

The Mark

03 - Metamorphosis: The Way of Transformation
Church on the Park | Sunday, 12 SEPT 2021 | Glen Gerhauser

Text: “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.” – Galatians 6:17

Theme: We do not need to fear in these last days if we fear the Lord.

Intro: History is a battle over the mark. This epic battle finds its culmination in the book of Revelation. Whose mark is on you? Certain people and forces want to mark you as their own. Ultimately, the battle is over God’s mark or the serpent’s mark. Spurgeon wrote, “Consider how precious a soul must be, when both God and the devil are after it.” Today, we will walk through the Bible, studying the subject of the mark. Specifically, we will look at God’s mark and discover what it means. Lastly, we will look at the mark of the beast and understand what it’s all about.

1) God marks those who are his.

a) In Hebrew, there are two main words for ‘mark’.

i) First is Tav.

(1) It’s the name of the last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet and means: a sign, mark, seal or signature.

(2) In ancient times and in near eastern languages, this mark was an X. It’s what we call today the Saint Andrew’s Cross.

(3) It marked ownership. For example, a Shepherd would mark or brand his sheep as his own. Or, one would mark a document as their own.

(a) Today, we still use the X for signatures.

ii) Second is ‘Ot

(1) ‘Ot is a sign or distinguishing mark. It’s used for signs and wonders too.

(a) ‘Ot is the name of a letter in Hebrew. A letter is an ‘ot. The Hebrew Alphabet is called the Otiyot. In other words, signs. They are signs and symbols for communicating. And according to Rabbinic tradition, they mean something greater than just a sound. It’s through words – God’s words – that the whole universe came into being.

b) The first time we find God marking (‘ot) man is in Genesis 4:15. It reads, “And Yahweh set a mark on Cain so that no one finding him would slay him.”

i) God’s mark on Cain was sheer mercy.

ii) It wasn’t based on Cain’s goodness or works; it was based on God’s kindness and grace

iii) How could God forgive a murderer? Usually society and religion sees this as the unforgiveable sin.

- (1) Yet, God is showing us the extent his grace goes to claim us as his own.
- (2) As history unfolds we see God forgive Moses and Paul of murder
- iv) Therefore, one of the first things that we learn about God's mark is that is the mark of his mercy and grace.
- v) And even before Cain, God makes man in his image and likeness. In other words, the Lord impresses on him his character and likeness (Gen. 1:26).
- c) As Scripture continues, we see that God marks Abraham through circumcision (Gen 17:10-11).
 - i) It's called an 'ot, a sign
 - ii) It's a sign of God's covenant in the most private/hidden of places.
 - iii) It's a personal blood covenant marked in the body part that reproduces the seed.
 - iv) It comes after Ishmael and before Isaac, distinguishing that there are two ways to bear fruit, one in the flesh and the other by the Spirit.
- d) Walking further through Scripture we come to the sign ('ot) of the blood on the doorposts (Exo 12:13).
 - i) The Israelites were commanded to mark their doorposts with blood on Passover.
 - ii) It was a sign. Furthermore, God's people were marked with signs and wonders before escaping Egypt.
 - iii) God protects those who have his mark, the blood.
 - iv) He makes a clear distinction between his people and the Egyptians
- e) Lastly, before we come to Jesus we see the mark (tav) of God in Ezekiel (Eze. 9:1-11).
 - i) God marks all those who deeply grieve over sin.
 - ii) He puts his mark on their forehead and they are protected from judgment.
 - iii) From all these verses, we should be firmly convinced that God knows his own and marks them with his seal. They are his and no one will steal them away.

2) Jesus bears the eternal marks of God, the wounds of his sacrifice (John 20:20, 24-29).

- a) Both the religious world and the political world tried to put their mark on Jesus.
 - i) They tried to put on him the marks of crucifixion, which are condemnation and ultimate rejection.
- b) However, Jesus is marked by God and they can't harm him.
 - i) The name Christ means anointed one
 - ii) An anointed one is marked by God
 - iii) Interestingly, Christos starts with the Greek letter Chi (X) which is the ancient Hebrew letter for Tav, mark.
 - iv) The early Christians used it as a sign X that they were followers of Christ.

- v) Because Jesus is marked by God's anointing, he is one with the Father, the marks the wicked world try to put on him don't stick.
- vi) Instead, the curse is turned into a blessing.
- vii) The marks of the cross are signs of God's love, grace, mercy and forgiveness.
- viii) His blood is the ultimate sign and mark that protects you.
- c) Once Christ was crucified, God's covenant and mark became an inward thing, a matter of the heart.
 - i) Listen to what Paul said in Galatians 6:12-18
 - ii) Outward marks mean nothing. What matters is the blood and God's work within.
 - iii) Persecutors could hold you down and stamp 666 on your forehead. That mark would not send you to hell since God's mark is on you — it transcends outward things.
 - iv) Paul bore the marks of worshipping God alone and laying down his life for Jesus. He was circumcised. And yet, others bore the same marks of devotion who were not circumcised.
 - v) Again, what matters is the new creation within.

3) God protects those he has marked and sealed (Rev. 7:1-8, Rev. 9:4, 14:1, 22:4).

- a) One of the key messages in Revelation, the last Book of the Bible, is that God protects those he has marked (sealed) even through the fiercest tribulation and persecution.
- b) The last book of the Bible is about God's mark.
- c) But there is also another mark. It's usually what readers are transfixed with.
 - i) It's mentioned in Revelation 13:16-17; 14:9, 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4.
 - (1) John uses the Greek word Charagma, and it means a mark, stamp, imprint or brand.
 - (2) It's from the idea of engraving or carving, especially the making of an idol (Acts 17:29).
- d) One thing that John makes clear repeatedly is that it is associated with those who worship the beast, the antichrist (the false Messiah).
 - i) You can't get this mark by mistake.
 - ii) It's the devil's imprint on your life. It's his character engraved in you.
 - iii) Realize that since God's mark is spiritual and cannot be seen by the natural eye, the mark of the beast may not be something physical.
 - (1) Revelation is full of symbolism.
 - (2) The mark of the beast is the enemy's branding of your life.
 - (3) If you are in Christ and Christ is in you, you don't need to be afraid of it.
 - iv) The anti-Christ has not yet been revealed. Many speculate. But our faith is not in speculations but in Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Therefore, let's not jump to conclusions and base our faith on speculations and fear (2 Thessalonians 2).
- e) The vaccines currently being rolled out are not associated with worshipping a false Messiah. Therefore, it's a matter of conscience and freedom if you want to get it or not.
 - i) You shouldn't think someone is compromised if they get the vaccine.

- f) Be careful that we don't fall into the ways of the serpent by dividing, blaming and accusing one another.
 - i) God's mark is the mark of love.
- g) The most important thing is: have you put your faith in what Jesus has done on the cross?
 - i) If you have received Jesus, and it's true and genuine, then you have God's mark and seal on you. Don't be afraid of the devil.

Conclusion: Let's put our faith in God and his seal. Let Jesus imprint his character on you. Then you will be an overcomer. Let's not base our faith on internet theories and speculations but on the solid Word of Christ.