's forgetting behind that which is behind where he says, you know, I was the chief of blasphemers. I was the chief of sinners. He says, you know what? I have to leave that behind. But this one thing I do, forgetting that which is behind and reaching forth under those things which are before.

[ 5 : 21 ] He recognizes there's always something more that God has for him. There's always something that we can reach forward for that God has put before us. And so what does he do? He doesn't just say, well, I'm just going to, Lord, I'm just going to put my hands out and you just give it to me whenever you want to.

No, he says, I press. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. There's a mark. Now, those are two totally different Greek words. In the English, it says mark. So it's great to find the verses that say mark. This would be, I press toward this thing that I'm aiming at, focusing on and have in view. I press toward that mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And then he jumps down in verse 17 and says, brethren, be followers together of me and mark them. Point them out. Notice them. Put them in view. Get them in your target and your crosshairs, which walk so as you have us for an example.

Brethren, follow me, he says. Be followers together of me. And then those also that are examples follow the same. You know, and that should be the mark that we make in one another's lives.

[ 6 : 24 ] I should be able to say to you, you know, follow me because of my amazing track record. No. Follow me as I follow Christ. As we forget which is that which is behind, as we press toward in Jesus.

Well, look around and find those that are doing that and do it with them. And that's obviously what we want to be all about here in this church and in our lives.

So Paul says to mark them. The mark that we're going to see tonight is a word. It doesn't mean to notice, to have in view or to see. It's actually to stamp, to imprint is the mark of the beast.

But anyway, picking up in verse 11, we ended last time in chapter 13, verse 9. It says, if any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity.

He that kills with a sword must be killed with a sword. Here's the patience and faith of the saints.

This is the benefits package of those who work for the Antichrist. That, hey, if you lead into captivity, you'll be led into captivity.

[ 7 : 24 ] Those who kill with a sword must be killed with a sword. But maybe not on our timetable. Maybe not when we think it should happen. Maybe judgment is being held because God says, man, I'm so long suffering, not willing that any should perish.

He says, here's the patience and faith of the saints. Our faith in God and our patience that God is going to wrap everything up nice and neatly and nothing will be left untaken care of. Then verse 11, he says, And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.

If you remember last time, he saw on the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea. This time, he says, I see another beast, another creature, and he's coming up out of the earth. And he had two horns like a lamb.

And he spake as a dragon. I mean, I don't know how many horns lambs have, but I guess this lamb had two horns. He looked like a lamb, but he sounded like a dragon.

So we have three beasts, creatures. We have the dragon was cast to the earth. The first beast comes from the sea, and the second beast comes from the earth.

[ 8 : 32 ] So we have Satan as the dragon. The first beast is the Antichrist. And the second is like his PR man or the false prophet. And we have our unholy trinity. You know, we have the one behind the scenes who's the dragon, who essentially representing the almighty power.

And then that is flowing through these other two. But the enemy, he's so lame. He can't create anything. He can only corrupt. I mean, he's like, you know what we should do?

We'll do something totally different. We'll make an unholy trinity. Like, wow, wow. Never saw that before. But John says, I see a lamb, or I see one that had two horns like a lamb, and yet he spake as a dragon.

So it might have looked the part, but it didn't sound the part. The enemy cannot create anything. There is nothing he can create. And that is the lie.

One of the lies that he puts upon people is that if they would just go along with him, there's so much more they could experience. There's not. There's nothing more to experience outside of this.

[ 9 : 35 ] Matthew chapter 7. I guess you can turn there if that's too small to read on the screen. Jesus in verse 15 is warning about false prophets. He says, beware of them.

Beware of false prophets. It's a legitimate thing. And they will come to you in sheep's clothing. They're going to look the part, but inwardly they're ravaging wolves. Right? They look like a lamb, but they got the breath of a dragon.

The breath of a wolf. You shall know them by their fruits. There's a proverb that says, wisdom is justified of her children. What is the offspring? What is coming from it? Wisdom is justification. It's not, we don't try to validate ourselves. We let it speak for itself. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.

It's just basic botany. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. But how many times do we think that the corrupt prophet is going to result in good fruit?

[ 10 : 41 ] How many times do we think that, well, you know, he did tag on the gospel at the end. So there could be fruit. God's word will never return void. Ever. But we are to judge a ministry, someone who claims to be a prophet.

What's a prophet? Those who claim to speak on behalf of God or with divine authority. They're saying, hey, I'm speaking for God or I'm speaking with divine authority. Well, how do we judge that? He said he did. Well, what's the fruit that comes from it? Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by your fruits, you shall know them.

Now, this is for false prophets. This is not for believers. Does not say by your fruit. You shall know if someone's a believer. But unfortunately, many believers do that.

We will look at someone and say, well, I don't see fruit in their life. Obviously, they can't be saved. But faith comes by fruit and fruit by the word of God. No, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

[ 11 : 40 ] I guess it would be fruit comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But that's not what saves us. It's faith that comes by hearing. So, the mark of the false prophet.

His mark that he will make. He will have vile words. As we go through this, we will see that. He will have deceitful signs. He will have deadly lies.

He's going to have universal coercion. So, what is the fruit that comes from his life? How do I know? Well, his words are vile. The signs that he's using are not to point anyone to God.

They're for deception. His lies are deadly. And then there's this universal coercion that will happen. A false prophet is known by his fruit.

A faithful prophet's fruit is love. John 13, 35 says, By this shall all men know that you are my disciples. If you have fruit, know if you have love.

[ 12 : 37 ] If you have love one to another. By this shall all men know who you are. By your love that you have one to another. The authenticity here of this man or lack of it.

You know, he speaks as a dragon. The authenticity or his lack of authenticity is in the word. It's determined by the word. The words he speaks and it's determined by this word.

How do you know what's authentic? Well, we determine by the word. You know, we've had some conversations in our home and just been starting to talk with just thinking about like what makes us unique?

I don't even mean just as Calvary Chapel. Like what makes Calvary Chapel Charlotte unique? What makes us different? Not that we need to be different. But who are we? What's our identity? What's our mark? And one of the things is that we base everything we do off of God's word.

That we use the methods and means found in God's word to validate what we do. We don't go looking for it anywhere else. And if something else comes in that looks like maybe a really great idea or maybe it's producing something that we would like to see produced here, but it's not in the word.

[13:49] Like it's not validated by the word. It's like, well, then we're not going to use that. We're not going to do that. Because we want fruit. Yes, we want fruit.

But we want fruit that comes from what? Well, it comes from God's word and that fruit's always going to be in love. John chapter 12, verse 50.

And I know that his commandment is life everlasting, says Jesus of the Father. Whatsoever I speak thereof, or therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

His commandment is life everlasting. Why would we leave that? Why would we leave that to find the results somewhere else? Even if it looks good? Well, if we've left God's command, if we've left his word, it's not going to end in life everlasting.

That is the goal. Whatsoever I speak thereof for, Jesus says, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. Authenticity is determined by the word. The dragon, or the false prophet here, he has dragon breath.

[14:53] He speaks like the devil. You are of your father the devil, Jesus says to the Pharisees. They looked good, but they also had dragon breath. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there's no truth in him.

When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he's a liar and the father of it. First Corinthians chapter 12, verse 3 says, Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed.

We reference this verse a lot. And that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. So we look to the word. The authenticity of a ministry, of the things that we do in our lives, of what we see in other people's lives.

It's based on the word, on the word of God. Verse 12, And he exercises all the power of the first beast before him. And so there's something that's being transferred here from the dragon to the Antichrist and now to the false prophet.

And you're going to see as we go through this that there's a movement to push further and further away. And Satan always does that. Deception, religion, and the dragon always push away.

[16:01] They never draw in. He wants to add as many layers as he can between him and deception. Because the closer you get, the more you realize what you're actually getting. You see the reality.

So he gives the power here. He exercises all the power of the first beast before him. And causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. Proverbs 27, 2 says, Let another man praise you and not your own mouth, a stranger, not your own lips. And so the Antichrist, he gets his PR man, you know, and he says, Look how amazing the beast is.

Look what he's done. He had a deadly wound and it was healed. Let's worship him. And they're like, well, you know, if false prophet so-and-so said to do it, we probably should do it. That's a good idea. I mean, and the Antichrist, the beast is over there going, no, no, don't worship me.

You know. The false prophet, he will use his position to lend credibility to an already incredible source, the beast.

[17:04] So he's going to use his position to lend credibility to the beast. But the enemy knows that man has an innate need to worship. God created us that way. We have been created to worship.

It's cliché, but it's true. We're created to worship. Man has an innate need for that. There is no man, woman, child that lives today that does not worship.

They worship something. But our need to worship combined with a rebellious heart, it leads to the worst type of worship. It leads to what we call religion.

And so here we see these earth dwellers, those that dwell on the earth, they will worship the beast. They will end up worshiping that which hates them. They're going to worship something that absolutely despises them and hates them and just wants to use them.

And they're going to end up worshiping something that will lead to death. You see, when we allow our rebellious hearts to lead us into worship, we end up worshiping absolutely something that will lead us from a place of life and peace to a place of darkness and death.

[ 18 : 13 ] As we saw in verse four, they worship the dragon, which gave power unto the beast. And they worship the beast saying, who is like unto him who is able to make war with him?

And here you see that progression. They worship the dragon. He gives his power to the beast. They worship the beast. He gives his power to the false prophet. They worship the false prophet. The thief comes not but to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

And then Jesus says, well, I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. So what does religion do? Well, religion keeps me comfortable. It keeps me comfortable in my distance from God because I'm separated from God.

I'm in rebellion, but I have this innate need to worship. And so I find myself in religion, which allows me to stay comfortably distant. It says, you're okay. You're okay.

You came to this sacred place and we did a sacred thing to you. You danced a sacred dance. You wear the sacred underwear. You eat the sacred thing. And now you can go and you can feel very comfortable in the fact that you're still distant from God.

[ 19 : 18 ] Nothing has changed except now you feel comfortable. You know, I was listening to something and the guy made a statement in it. And this wasn't what it was about, but it's interesting.

Oops. Don't play with the oil with your foot when you're teaching. But what he said was that in the early 2000s, that church attendance was at its all time low.

I think it was something like only 40% of Americans were at that time going to church. It's all time low. I know what it was. It was about CrossFit. I was watching it and the crash of it.

And it was because at that time, so many people wanted community. They wanted something where they could feel they're part of a tribe, part of something. And that took off because people weren't going to church. And I was thinking about that now.

On the, you know, then we had COVID and people didn't go to church. Now where we're at now on this post whatever where we're at. And so many people go to church now. There's so many big churches and so many people in church.

[ 20 : 16 ] And I wonder how many of them are just there to try and keep themselves comfortable. You know, I'm not knocking those churches. I'm just thinking like about my own heart. How many people are just trying to be comfortable and trying to feel like they belong somewhere?

And they're hearing Christian things and they're trying to do Christian things, but they don't have a reality of a Christ in their life. Religion, it keeps us comfortable.

Fallen man will always seek validation in his separation from God. Always. All of these religions that give us validation in the fact that I'm separated from God. Deception will always separate.

It always pushes us away. And so Satan's goal is to keep man comfortable in deception, to use deception and to use these things to keep us to keep us very comfortable. And he will gladly infiltrate a Christian, a genuine Bible believing church and do that in people's lives if he can.

That's why we stick to the word. Because I'm just as fallen as you, redeemed, but just as fallen as you. And my nature may be, I don't want to see them uncomfortable.

[ 21 : 24 ] Oh, I just want to see them blessed. And yet God's word is saying, I need this to be spoken so that I can do a work in a heart that's going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be uncomfortable, but it's going to lead to, like we just read, everlasting life.

And I'm like, well, but I don't want to cause discomfort. So I'm just going to, you know, I'm going to do dot to dot through the Bible and just jump around and do those things that are kind of comfortable and keep people comfortable.

Maybe in their true, genuine faith, but comfortable in the fact they're not growing. Comfortable in the fact they're not dealing with things where God's like, I want to deal with that. I want to deal with that in your heart so I can bring more of that life into your life.

So Satan does that. He keeps, he seeks to keep us comfortable in our deception. The false prophet, he represents just one more layer of separation from the dragon.

So you have the dragon, right? They worship him, but you see right away, he's putting these layers of separation. You know, there are people out there ridiculously that worship Satan today and think he's a great idea.

[ 22 : 26 ] If they saw him and knew him for what he was, they wouldn't worship him. They'd be terrified. There are people who don't worship Jesus because they will refuse to see him for he is. But when you see Jesus for who he really is, you're not terrified.

You're not running. You're running to him and realizing he loves me. But Satan wants to put those layers of separation. Verse 13.

Where did we just see that? If you remember the last time where we saw that, we had the two witnesses, right?

And fire would come out of their mouth. And what also happened to them? They were put to death. And then three days later, they rose again. And so here we see the enemy can't do anything original.

Here he's counterfeiting exactly what has just happened. He said, well, the beast, look at it. He had a deadly wound and he was healed. It's like he came back to life. And now this false prophet, he can call down fire from heaven.

[ 23 : 27 ] It wasn't God Almighty doing that. We've got the same power. The enemy seeks to use deception to invalidate God. But in reality, his deception simply declares there must be something real.

He uses this deception to, I want to invalidate God. But the fact that he's using a deception, the fact that he has to do that just proves there's something real. There's something else. Remember in Exodus when Moses goes before Pharaoh that first time.

And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh in Exodus 7. And they did so as the Lord commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh. Again, this is a perfect example of following God's word and not following what you think will work.

Well, it seemed like a good idea on the mountain, but I don't know if this is going to work. You want me to go in in front of Pharaoh and just throw my rod on the ground and hopefully it's going to turn into a snake? Like, you know, what if it doesn't work this time?

What if I didn't pray enough this morning? What if I yelled at my wife? You know, I don't yell at my wife. But it may. You base it on God's word alone. God's word alone.

[ 24 : 31 ] And so he cast it down before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a serpent. And then Pharaoh called the wise men and sorcerers and the magicians of Egypt. They also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Yeah, we can do this. We can counterfeit this. For they cast down every man his rod and they became serpents. And they all stood there and watched as Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. You ever seen a snake eat something? It's not fast. I don't know how many rods there were and how many snakes it were. But I picture it's pretty quiet in there as he's just like.

And then he goes to the next one and the bulge is getting bigger. And then Aaron just goes and picks it up and it's back into a rod. You know, it was like a three for one deal.

He's got. Anyway. But in Revelation 5, I mean, Revelation 11, speaking of the two witnesses in verse 5, it says, If any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies.

[ 25 : 28 ] And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. And then they were put to death. But after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. They stood upon their feet and great fear fell upon them, which saw them.

And so the enemy, his deceptions, his counterfeit, he doesn't have anything new. He's simply seeking to deceive and to counterfeit. You know, when we're unwilling to accept God's word for what it is, man, the enemy is right there.

He's right there with a deception and a counterfeit to go. It's not God's word because look over here. I can do the same thing. Verse 14. Signs and wonders.

Remember in Matthew 24, as Jesus is answering the disciples' question of what shall be the signs of the end, what shall be the signs of your coming. One of the signs of the end. Matthew 24, verse 24.

For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets. And shall show great signs and wonders. In so much that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.

[ 26 : 49 ] And at this time, somebody will be reading Matthew 24, 24. As all these things are taking place. And they'll be putting their faith in Jesus Christ, not Antichrist. And they'll read this and they'll go, this is exactly what's happening.

Many signs and wonders. And then they'll read that verse in Corinthians that says, well, no man can call Jesus accursed by the spirit of God. So this can't be something divine because it's rejecting God.

And they won't be deceived any more than you and I will be deceived ultimately. Second Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 9 and 10, speaking of the Antichrist.

It says that his coming is after the working of Satan. With all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. There's nothing left when you reject the truth. There is nothing else out there but deception.

[ 27 : 46 ] Signs and wonders devoid of truth lead only to deception. But signs and wonders among the truth are a mark.

Our word mark. Of a genuine move of God. Mark 16, 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe. They shall cast out demons. They shall drink poison.

It will not harm them. They will follow them. So signs and wonders, when it's devoid of the truth, it will lead to deception. Because you'll see that and you'll think that validates this person or this thing. But when there's signs and wonders among the truth, well, it's just the mark of a genuine move of God. You say, well, are there any signs and wonders here?

We've got the truth. There's been many wonderful things that have happened. And God has many, many times given the sign, many signs that he is at work.

[ 28 : 44 ] We think signs and wonders. And we think we got to call fire from heaven. I don't want fire to come down from heaven. I like this place. When God wants to move us to a new place, he can bring the fire down. But I want him to send the fire of the Holy Spirit.

I ask him to send that from heaven. We all do. And he does. Time after time, week after week. I don't know if you know it, but one of the signs of God's work of a genuine move that happens time after time.

We don't coordinate worship songs. It happened again this week. It's like the emphasis of the text and of what God's bringing out ends up being the lyrics of the worship song.

To me, that's so encouraging. When I'm standing there worshiping before I come up to teach, it's like the Lord, to me, it feels like he's like, yeah, I'm in this. Go ahead. Thank you, Lord.

Just checking. That's good. I'm glad you're here. Signs and wonders. She'll follow them that believe. So now the false prophet here, this PR man for the beast, he says, I got this idea, a global initiative, that they should make an image to the beast.

[ 29 : 53 ] So this image will become the third level of separation from the dragon. You have the dragon. You have the antichrist. You have the false prophet. And now you have an idol. This is the third level. He's moving us away.

Deception always leads to distance. It pushes further and further away. And it just muddies everything. You know, the truth draws you in. The truth says, Jesus says, there is no priest or prophet needed between you and this.

You can come to the word alone. You can come to God alone. And he'll receive us. We have the Holy Spirit, our comforter, our helper. It draws it in. It makes it so simple. God's grace is so simple. And I hope that's another earmark, mark of our congregation, that it's grace. That we emphasize grace above law. We emphasize grace above works.

We emphasize grace above sin. We emphasize grace above consequences. Well, that's kind of dangerous, isn't it? No, because that's what Jesus did in my life. Jesus says, I receive you as you are.

[ 30 : 50 ] Come to me as you are, and I'll take care of all the rest. That's what we emphasize. Someone comes through the door. Okay, we love you. Jesus loves you. God loves you. Here's the word. Apply it to your life. And we'll just keep loving you.

You know, we're not here to try and correct people's lives or direct people's lives. I can't even do that very well myself. My own life. You can ask my kids how well I've done in their life.

No, God is gracious. But the image becomes this third level of separation. Always leading to distance is deception. Satan desires to move man as far away from God as he can. He's trying to get him as far away from God as he can. He also understands idolatry. He understands what's behind that. We can think, well, it's just an image. And then the world thinks it's just an image.

What's that? What's the matter? You know? So I got a little idol on my dashboard. You know, so what? I like that culture or whatever. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 20, I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, the demons, and not to God.

[ 31 : 58 ] And I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. This is where he's talking about, hey, the idol, essentially he says before this, an idol is nothing. It is. It's a chunk of whatever. Any more than meat is anything.

But understand that there is a spiritual aspect to this. That when people are worshiping these things, it's not the thing that is the thing. It's what's behind it. Right? So when the person goes and they sacrifice their whatever to this God, then they eat that meat and that food and they think, oh, I'm ingesting whatever, you know, the heart of the elk to take on the spirit of the elk. That is nothing. It's no different than if you and I eat it. It's nothing in itself. But the spiritual implications are great because of the heart of that person. Deuteronomy 32, Moses will say the same thing.

Speaking about Israel, he said, they provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God, to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

So behind these idols, it's not just the idolatry. So you see Satan pushes this way out away from himself. They say, well, we're worshiping this image now. But behind all of that, they're worshiping the dragon.

[ 33 : 12 ] They're still worshiping the dragon. Satan also understands that the further he can remove himself from our consciousness, from man's consciousness, consciousness, the greater the potential he has in deceiving man, into worshiping him.

The further he can remove himself from our consciousness, well, then he has much greater potential in deceiving us into worshiping him, by worshiping something else that he is behind. Satan is using the things that come from the earth, right? This false prophet comes from the earth. He makes this idol. He's using the things that come from the earth to desensitize, normalize, and condition the world for false worship.

He's trying to desensitize, normalize, and condition. It's happening all around us, guys. It's happening all around us. He wants to normalize the things that would push us away from God and would cause this world to focus on worshiping him.

Verse 15. And this false prophet, he had power to give life under 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.

[ 34 : 34 ] So no matter how miraculous, no matter how amazing, or how fun, the fruit of deception is always death. Oh, man, that's so cool.

Did you go see that latest thing? Yeah, the beast was talking. It was great. It was amazing. You know, I went on the app and I said, oh, beast, what should I do? And he gave me an answer and it worked.

I couldn't believe it. You know, it's great. It was amazing. It's fun. It's miraculous. And it still leads to death. And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Killed. We'll find out later in Revelation that is decapitation is the punishment, the capital punishment at the time. Interesting though, he had power to give life to the image of the beast. You know, when God breathed life into Adam in the beginning, he gave life with his breath.

And yet the breath of the dragon leads to death. This image as it speaks. God's word speaks life. The word of this dragon, from the dragon of the image, declares death.

[ 35 : 42 ] idolatry is wicked, obviously, but it's so wicked because it makes man subject to the work of their own hands.

Idolatry makes man subject to the work of their own hands. I think it's one of Satan's most degrading things that he does in the life of people and fallen man.

I think he loves to do that. He loves to bring them to where they are making something and then he degrades them to where they are worshiping the thing they made. How pathetic is that? Idolatry causes man to be subject to the work of their own hands.

It doesn't have to be something physical that you carved. It could be the work of your career. It could be the work of your passions. It could be the work of whatever. But it's something that you are putting in a place that only God should own.

And here in the time of Jacob's trouble, it will be worship that is the determining factor between life and death. You know, those who live or die, it's going to be based on their worship. But it's no different today than today, is it?

[ 36 : 46 ] Today, we live in a world where our lives, whether we live or die spiritually, is determined by what we worship. And Acts 4.12 says, neither, Peter says, is there salvation in any other.

There's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. You see, what you worship, it determines whether you live or die. There's nothing else that's going to lead to life to worship.

Tucked away in Nehemiah, Nehemiah 9.6 says, Thou, even thou, art Lord alone. Thou has made heaven, the heavens of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein, and the seas, and all that is therein.

And thou preservest or givest life, gives life to them all. And the host of heaven worship you. What does your worship lead to? Does worship lead to life or to death?

I think Satan's biggest frustration at this time, the dragon's biggest frustration, is that despite all of this power, ability, and deception, he still cannot control man's heart. He still has no control over man's heart.

[ 37 : 53 ] The Lord alone owns that. Jeremiah 17.10, I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

I, the Lord, alone, search the heart. And here, Satan, he wants that ability. He wants to be able to control man in that way. So for that reason, he has to use external pressure to seek to affect an internal choice.

He knows that, all right, I can't, I can't change their hearts. I cannot force my will. So I will use external pressure to seek to get them to make an internal choice.

Verse 16, and he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads. And this is that word mark.

It means a stamp, an imprint, or brand, like you brand cattle. But I, I thought that was pretty interesting. You know, how Satan is conditioning us to be used to things, used to brands.

[ 38 : 54 ] We all wear them. We always, we all wear brands that we're branded with. And I think at that time, the world will be like, man, check it out. Man, I got, I'm wearing the beast. You know, I got the beast logo.

The mark will be, it will have global compliance. It causes all. Doesn't matter your state. There will be no elite.

There will be no escaping this. It will be visible identification. Their right hand around their foreheads. And there will be no exemptions at all. Global compliance, visible identification, no exemptions.

As far as I know, this has never happened in the history of the world until our lifetime. For the first time, as far as I know, we saw a sign of global compliance, visible identification that nobody was exempt from during COVID.

Everybody had masks. And it was so weird to see like, in Iran, who hates the West, they have masks. In China, masks.

[ 39 : 59 ] Here, everyone. It was the first time in my lifetime that I know of and it happened in my lifetime that there was a sign of global compliance that the whole world said we will comply. We will have visible identification and there's no exemptions.

It was like, wow, this sure seems like trying to get the world ready for something. verse 17. So he's putting this outward pressure to affect an internal choice.

All, if they want to partake in this economic system at the time, no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, that had the stamp, that had the imprint, that had the brand.

The one that had the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. So the worship of the beast will be tied to a political and commercial system. It'll all be about, well, you know, this is all

for everybody's good and yeah, you're going to have to worship the beast but it'll be worth it. And so here we see three forms of identifying with the beast. You know, I always thought it was three of the same. I thought it was describing the same thing. The mark, his name, and his number. I thought it was like all interchangeable, the same.

[ 41 : 10 ] But it is or. In the language, it's or. So there's the mark or his name or the number of his name. So three, three forms of identifying with the beast.

You can be marked, branded. You can receive his mark, his brand in your hand or your forehead, his name, or his numbered. And again, he can't come up with anything original.

It's all a copy because you and I have been marked, named, and numbered. We've been marked. Galatians chapter 6, verse 17. From henceforth, Paul says, let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks, the brand, the Lord Jesus.

I wear Jesus's brand. He wore Levi's. Oh, that's an Exodus joke. He wasn't of the tribe of Levi.

But we're marked. We're named. Ephesians chapter 3, verse 14. For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

[ 42 : 19 ] That's the name we bear. We're marked, we're named, and we're numbered. Acts 16, 5. And so were the churches established in the faith and increased in number daily.

And the Lord added, such as should be saved. We're numbered with something. We're numbered with God's people. This is our number. Someone said, what's your number? Who's got your number?

Jesus got my number. I've got his name. I've got his mark. I'm numbered with his people. 1 Peter 4, 16 says, yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

We are Christians. That's what we are. It's okay. Own it. Be it. We are identified with him. And if we suffer because of that identification, don't be ashamed.

Glorify God on this behalf. Be thankful. God, you're just proving I'm numbered with you. You're just proving I've been counted with you. You're just proving I bear your name and that I'm bearing your brand upon my life.

[ 43 : 24 ] The last verse here for tonight, verse 18. And here is wisdom. Let him that has understanding count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man and his number is 603 score and six.

Six. Six. Six. This is so ingrained in our culture and in our world that everybody knows. Six, six, six. You know, I mean, if you're driving down the road, you see that on someone's license plate, you're not going to think, but they go to church.

Wonder what church they go to. What is it? I don't know. And if you read commentaries, if you want to go down a rabbit hole, I don't recommend it.

A rabbit trail, either one. You can go down a trail or down a hole. Start researching what the mark of the beast is going to be and what the name, what the number means and six, six, six. Nobody knows. Why?

Because it says here what? Let him that has understanding. Understanding is given when understanding is needed. You know why we don't understand? Because it's not needed for us to understand and it's not been given. One of the things that I read was that the letters of Jesus in Greek add up to 888.

[ 44 : 31 ] Eight is the number for grace. Six, six, six may be a satanic counterpart to the name of Jesus or six, six, six may be God's evaluation of such a satanic counterpart.

It falls short of 88. Is that what it actually is? I don't know. You can find a hundred more of the things that sound good that could fit. Modern interpretations of the idea of the Antichrist.

They are, many of their interpretations of what the Antichrist will be, they're kind of full of this idea of like some demon child marked by evil. It's very obvious, you know, he's so evil.

But he's an instead of Christ. I think he's going to appear to be someone who his evil is only seen after his rise to power after this point. And even then, what we see is there's this effort to keep it away from him.

These layers of separation to keep it, well, this is just policy. He doesn't really want to kill you, but he has to. But at this time, understanding will be given because understanding is needed.

[ 45 : 32 ] But then what does it say? Here is wisdom. Well, what is wisdom? Wisdom is the application of knowledge. So at this time, it will be upon those to apply the knowledge that

Revelation 13, 18 will give them.

At that time, wisdom is apply the knowledge that the scripture, when you read it at that time, oh, that's his number. That makes sense. It will make sense because of whatever's happening in the world at that time with him.

Understanding will be given. And then wisdom is, here is wisdom. Apply that. Apply the knowledge to understand what is taking place at the time. So, the mark.

What is the mark? I don't know. Some type of stamp. Global compliance, visible identification, no exemptions. The mark is globally mandated.

It is attached to worship. It's not something that is just, can be received by accident. It is a decision of eternal destiny.

[ 46 : 34 ] Those who choose to take it. It exists only at the time of the Antichrist. It exists only at the time of the Antichrist. There is no mark of the beast currently.

The COVID vaccine was not the mark of the beast. It is not. Just like the mask. Is it a precursor of trying to enforce compliance from the world? Sure. Okay.

But it's not going to determine my eternal destiny. Remember what Jesus said? That which goes into a man does not defile him, but that which comes out of a man because it comes out of his heart. It exists only at the time of the Antichrist.

It is unable to be received now. Under Domitian from 81 to 96 AD, which would be about the time John is writing, the Emperor Domitian, emperor worship was kind of at its zenith.

It was becoming a thing. And it was for every Roman citizen to once a year to go and offer a pinch of incense to Caesar and say Caesar is Lord. And then you would be given a certificate of authenticity saying, okay, good job.

[ 47 : 44 ] You paid your tax. You paid your incense. Good job. If you failed to produce a certificate, it meant that you were marked as a Christian. It meant that that was one of the few sects that would not do that, groups of people that wouldn't do that.

And it meant that there was now, if the magistrate so decided, the door was open now for you to be put to death on the penalty of, on the grounds of treason. It was linked to, it's like, it's just, admittedly, burning the incense, it was more a political act of loyalty than religious observance. Sure. Because after that, all the citizens were allowed to go and worship whatever God they wanted. Yeah, yeah, it's just, just, we're not saying don't go to church. We're not saying don't worship Jesus.

We're just saying be a good citizen. Be patriotic and offer that pinch. And just say it. It's just words. What's it matter? Yet no believer loyal to Christ could do this.

How could we? He alone has the words of life. Remember when Satan came to tempt Jesus and he said, you shall worship the Lord your God and him alone shall you worship.

[ 48 : 51 ] He says, bow down to me. He says, no, him alone. And so many perished, were burned at the stake and torn to pieces just because they wouldn't do that. as a precursor to what this mark will be.

So in scripture, this mark in Revelation, Revelation, as we read tonight, it brings about the mark. It gives us, tells us what it is. But in chapter 14, we're told that people will be warned about the mark. And we'll see this when we get there. But an angel will fly throughout heaven and saying, hey, if any man worship the beast in his image and receive his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.

So there'll be warning. Nobody's gonna not understand what's happening. The mark will be overcome. It can be overcome. Revelation 15, two, and I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire and then them had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name.

They were standing on the sea of glass having the harps of God. They overcame. They overcame. The mark will result in temporal and eternal judgment. Revelation 16, two, and there was poured out upon the vial upon the earth and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped the image.

[ 50 : 14 ] So there's gonna be whatever this mark is, it's gonna backfire pretty bad. And that'll also include eternal judgment. Revelation 19, 20, and the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought much miracles before him with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image.

And these both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. So both the beast and the false prophet, they will be cast in the lake of fire. And then Revelation 20, verse 4, and I saw thrones and they that sat upon them and judgment was given unto them and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.

Since now we see the type of death will be beheading and for the word of God and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

So temporal and eternal judgment attached to this mark. But just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who would not bow before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

They will overcome. Sure, will they go through a fire of judgment, temporal judgment? Yeah, but they'll overcome. So as we end, what will our mark be?

[ 51 : 37 ] What mark will we make? What stamp will we leave? What stamp can we leave upon others? Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. You can turn there if you want.

You don't have to. I'll just read it to you. 1 Thessalonians, Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 5, the first, the verses 5 through 8. Speaking of them, the church there in Thessalonica, he says, our gospel came not unto you in word only, but it also came in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.

As you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

So that you are examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place that your faith to God word is spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything.

You know, I think we think our mark, oh man, what's it, it needs to be something great. So many great men and women of the faith, so many people that have just given their lives to go and do. And Paul's writing to the Thessalonians and just saying, hey, your mark is simply that you've been faithful and that is spread abroad.

[ 52 : 59 ] That they hear you are a faithful congregation, a faithful people, a faithful body, a faithful church, a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. You are examples to all that believe.

It's the mark you left. You know, Paul says that we ought to live quiet, to seek to live quiet and peaceable lives. I think sometimes, especially within the church in the West, no, we should seek to stir things up, shake it up.

No, we should seek to live quiet and peaceable lives and to be an example in this world. There's not anything quiet and peaceable in this world. Brethren, be you followers together of me and mark them which walk so you have us for an example.

I don't know why that lady's leading all those geese. But hey, what mark are we going to leave? Can we say to someone, hey, I don't, just follow our example, you know?

What mark do we want to leave on people? What's that stamp? Is it that, wow, signs and wonders and miracles and pizzazz? I hope, if God wants to do that, that's great.

[ 54 : 02 ] But I hope it's grace and love and mercy and acceptance and faithfulness, you know? I hope the example we leave as a church and as a people is, man, they love Jesus and they love me.

Even though I'm kind of kooky, even though I've got this in my life and I was brave and I shared with them that a thing that's troubling me and they didn't condemn me. They didn't tell me, well, you need to get that right.

You know, Christians don't do that. Don't do that. No, they just said, hey, you know what? Let's be followers together. Let's follow them together.

Let's walk together. So, Lord, we want to leave, we want to leave that, like we said Sunday, that fragrance of Christ, Lord. We want our lives to be, have your stamp of approval on them.

Yes, Lord. Yes, but not because of the great things we are doing, not because we're going, look at all this fruit, but Lord, because of the love that we've received from you and the love that we share with one another, Lord.

[ 55 : 02 ] Lord, we want to know your stamp of approval of the Holy Spirit that worked in our lives, Lord. That the word is paramount in our lives and that lives are being changed around us, Lord. Lord, we don't need to do great and mighty things, Lord, to prove that you're at work.

Lord, that's deception. That's the way that the enemy goes. He tries to validate himself through things that can be seen and experienced. Lord, you validate yourself through your word.

And if we would put our trust in that alone, Lord, then we begin to experience the love of God in our lives and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Lord, I pray, Lord, that we would be faithful to just continue to follow and, Lord, be that mark upon other people's lives, Lord, of the grace and love of God. We thank you and praise you and bless our time of fellowship now. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen, guys. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 57 : 36 ] Amen. Amen.

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[ 62 : 36 ] Amen. Amen.

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[ 77 : 06 ] Amen. Amen.

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[ 81 : 06 ] Amen. Amen.

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[ 84 : 37 ] Amen.

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[ 97 : 07 ] Amen.

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