

END OF TIME SERIES

An Expanded Spirit of Prophecy Study

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- VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS - BEERSBEBE SPRINGS, TN 37305

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END OF TIME SERIES - PART FIVE

THE SEAL AND THE MARK

Seals have been used for thousands of years to provide a permanent shutting or closing of something. For example, a sheet of paper containing a letter would be folded over upon it self, a bit of wax dropped to hold it shut, and then a signet ring would be impressed upon the wax. The sheet was now considered securely sealed; it could not be opened without tearing apart the molded wax.

When the seal of God is applied, those who receive it will be permanently identified as belonging to God. Their already-developed characters will be sealed in. At the same time that the seal (also called a "mark" in the Bible: Ezekiel 9) is impressed, a different kind of closing signet will be applied: the mark of the beast. It will be placed on those who, by their decisions and actions, have refused the seal of God. They have refused obedience to God's expressed will, as stated in the Scriptures.

The sealing will be a major event in the lives of the remnant who live at the end of time. In this section, we will learn the nature of the seal, in what way it is different than the mark, and when both begin to be placed.

1 - The winds of strife, war, and manifold disasters are being held in check until the seal is placed.

"Everything in the world is in an unsettled state. The nations are angry, and great preparations for war are being made. Nation is plotting against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. The great day of God is hastening greatly. But although the nations are

mustering their forces for war and bloodshed, the command to the angels is still in force, that *they hold the four winds until the servants of God are sealed* in their foreheads." -7 Bible Commentary, 968/2:3.

2 - The seal will be placed before the last great battle. (In a later study, we will discuss the battle of Armageddon.)

"As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. *Then* the powers of earth will marshal their forces for *the last great battle*. How carefully we should improve the little remaining period of our probation."-7 Bible Commentary, 968/2:1.

3 - It is now that we are to prepare for the sealing.

"The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. *Now is the time*, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make sure our calling and election *sure*."-Early Writings, 58:2.

4 - The seal is an invisible mark of loyalty and obedience to our Creator.

"What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? *It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read*; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption. The intelligent mind has seen the sign of the cross of Calvary in the Lord's adopted sons and daughters. The sin of the transgression of the law of God is taken away. *They have on the wedding garment, and are obedient and faithful to all God's commands*."-7 Bible Commentary, 968/2:4.

5 - The seal is a settling into the truth.

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads -it is *not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth*, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved -just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already." - 4 Bible Commentary 1161/2:3.

6 - The seal will be our passport through the heavenly gates.

"Only those who receive the seal of the living God will have *the passport* through the gates of the Holy City."-7 Bible Commentary, 970/1:1.

7 - The seal will only be placed on those who are like Christ.

"The seal of the living God will be placed upon those only who bear a *likeness to Christ* in character."- 7 Bible Commentary, 970/1:3.

8 - They must reflect the image of Jesus.

"I also saw that many do not realize what they must be in order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble. Those who receive the-seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble *must reflect the Image of Jesus fully*." *Early Writings*, 71:1.

9 - The seal is only placed on those who are pure and without spot.

"The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. *All who receive the seal must be without spot before God-candidates for heaven*." - 5 Testimonies, 216:2.

10 - The seal is placed on those who love God and obey Him.

"Love is expressed in obedience, and perfect love casteth out all fear. *Those who love God, have the seal of God in their foreheads, and work the works of God.*"-*Son and Daughters*, 51:2.

11 - It is placed on those who overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"*Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God.*" -*Testimonies to Ministers*, 445:1.

12 - Many ere erroneously neglecting becoming like Jesus, and are instead waiting for the latter rain to change them.

"Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully. I saw that *many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter!*" *Early Writings*, 71:1-2.

13 - The seal is the property sign; it shows who belongs to God as His special possession.

"Every soul in our world is the Lord's property, by creation and by redemption. Each individual soul is on trial for his life. Has he given to God that which belongs to Him? Has he surrendered to God all that is His as His purchased possession? *All who cherish the Lord as their portion in this life will be under His control, and will receive the sign, the mark of God, which shows them to be God's special possession.* Christ's righteousness will go before them, and the glory of the Lord will be their reward. The Lord protects every human being who bears His sign." *7 Bible Commentary*, 969/1:1.

14 - The seal is placed on those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath.

"The seal of the living God is placed upon *those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord.*"- *7 Bible Commentary*, 980/1:2.

"Those who would have the seal of God in their foreheads *must keep the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.*"- *7 Bible Commentary*, 970/1:2.

"*True observance of the Sabbath is the sign of loyalty to God.*"-*7 Bible Commentary*, 981/2:1.

"*The fourth commandment alone of all the ten contains the seal of the great Lawgiver, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.*" - *6 Testimonies*, 350:3.

"The observance of the Lord's memorial, the Sabbath instituted in Eden, *the seventh-day Sabbath, is the test of our loyalty to God.*" -*Last Day Events*, 220:5.

"*A mark is placed upon every one of God's people, just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings to preserve the people from the general ruin, God declares, 'I gave them My sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them' [Ezekiel 20:12].*" - *7 Bible Commentary*, 969/1:0.

15 - The seal will be placed on every true child of God.

"In a little while every one *who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. O that it may be placed upon our foreheads! Who can endure the thought of being passed by when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads?*"-*Maranatha*, 211:7.

16 - All of the 144,000 will be sealed.

"The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name."-*Early Writings*, 15:1.

17 - We should strive to be among the 144,000.

"Let us strive with all the power that God has given us to be among the hundred and forty-four thousand."-7 *Bible Commentary*, 970/2:2.

18 - Through the enabling grace of Christ, we are to strive to put away sin and obey God's will -that we may become complete in Him.

"Are we striving with all our God-given powers to reach *the measure of the stature of men and women In Christ?* Are we seeking for His *fullness*, ever reaching higher and higher, trying to attain to *the perfection* of His *character*? When God's servants reach this point, they will be sealed in their foreheads. The recording angel will declare, 'It is done.' *They will be complete in Him* whose they are by creation and by redemption."-3 *Selected Messages*, 427:2.

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MARK OF THE BEAST IS OPPOSITE OF SEAL OF GOD FOR MARK IS BASED ON KEEPING OF THE FALSE SABBATH

1 - The mark of the beast is a subject we all need to understand.

"It is in the interest of all to *understand what the mark of the beast is*, and how they may escape the dread threatenings of God. Why are men not interested to know what constitutes the mark of the beast and his image? *It is in direct contrast with the mark of God.*" -7 *Bible Commentary*, 979/2:2.

2 - It is important that we know how to avoid receiving the mark.

"The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image, *should lead all to a diligent study* of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it." -*Great Controversy*, 594:2.

3 - God has sent an urgent warning to mankind to avoid receiving the mark; a warning which tells them how to avoid receiving it.

"When God sends to men *warnings so important* that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, He requires every person endowed with reasoning power to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image, should lead all to a *diligent study* of the prophecies to learn *what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it.*"-*Great Controversy*, 594:2.

4 - The Sabbath truth will be the basic issue in the final conflict.

"*The Sabbath question will be the issue* in the great conflict in which all the world will act a part. [Revelation 13:4-8, 10 quoted.] This entire chapter is a revelation of what will surely take place [Revelation 13:11, 15-17 quoted]."-7 *Bible Commentary*, 979/2:3.

5 - The Sabbath is the seal of the law. It seals it as God's property and identifying characteristics.

"When *the Sabbath* was changed by the papal power, *the seal* was taken from the law." *Great Controversy*, 452:1.

6 - The observance of the first day of the week as sacred -is the mark.

"John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the beast and his image, by keeping the first day of the week. *The observance of this day is the mark of the beast.*" -7 Bible Commentary, 979/2:4.

7 - The attempted change of the Sabbath to Sunday is the mark.

"As *the sign* of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite *this very* act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday." -*Signs, March 22, 1910.*

8 - The enactment of the national Sunday law will perfect this device of Satan.

"When the legislature frames laws which exalt the first day of the week, and put it in place of the seventh day, *the device of Satan* will be perfected." -7 Bible Commentary, 976/2:1.

9 - Knowing acceptance of enforced Sunday keeping is the worship of the beast.

"The enforcement of Sundaykeeping on the part of the Protestant churches *is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy -of the beast.* Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded." - *Great Controversy, 448:3-449:0.*

10 - The papal sabbath is the mark of the beast; it is his identifying signet.

"*The change of the Sabbath is the sign or mark of the authority* of the Romish church. . The mark of the beast is *the papal sabbath.*" *Evangelism, 234:1.*

11 - The false sabbath is the basis of Rome's authority over the people.

"Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change in the Sabbath was made by their church, and they cite *this very change* as evidence of the *supreme authority* of the church." -*Manuscript 51, 1899.*

12 - The sign of Satan's authority is in direct contrast to the seal of God's authority.

"*The spurious Sabbath.* . Satan has exalted as *the sign of his authority.* But God has set His seal upon His royal requirement. *Each sabbath Institution bears the name of its author,* an ineffaceable mark that shows the authority of each. It is our work to lead the people to understand this. We are to show that *It is of vital consequence whether they bear the mark of God's kingdom or the mark of rebellion,* for they acknowledge themselves subjects of the kingdom whose mark they bear." - 6 Testimonies, 352:1.

13 - The beast's mark is found in the spurious sabbath.

"What then is the mark of the beast but *the spurious sabbath.*" -*Manuscript 51, 1899.*

"*The spurious sabbath bears the mark of the man of sin.*" -*Manuscript 63, 1899.*

Note: The very word contains its meaning: It is the "sun day," the day of the sun god, which, throughout history, has been a primary pagan deity by which men have worshiped Satan. "The Sabbath" comes from the Hebrew word for "rest," and is the rest day given to mankind by the Creator in Genesis 2:1-3.

14 - The one day of worship is the sign of God's creatorship, while the other day of counterfeit worship is the sign of papal control.

"The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in *the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation.* . The mark of the beast is the opposite of *this-the observance of the first day of the week.* This mark distinguishes those who

acknowledge the supremacy of the *papal authority* from those who acknowledge the *authority of God*. "-8 *Testimonies*, 117:3-4.

15 - While the true worshipers of God exalt His creatorship; the other worshipers will attempt to erradicate the true Sabbath.

"The worshipers of God will be especially distinguished by their regard for *the fourth commandment -since this is the sign of His creative power and the witness to His claim upon man's reverence and homage*. The wicked will be *distinguished by their efforts to tear down the Creator's memorial, to exalt the Institution of Rome*. In the issue of the contest all Christendom will be divided into two great classes -those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. Although the church and state will unite their power to compel 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), to receive the mark of the beast, yet the people of God will not receive it."-2 *Selected Messages*, 55:1 (*similar but shorter: Great Controversy*, 450:1).

16 -It was only by changing God's law, that the papacy could appear to exalt itself above God.

"*Only by changing God's law* could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed *would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made*. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God." *Great Controversy*, 446:1.

17 - God's people will willingly, gladly bear His signature.

"The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God's property. *So the children of God In this age will bear the signature God has appointed*. They will place themselves in harmony with God's holy law. *A mark is placed upon every one of God's people* just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin. God declares, 'I gave them my Sabbaths, *to be a sign between Me and them*, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.' "-7 *Bible Commentary*, 668/2:5-669/1:0.

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MARK AND SEAL PLACED AT SAME TIME

The Sabbath/Sunday test is such a simple one. All will be required by human law to keep the sun day. Yet God requires that we observe the Seventh-day Sabbath, and work on the other six days. We must rest and worship on the Bible Sabbath, and we can do missionary work on Sunday. But we are not to assemble in weekly worship gatherings on that day. The day we hallow will determine what we will receive: the seal or the mark.

When the national Sunday law is enacted, to knowingly sacredly observe one day is to reject the other. In that crisis, we will individually receive either the seal of God or the mark of the beast.

1 - Each person will receive either the mark or the seal.

"*If we receive this mark* in our foreheads or in our hands, the judgments pronounced against the disobedient must fall upon us. *But the seal* of the living God is placed upon those who conscientiously keep the Sabbath of the Lord."- 7 *Bible Commentary*, 980/1:2.

2 - Each will receive the mark of deliverance or the mark of the beast.

"The Lord is doing His work. All heaven is astir. The Judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate His insulted authority. *The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep*

God's commandments, who revere his law, and *who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image.*" -5 *Testimonies*, 451:3-452:0.

3 - One class will receive the mark; the other will receive the seal.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, *then the line of distinction will be drawn* between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. *While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.*" -*Great Controversy*, 605:2.

4 - They are totally different identifying labels; they are two separate marks of opposing authority.

"*The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath*, the Lord's memorial of creation. 'The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.'" Exodus 31:12-13. Here the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people.

"*The mark of the beast is the opposite of this -the observance of the first day of the week.* This mark distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God." - 8 *Testimonies*, 117:4.

5 - Everyone will place himself under one authority or the other.

"*In every case, the great decision is to be made* whether we shall receive the mark of the 'beast or his image, or the seal of the living God.'" -6 *Testimonies*, 130:2.

6 - The line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true.

"*No one has yet received the mark of the beast. . . but when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath. . . the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true.*" -*Manuscript 51*, 1899 (*Evangelism*, 234:2).

7 - It will be a time when each will decide whether he will think Satan's thoughts after him, -or, instead, stand obedient to God.

"To receive this mark means *to come to the same decision* as the beast *has done*, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God." -7 *Bible Commentary*, 979/2:5.

8 - Both classes are now preparing. Each of us is either uniting with the world, or drawing closer to God and becoming more like Him.

"*Those who are uniting* with the world are receiving the worldly mold and *preparing for the mark* of the beast. *Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth* these are receiving the heavenly mold and *preparing for the seal* of God." -5 *Testimonies*, 216:1.

9 - Your decision regarding the one you will obey-will determine which mark you will receive. And the test will be a simple one: the day on which you worship.

*"When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God."*7 Bible Commentary, 980/1:1 (Evangelism, 235:2).

10 - Some will disobey the beast and obey God. By doing so, they declare themselves to be His followers.

"All who prove their loyalty to God *by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God.*" -Letter 11, 1890.

11 - Some will, by obeying the beast and keeping his pagan worship day, acknowledge his authority.

"This mark [of the beast] distinguishes those who acknowledge the supremacy of the papal authority from those who acknowledge the authority of God."-8 Testimonies, 117:4.

12 - Ultimately, everyone will decide to be on one side or the other.

"In the issue of the great contest *two parties are developed, those who 'worship the beast and his image,' and receive his mark, and those who receive 'the seal of the living God,' who have the 'Father's name written in their foreheads.'* This is not a visible mark." -7 Bible Commentary, 980/1:4.

13 - A genuine experience with Christ will make all the difference in regard to which decision will be made.

"The sanctification of the Spirit signalizes the difference between those who have the seal of God and those who keep a spurious rest day.

"When the test comes, It will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday. Those who, after having heard the truth, continue to regard this day as holy bear the signature of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws." -7 Bible Commentary, 980/2:2-3.

14 - Rejecting the Sabbath truth-a truth of heavenly origin, -brings one the mark.

"Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." -Letter 11, 1890.

- 4-

WHICH DECREE BEGINS THE MARKING AND SEALING?

As mentioned in the next quotation, a *decree begins the marking and sealing time*. But what "*decree*" is this? Is it the National Sunday Law, or is it some other decree which begins the marking and sealing? The following statements reveal that this "*decree*" is the National Sunday Law:

1 - The decree begins the marking and sealing.

"What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and *preparing for the mark of the beast*. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth-these are receiving the heavenly mold and

preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

"Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts, *All who receive the seal must be without spot before God -candidates for heaven,*"-5 *Testimonies*, 216:1-2,

2 - The mark begins when the decree goes forth.

"Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision now to say, Nay, we will not regard the institution of the beast." *Early Writings*, 67:2.

"The [Sunday law; see context] *decree* is not to be urged upon the people *blindly.*" -*Great Controversy*, 605:1.

3 - It is the decree that men must obey the false sabbath.

"The powers of earth will decree that all . . . shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath."-*Great Controversy*, 604:2.

4 - It is the decree enforcing the papal institution.

"By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness."-5 *Testimonies*, 451:1.

5 - It is the decree requiring the worship of the beast.

"The principles necessary for our youth to cultivate must be kept before them. . . that *when the decree shall go forth, requiring all to worship the beast and his image* they may make the right decisions." -5 *Testimonies*, 525:2.

6 - It is the decree enforcing the papal sabbath.

"The assumption of power on the part of our nation in *the decree enforcing the papal sabbath* will be a warning to us." - 5 *Testimonies*, 464:9.

7 - It is the decree requiring the worship of the beast.

"And *the decree goes forth against all those who will not worship the image of the beast.*"- 4*Testimonies*, 251:1.

Note: Why is the national Sunday law sometimes called a decree? A legislative body, such as the U.S. Congress, makes "laws"; a ruler, such as the U.S. president, would normally be the one to issue "decrees." In addition to being called a "decree," the Sunday Law is also called an "edict"; see PK 588; 5T 473; 9T 231; and, of course, it is frequently referred to as a "law" (GC 592, CW 97-98, 5T 451, 711-712, 464-465; 9T 230; PK 186; 7BC 975,977; etc.), and "legislation" (6T 18; 7BC 910).

It is well to keep in mind that, in the Inspired Writings, heavy emphasis is placed on the Old Testament type -which is called a decree. This type was Nebuchadnezzar's decree of Daniel 3, ordering the people to worship the image set up by order of the king. (A second typical decree was that of Haman in Esther 3, ordering the Jews to be slain on a certain day. The antitype of that would be the death decree issued at the general close of probation.) This type-antitype relationship is probably why the national Sunday law is sometimes referred to as a "decree."

However, as we noted in our extensive Genocide Treaty studies, the order to enforce a treaty would issue from the president, not from the legislature. In addition, as

we noted in other studies, if the making of commemorative days was transferred to the Executive Branch (as Congress is in the process of doing), the announcement could be issued as a presidential proclamation, not as a congressional law. Yet the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that it will be the U.S. legislature which will have abandoned principle in enacting the Sunday law (TM 206), that laws framed by the U.S. legislature will exalt Sunday (7BC 976), and that its actions will be supportive of the papacy (TM 206).

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WHEN THE SUNDAY LAW DECREE GOES FORTH, THE MARKING AND THE SEALING BEGIN

Throughout the Spirit of Prophecy, we are told of only one government announcement commanding men to worship on Sunday. This is the national Sunday law. This decree will be repeated over and over as the other nations of earth enact their own national Sunday laws.

1 - The marking begins when men knowingly obey. It begins being applied to an individual when he understands the issues involved, yet still keeps Sunday holy, in obedience to the national law.

"When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God." 7 Bible Commentary, 980/1:1 (Evangelism, 235:2).

2 - In order to understand when a person receives the mark of the beast, we must understand six principles:

"[1] No one has yet received the mark of the beast. [2] The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. [3] None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. [4] But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and [in the case of those who had not previously heard or understood our message,] [5] the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. [6] Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast." Evangelism, 234:2-235:0.

3 - We are now, individually, preparing either for the mark: or the seal.

"What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth-these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity."- 5 Testimonies, 216:1.

4 - We can now say No to the mark. Indeed, we MUST now say No to the mark; we, who know so much, dare not wait until later to keep God's Sabbath holy.

"Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision now to say, Nay, we will not regard the institution of the beast." -Early Writings, 67:2.

5 - The test of the mark is yet future.

"Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but that time has not come yet." - 7 Bible Commentary, 977/2:4.

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FAITHFUL WILL BE TESTED BY THE IMAGE BEFORE BEING SEALED

Contrary to what some are teaching, the "probation of the church" has not already closed-because the probation of God's people does not close until the marking/sealing time. (It is God's professed people who constitute the "church;" not buildings, committees, organizational charters and policy books, or public gatherings.) The individual closing of probation does not begin until the test of the national Sunday law occurs by its enactment. At that time the image is set up (by the union of churches in the act of coercing the U.S. government into enacting a national Sunday law), to be immediately followed by the sealing and marking time-which will begin with present and former Sabbathkeepers, since they already know the issues involved. At that point, probations begin closing.

In a later study in this set, in the section on *"Individual Close of Probation,"* we will learn that, following enactment of the national Sunday law in a given nation, the probation of individuals will begin closing.

1 - The sequence, according to *7 Bible Commentary, 976*, is this: (1) The image of/to the beast is formed (with the enactment of the national Sunday law). (2) Then God's people are tested, and, according to the decisions made, (3) they are individually sealed or marked. Then (4) their probations close.

"The Lord has shown me clearly that the *Image of the beast will be formed before probation* closes; for *it is* to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. This is the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed. All who prove their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the seal of the living God. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." -*7 Bible Commentary, 976/1:2-3 (Maranatha, 164:1; cf 2 Selected Messages, 81:0).*

2 - The closing work for the church occurs during the sealing time.

"Especially in the *closing work for the church, In the sealing time* of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people." -*3 Testimonies, 266:2.*

3 - Some are passed by; while others enter.

"But I speak not my own words when I say that *God's Spirit will pass by those who have had their day of test and opportunity*, but who have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movings of His Spirit. *Then thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth.*" -*2 Selected Messages, 16:1.*

4 - Some will accept and be saved; while door is closed to others who would not enter.

"The time of God's destructive judgments is *the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth.* Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; *His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter.* Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days

hear the truth for the first time."- 7 Bible Commentary, 979/1:3.

5 - Unless we are daily advancing now, we will not be ready later.

"Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues. We shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it."- Testimonies to Ministers, 507:1.

6 - No one has yet received the mark. *"No one has yet received the mark of the beast." - Evangelism, 234:2.*

"Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but that time has not come yet." -7 Bible Commentary, 977/2:4.

- 7 -

WHEN A PERSON WILL RECEIVE THE MARK

The mark of the beast has not yet been given to anyone. This will not occur until the three conditions, mentioned above, have occurred: (1) The Sunday Law has been enacted; (2) the issues are individually heard and understood; (3) Sunday sacredness has individually been accepted or rejected.

1 - This is the sequence, according to *Evangelism, 234-235*: (1) *The decree has been given, (2) the issues are understood, (3) each person has chosen one way or the other, and therefore (4) one of the two marks is placed on him.*

"The change of the Sabbath is the sign or mark of the authority of the Romish church. Those who, *understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false sabbath in the place of the true, are thereby paying homage to that power* by which alone it is commanded. The mark of the beast is the papal sabbath, which has been accepted by the world in the place of the day of God's appointment.

"No one has yet received the mark of the beast. *The testing time has not yet come.* There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But *when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast.*

"With rapid steps we are approaching this period. When Protestant churches shall unite with the secular power to sustain a false religion, for opposing which their ancestors endured the fiercest persecution, then will the papal sabbath be enforced by the combined authority of church and state. There will be a national apostasy, which will end only in national *ruin.*"-*Evangelism, 234:1235:0.*

2 - No mark is applied until the decree goes forth.

"Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol sabbath. The time will come when this day will be the test, but that time has not come yet."-7 Bible Commentary, 977/2:4.

3 - According to *Evangelism, 235*, the sequence is this: (1) The national Sunday law *decree* is passed. (2) The issues underlying it are individually *understood*. (3) Each person *chooses* the day on which he will worship God. (4) He is then individually *marked or sealed*.

"If *the light of truth has been presented to you*, revealing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, showing that there is no foundation in the Word of God for Sunday observance, and *yet you still cling to the false sabbath*, refusing to keep holy the Sabbath which God calls 'My holy day,' *you receive the mark of the beast. When does this take place? When you obey the decree* that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday and worship God, while you know that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God." -*Evangelism*, 235:2.

4 - This is the sequence, according to *Great Controversy*, 449: (1) decree, (2) understand, (3) choose, and then (4) marked.

"*Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians In every church*, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. *God accepts their sincerity* of purpose and their integrity before Him.

"*But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened* concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, *will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome*, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. *He is worshiping the beast* and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, *they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome*- 'the mark of the beast.' And *It is not until the Issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose* between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.' "-*Great Controversy*, 449:1.

5 - Here is another sequence: (1) decree, (2) understand, (3) choose, and then (4) marked.

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that all, 'both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,' shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest-day demands obedience, and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts.

"*With the Issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment, receives the mark of the beast*; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God. The warning from heaven is, 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.' Revelation 14:9-10." -*Great Controversy*, 604:2-605:0.

6 - Sequence: (1) Test, (2) choose, then (3) marked.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the *final test* shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

"While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the

state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, *by accepting* the sign of submission to earthly powers, *receive* the mark of the beast, the other, choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God." *Great Controversy, 605:2.*

7 - Sequence: (1) Test, (2) understand, (3) choose, then (4) marked.

"God has given men the Sabbath as a sign between Him and them as a test of their loyalty. Those who, after the light regarding God's law comes to them, continue to disobey and exalt human laws above the law of God in the great crisis before us, will receive the mark of the beast." -Evangelism, 235:3.

8 - Sequence: (1) Test, (2) understand, (3) choose, and then (4) marked.

"When the test comes, it will be clearly shown what the mark of the beast is. It is the keeping of Sunday. Those who, after having heard the truth, continue to regard this day as holy bear the signature of the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws." -7 Bible Commentary, 980/2:3.

Note: The above analysis is very important, because it is now being taught in our denomination that the latter rain and sealing precede the national Sunday law crisis. It is frequently stated in our denominational papers and gatherings that the latter rain is falling somewhere else in the world-as evinced by lots of baptisms. (1) If the Sunday law crisis precedes and leads into the other events (including the sealing and latter rain) before the general close of probation, then a terrible crisis is ahead of our denomination! This view, fully supported by the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, is the correct one. (2) If the latter rain and sealing come first, then it is easier to conjecture that we can remain in our sins while we receive the latter rain and are sealed, still continuing in those sins until the second advent -with the denomination experiencing no great crisis over strict obedience to the law of God. This view is incorrect, and is bringing a false hope to many of our people.

- 8 -

SEALING AND MARKING A PROGRESSIVE WORK

The sealing occurs over a period of time (3T 266; EW 58), and all do not receive the seal at the same time (GC 605; 6T 130). Four different factors render it impossible for everyone on earth to instantaneously receive the seal or mark: (1) Each person, in making his intelligent choice, receives either the mark or the seal. So both (the seal and the mark) begin to be placed at the same time. Yet the mark is only placed when the decree is made, the issues are understood, and the decision then made. This produces an inherent delay factor, not only for the mark, but for the final impressing of its counterpart: the seal of God. (But it is now that we must prepare for the sealing; not later!) (2) Those in the church will understand the issues before the world, so some will be sealed or marked before others. (3) Those sealed will begin taking part *in* giving the loud cry of the third angel to still others. As other individuals accept (or reject) this message, they too will be sealed (or marked), and on and on it will go. (4) America will lead out in enforcing the decree and imposing the mark, other nations will follow her lead and enact national Sunday laws, until the entire earth is included and it is a universal law. This will produce a fourth delay factor in the placing of the mark/seal.

1 - People throughout the nation and the world are gradually warned, make their decisions, and receive the mark or seal.

"While one class receives the mark of the beast, . . . the other receives the seal of God."

"As the controversy extends *into new fields*."

"When the third angel's message closes. . . all who have proved themselves loyal to the Divine precepts have received the seal of the living God."-*Great Controversy*, 605:2; 607:1; 613:2.

"Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. *Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world.*" -6 *Testimonies*, 395:1.

- 9 -

ALL WILL BE MARKED OR SEALED

The national Sunday law decree will be the great dividing test, which will separate all into two classes. By their knowing acceptance or rejection of the terms of the decree, all will be sealed by Heaven or marked by the image and the beast.

Several fundamental issues underlie the Sabbath test:

(1) The moral law of God, including the fourth commandment, is enduring and must be obeyed. (2) It can be obeyed through the enabling grace of Jesus. (3) Indeed, through Christ's empowering Strength, we can put away all sin and live in perfect harmony with God's requirements. (4) We can only be healthy, happy, and in favor with God as we do so. (5) The Seventh-day Sabbath is the only true Bible Sabbath, and the only weekly rest-day ever hallowed and commanded by the Lord. Thus, it is the only true "Lord's Day." (6) Sunday is only a common working day, which in earlier centuries Rome adopted from paganism and made into a counterfeit holy day. (7) It would be apostasy from God and Bible truth to worship on that day. (8) To knowingly do so would be equivalent to the worship of the papacy -regardless of whatever human power may have commanded that worship. Before this crisis comes to an end, everyone will have decided one way or the other.

1 - Two parties, and only two, will be developed by the crisis.

"In the issue of the great contest, *two parties are developed*, those who 'worship the beast and his image' and receive his mark, and those who receive the seal of the living God."-7 *Bible Commentary*, 980/1 :4.

2 - All will take sides.

"In the great conflict between faith and unbelief the whole Christian world will be involved. *All will take sides*. Some apparently may not engage in the conflict on either side. They may not appear to take sides against the truth, but they will not come out boldly for Christ through fear of losing property or suffering reproach. All such are numbered with the enemies of Christ." -*Last Day Events*, 215:2.

3 - A line of distinction is drawn between the two classes.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty; for it is the point of truth especially controverted. *When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn* between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. . . *While one class*, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, *the other* choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God,"-*Great Controversy*, 605:2.

4 - All Christendom will be divided into two classes.

"In the issue of the contest, all *Christendom* will be *divided into two great classes*, - those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark." -*Great Controversy, 450:1.*

"*There can be only two classes*. Each party is distinctly stamped, either with *the seal* of the living God, or *with the mark* of the beast and his *image*,"-*Last Day Events, 215:1,*

5 - There will be separation even within families.

"Those who have been members of the same *family* are separated. A *mark* is *placed upon the righteous*. 'They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him' [Malachi 3:17]. Those who have been obedient to God's commandments will unite with the company of the saints in light. They shall enter in through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life. 'The one *shall* be taken.' His name shall stand in the book of life, while those with whom he associated shall have the mark of eternal separation from God." *Testimonies to Ministers, 234:2-235:0.*

6 - This same test and crisis that Americans will face, will be met by those living in foreign nations.

"*Foreign nations* will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet *the same crisis* will come upon our people in all parts of the world,"- 6 *Testimonies, 395:1.*

7 - The powers of earth. . will decree it.

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought, *The powers of earth*, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that all, 'both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,' shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath," -*Great Controversy, 604:2.*

8 - It will go to all the world.

"The decree enforcing the worship of this day is to *go forth to all the world*." -7 *Bible Commentary, 976/2:3.*

9 - All nations, tongues, and peoples will be commanded to practice it.

"History will be repeated, False religion will be exalted, The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will *be set up as was the image at Babylon*, *All nations and tongues and peoples* will be commanded to worship this spurious sabbath, This is Satan's plan to make of no account the day instituted by God, and given to the world as a memorial of Creation."- *Maranatha, 214:1,*

10 - Every country on the globe will follow America's example.

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience, and compelling men to honor the false Sabbath, the *people of every country on the globe* will be led to follow her example."-6 *Testimonies, 18:2,*

-10 -

THE SEAL, AND THE MARK ARE PLACED PRIOR TO THE GENERAL CLOSE OF PROBATION

The seal is placed before the general close of probation. .Everyone will be given the light and have his opportunity to make his decision in regard to Sabbath/Sunday

sacredness. When the last one has decided, probation will have closed for everyone. We call that point in time the "general close of probation."

1 - The seal will be placed before probationary time ends.

"The living righteous will receive *the seal of God prior to the close of probation.*" - 1 *Selected Messages*, 66:2. (Also see *EW* 38:1-2.)

2 - The (protestant-government) Image (of/to the papacy) will be the test, and it will be set up before the close of probation.

"The Lord has shown me clearly that *the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes*; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, *by which their eternal destiny will be decided.* [Revelation 13:11-17 quoted] . . . This is *the test that the people of God must have before they are sealed.*" -7 *Bible Commentary*, 976/1:2-3.

3 - The sealing time (which is also the loud cry time) is the closing work for the church.

"Especially in *the closing work for the church, in the sealing time* of the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people." 3 *Testimonies*, 266:2,

4 - The sealing is finished when probation ends.

"Jesus is soon *to step out from between God and man. The sealing will then be accomplished, finished up.* O let us keep on the whole armor of God that we may be ready for battle at any *moment,*" -*Record Book* 1, p, 72.

5 - The final close of probation comes after the latter rain, loud cry, and sealing are completed.

"I was pointed down to the time when *the third angel's message was closing.* The power of God *had* rested upon His people; they *had* accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They *had* received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony *had* been revived. The last great warning *had* sounded everywhere, and it *had* stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.

"I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side *returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed.* Then I saw Jesus, who *had* been ministering before the ark containing the Ten Commandments, *throw down the censer [of Intercession].* He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, 'It is done,'" -*Early Writings*, 279:1-2.

6 - The close of probation (and with it, the end of the investigative judgment) occurs after the blotting out of sins has been finished.

"*When Jesus leaves the sanctuary,* then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all *their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God,*" -*Early Writings*, 48:1.

Note of clarification: The sins of the righteous are blotted out of the book of sin in the judgment to the living phase of the investigative judgment. At that same time, the names of wicked professors will be blotted out of the book of life: See *Great Controversy*, chapter 29, especially pages 480-486. More on this in the later study, "*The Judgment Passes to the Living.*"

7 - The personal elimination of sins, through the enabling grace of Christ, precedes the sealing and latter rain.

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our character, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." -5 *Testimonies*, 214:2.

8 - The sealing will take place before the great time of trouble (which follows the close of probation) -and its accompanying events begin.

"Just before we entered it [*the great time of trouble*], we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion."-7 *Bible Commentary*, 968/2:2.

- 11 -

WE ARE NOW DECIDING WHETHER WE WILL LATER RECEIVE THE SEAL OR MARK

It is clear that the seal will be impressed upon minds at the time when the mark is being imprinted on others. *Yet it is before that time- HOW -that we are, by the enabling grace of Christ, to live In such a way that we will, when the Sunday law crisis suddenly occurs, be prepared to receive that seal and avoid that mark! This is a very important point!*

The "sealing time" is when the seal is applied during the Sunday law crisis. But prior to that time -right now -is also the "sealing time. " For it is now that we decide whether we will later receive the final, permanent impress of that seal. In this sense, we are now living in the sealing time, as indicated in some of the following quotations.

1 - Satan is working now to keep us from being prepared.

"Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that Satan *was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people, just now in this sealing time.*"- *Early Writings*, 44:1.

2 - He is using every device to hinder us.

"*Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from present truth, and to cause them to waver.*" *Early Writings*, 43:2.

3 - We can decide it now.

"Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image *when the decree goes forth*, must have decision *now to say*, Nay, we will not regard the institution of the beast." *Early Writings*, 67:2.

4 - We can now be settled into the truth.

"*Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads -it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling Into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved -just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it [the shaking] will come.*"-4 *Bible Commentary*, 1161/2:3.

5 - We should now put away our sins.

"*Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. . It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ.*" -*Great Controversy*, 623:1-2.

6 - It is now, before probation closes, that, through Christ's grace, we must

remove sin from our lives.

"We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. . *When He comes He Is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects In our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time.* When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. *This is all to be done in these hours of probation.* It is *now* that this work is to be accomplished for us . .

"We are now in God's workshop. Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of whatever nature. Thus we are prepared to see the King in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. *It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality.*"2 *Testimonies, 355:1-2-356:0.*

7 - It is now that we must prepare for the sealing.

"*Now Is the time to prepare.* . All who receive the seal of God must be without spot before God -candidates for heaven." -5 *Testimonies, 216:2.*

8 - Now is the time to prepare.

"In these things [worldly cares and interests] I saw great danger; for if the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God. I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished. .

" *Live and act wholly In reference to the coming of the Son of man.* The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. *Now is the time,* while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure." -*Early Writings, 58:1-2.*

9 - We dare not be passed by.

" 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' In a little while every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. O that it may be placed upon our foreheads! *Who can endure the thought of being passed by when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads?*" *Review, May 28, 1889.*

10 - Are we getting ready?

"*What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation?* Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth-these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity." -5 *Testimonies, 216:1.*

11 - The changes must be made now.

"It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. *What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity.* Death brings dissolution to the

body, but makes no change in the character. *The coming, of Christ does not change our characters; It only fixes them forever beyond all change.*"-5 Testimonies, 466:2.

-12 -

THOSE NOT RECEIVING THE SEAL WILL HAVE NO PROTECTION AFTER PROBATION CLOSES

Those who do not receive the seal of God before the close of probation can have no protection from the events which will follow the close of probation.

1 – After probation ends, the faithful will still have trials, but they will be shut in by God's sealing protection.

"And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come, but the furnace is closely by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has shut them in. Their destination is inscribed- 'GOD, NEW JERUSALEM.' They are God's property, His possession."- Testimonies to Ministers, 446:1.

2 - After probation ends, all are either protected or not protected.

"I also saw that *many do not realize what they must be In order to live in the sight of the Lord without a high priest in the sanctuary through the time of trouble.* Those who receive the seal of the living God and are protected in the time of trouble must reflect the image of Jesus fully.

"I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, *how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation;* therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building.

"But there will be no time then to do it and no Mediator to plead their cause before the Father. Before this time the awfully solemn declaration has gone forth, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.' *I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.*" -Early Writings, 71:1-2.

3 - How Satan is working to keep you from becoming covered in this covering time.

"Satan is now using every device in this sealing time to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth and to cause them to waver. *I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble;* and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart *was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty.*

"Satan knew this, and *he was at work in mighty power to keep the minds of as many people as he possibly could wavering and unsettled on the truth.*" -*Early Writings*, 43:2-3.

Note: The "covering" is right living by faith in the enabling merits of Christ death and mediation. It is being drawn over God's people during their earthly life, as, by faith in Christ's power to help them do it, they habitually obey God in fact, in reality. When, in the crisis, the seal is stamped upon them, the habitual pattern of trusting and obeying God becomes cemented in (5T 216:1-2; 475:2).

4 - More on Satan's methods.

"Some of these agents of Satan were affecting the bodies of some of the saints - those whom they could not deceive and draw away from the truth by a Satanic influence. Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that *Satan was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away* God's people, just now in this sealing time. I saw some who were *not standing stiffly for present truth*. Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were *not firmly planted on the truth*, and the covering of Almighty God could not be drawn over them while they were thus trembling.

"*Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn* over God's people, and they [were] left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues. God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter. God will work in power for His people; and Satan will be permitted to work also." -*Early Writings*, 44:1-2.

5 - The destroying angel will pass over those with the seal.

"What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels', but not human eyes can read; *for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption.*" -*4 Bible Commentary*, 1161/2:1.

6 - In mercy, Jesus waits.

"I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He said to me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth; that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let them go; but while their hands were loosening, and the four winds were about to blow, the merciful eye of *Jesus gazed on the remnant that were not sealed*, and he raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels *and bid them hold, until the servants of God were sealed* with the seal of the living God in their foreheads." -*Early Writings*, 38 (similar: 5 *Testimonies*, 717; for more on the winds, see *TM* 444; *GC* 614, 649).

7 - When probation closes, the plagues will fall.

"When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark, will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel, were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people." -*Great Controversy*, 627:3-628:0.

"*The plagues. . shall come on all the ungodly* who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark." -*Early Writings*, 65:0.

Two of the most thrilling thoughts in the world are these: (1) The realization that, in Christ, you can have salvation, and (2) the resolve to stand true to God. My brother, my sister, in Christ we can make it through the crisis ahead! Let us be true to Him to the end!

Here is a third wonderful fact: (3) God loves you as He loves His own Son, and, as you cling to Him, He will be with you to the end.

- 13 -

MARK WILL BE A TEST TO CHURCH BEFORE IT BECOMES A TEST TO WORLD

Because Sabbath keepers already understand the issues, they will be the first to be tested regarding whether they will obey God or man, when the National Sunday Law is enacted. For this reason, (1) the mark will be a test to the professed Sabbath keepers and backsliders before it is a test to the world; (2) the sealing will also begin first among the conscientious Sabbathkeepers among them who, refusing the mark under terrible duress, will receive the seal; (3) the sifting-or separation of the good from the bad-will begin in the church (4) the judgment will first pass to the living among professed Sabbath keepers; and (5) it will be the commandment-keepers-by-faith (Revelation 14:12) who will be first to receive the latter rain and go out and begin giving the loud cry of the third angel to all the world.

As the faithful in spiritual "Jerusalem" will be the first to receive the blessing (Ezek 9:4), so the apostate Sabbathkeepers in the church, beginning with leading apostates (5T 211:12), will be the first to be placed under His curse, which will begin to be poured out in the plagues after probation closes (Ezek 9:6).

- 14 -

MARK IS TEST TO CHURCH BEFORE LOUD CRY BEGINS

Not only will the mark be a test to professed Sabbath keepers before it is a test to the world, but, in addition the mark will be a special test to Sabbath-keepers BEFORE the loud cry begins, because, prior to the loud cry, few Sunday-keepers and worldlings may understand the issues. Thus, the mark will especially be a test to the world AFTER the loud cry begins.

With the exception of some who are in unusually secluded locations, within a week or so after the enforcement of the Sunday Law begins, a majority of Sabbath keepers will be tested on this point and be marked or sealed.

The crisis will burst upon us rapidly! The sealed ones will then go out and begin giving the loud cry, so the rest of the world can learn the issues and make their own intelligent decisions on the matter.

1 - Here is one example of this "first to the church, then to the world" theme, as given in last-day-event passages:

5 *Testimonies*, 81-82: 81:1- The test (urging of the mark) begins. / 81: 1- The sifting occurs within the church, as the gold and wheat are separated from the dross and chaff. /81:2- The faithful stand through it unmoved. /82:0- The faithful come off more than conquerors. /82: 1- The faithful go out with the loud cry message to the world, and many accept and unite with them.

2 - The testing time has not yet come, -but this is when it will come:

"No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The *testing time has not yet* come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic

communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. *But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his Image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast. With rapid steps we are approaching this period.*" -*Evangelism, 234:2-235:1.*

- 15 -

SEALING EVENTS IN 5 TESTIMONIES, 207-216

The following statements from a single chapter (5 *Testimonies*, 207-216) clearly summarize the Issues revolving around preparations for, and placement of, the seal of God:

1 - Only those who sigh and cry receive the seal.

"The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land." -5 *Testimonies*, 212:3.

2 - Right living -right now -is crucial in determining our future.

"Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God's power to save do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. *By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God were sealing their destiny.*" -5 *Testimonies*, 213:1.

3 - Through Christ's enabling strength, we need to put away sin now.

"Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost." -5 *Testimonies*, 214:2.

4 - Why some will later be sealed and others will be marked.

"What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? *Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth-these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.*

"Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure, man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, worldloving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God -candidates for heaven."-5 *Testimonies*, 216:1-2.

5 - Zechariah's vision provides us with important information on the sealing, and how to prepare for it. You will want to read it carefully.

"Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his

triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. *All will be required to render obedience to human edicts* in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will 'be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends.'

"Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so *the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead* for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast.

"Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. 'Are these,' he says, 'the people who are to take my place in heaven and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another.'

"The people of God have been in many respects very faulty. Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these in the most exaggerated light, declaring: 'Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Thy throne will not stand in righteousness and judgment. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them.'

"But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves to the control of evil. *They have put away their sins, and have sought the Lord In humility and contrition*, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin, and also their repentance, declares: 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands.'

"The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness must be removed that the Image of Christ may be perfectly reflected; unbelief must be overcome; faith, hope, and patience are to be developed.

"The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are

fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and selfabasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. *Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted.*

"The faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut In with God. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness.

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments' from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained In the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. 'A fair miter' is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 'These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.'

"Now is reached the complete fulfillment of those words of the Angel: 'Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.' Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant, 'men wondered at,' as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb. 'In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem.' "-5 Testimonies, 472:2-476:1.

Note the high points in the above passage:

(1) All will be required to render obedience to the Sunday law. (2) The faithful have put away their sins and sought the Lord in contrition. Their earthliness must be removed that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected. (3) They are sighing and crying to God over the abominations about them. (4) They are regaining strength and nobility of character. (5) Rulers are seeking to destroy them. (6) In this terrible crisis, as they continue pleading with God - the command is given: "Take away the filthy

garments" from them, and (7) they are clothed with a change of raiment, even the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. (8) At this point in time (after enactment of the national Sunday, law, and placement of the seal upon them), nevermore will they be defiled by the corruptions of the world. (9) Their names have been retained in the book of life. (10) Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. (11) Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. (12) The seal of God has been placed upon them.

From the above passage, we learn that, after the national Sunday law is enacted, the seal is placed on the faithful. When that happens, each individual receiving the seal of God has had his name sealed in the book of life, and he will never again "be defiled by the corruptions of the world," and "he is eternally secure from the tempter's devices."

From information given elsewhere in the Spirit of Prophecy, at that point his individual probation has closed and, as soon as everyone is warned, probation for all will close, and post-close of probation events will begin.

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THE DECIDING POINT

(1) To summarize, in the final crisis the National Sunday law must be enacted, (2) the person must understand the issues -he must know the truth about Sabbath and Sunday, and (3) he must have submitted to Sunday-keeping (and thereby, automatically, have rejected the Bible Sabbath) - THEN (4) he will receive the mark of the beast. This sequence requires a duration of time between the enactment of the law and the close of probation so that, during the loud cry, people can be given clear warning of the issues involved.

Here are several summary passages:

1 - Understand, choose, marked.

"It is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast." -Great Controversy, 449:1 (Evangelism, 294).

2 - Understand, choose, and receive.

"If the light of truth has been presented to you . . . and yet you still cling to the false sabbath, . . . you receive the mark of the beast." -Review, July 19, 1897.

"Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin, and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the mark of the beast." -Letter 11, 1890.

3 - Making the same decision that the beast has made.

"To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same Ideas, in direct opposition to the Word of God." -7 Bible Commentary, 979/2:5.

4 - Everyone will decide.

"The great decision now to be made by every one is, whether he will receive the mark of the beast and his image, or the seal of the living and true God," -7 Bible Commentary, 977/2:3.

5 - All will accept one or the other.

"When you obey the decree that commands you to cease from labor on Sunday

and worship God, *while you know* that there is not a word in the Bible showing Sunday to be other than a common working day, *you consent to receive the mark of the beast, and refuse the seal of God.*" 7 Bible Commentary, 980/1:1 (Evangelism, 235:2).

6 - The test is yet future.

"No one has yet received the mark of the beast. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting Roman Catholic Communion, None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment.

But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit sabbath, and the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast." -Evangelism, 234:2-235:0,

7 - It is the worship of the papacy.

"The enforcement of Sundaykeeping on the part of Protestant churches is an enforcement of the worship of the papacy- of the beast. Those who, understanding the claims of the fourth commandment, choose to observe the false instead of the true Sabbath are thereby paying homage to that power by which alone it is commanded. But in the very act of enforcing a religious duty by secular power, the churches would themselves form an image to the beast; hence the enforcement of Sundaykeeping in the United States would be an enforcement of the worship of the beast and his image." - Great Controversy, 448:3-449:0,

8 - Sundaykeeping was accepted in the past, but not when the test comes.

"Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their Integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshiping the beast and his image. As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority, and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome-'the mark of the beast' And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast' " -Great Controversy, 449:1.

9 - Here is the meaning of "right hand" and "forehead: "

" 'He causeth all both small and great, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads. ' Not only are men not to work with their hands on Sunday, but with their minds they are to acknowledge Sunday as the sabbath." Manuscript 1, 1897.

- 17 -

IS A SEAL PLACED BEFORE THE NATIONAL SUNDAY LAW?

In this section, we have observed abundant evidence that the sealing and

marking occur at the same time. It is also clear that the mark does not begin being applied until the national Sunday law has been enacted and men have made their decision in the matter, and that the seal will be impressed at that time.

But is there not some kind of earlier sealing? A careful reading of the Spirit of Prophecy indicates that, throughout our lifetime-right now, -we are individually deciding for the right or wrong side in the great controversy. As, by faith in Christ, we consistently choose submission and obedience to God, a "covering" or "sealing" is being drawn over us. But the evidence indicates that that seal, although being firmed in by the time of very advanced age, is not completed until the death of the righteous. .

In the New Testament we are also told about the sealing, and we note that there appears to be an early rain seal (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13), and a latter rain seal. In Acts 3:19-20, we are told that there is a putting away of sin, then a blotting out of sin, then the outpouring of the Spirit, and then the second advent of Christ.

The latter rain seal is especially discussed in Revelation 7, as something given to the 144,000. For more on the experience of the 144,000, see *Great Controversy*, 648:3-649:0. (We will discuss it in a later study.) That passage indicates that this group (the 144,000) is the one which chooses God's side in the crisis, obtains the victory over the beast and his mark, and goes through the final conflict of Jacob's trouble after the close of probation.

God's people who-through Christ's strength, maintain their faithful submission and obedience to Him -are presently in the sealing process. This would mean that you and I are now in the sealing process. That process would equate to a putting away of sin and a more complete and full surrender and obedience to God. But this concept -of a sealing occurring now -does not mean that we are guaranteed final redemption. We may later fall away and not receive the final seal, and be redeemed from earth. We may be in the sealing process, but that does not mean we are now sealed for eternity.

In conclusion, we can say that, throughout the humble, believing, obedient lifetime of a child of God, the covering or sealing is gradually being drawn over him. But he does not receive the final aspect of that seal until he dies in Christ, or goes through the sealing experience after the national Sunday law is enacted. The reason that the concluding phase of the sealing is so crucial, is that it seals his name into the book of life and henceforth he will never again fall under the domain of Satan. But, in both instances (whether at his death or after enactment of the national Sunday law), he has arrived at the close of his probation.

So we have here a self-consistent concept of the sealing.

Let us briefly view some passages which clarify the position we apparently should take in this matter:

1 - We are now in the sealing time.

"Satan is now using every device *in this sealing time* to keep the minds of God's people from the present truth and to cause them to waver." *Early Writings*, 43:2.

2 - The sealing is a settling into the truth so that one cannot be moved.

"Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads-it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, *but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually*, so *they cannot be* moved -just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming."-4 *Bible Commentary*, 1161/2:3.

3 - When the sealing is ended, the plagues will begin falling.

"Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that Satan was at work in these days to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people, just now *in this sealing* time. I saw some who were not standing stiffly for present truth. Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were not firmly planted on the truth, and *the covering of Almighty God* could not be drawn over them while they were thus trembling.

"Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, *until the sealing was past, until the covering was drawn over God's people, and they left without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues.* God has begun to draw this covering over His people, and it will soon be drawn over all who are to have a shelter in the day of slaughter. God will work in power for His people; and Satan will be permitted to work also." -*Early Writings*, 44:2-3.

Note: In a special sense, from 1844 onward to the general close of probation, we have been "in the sealing time." This is because, since 1844 when the investigative judgment began on the cases of the dead (who, during their lives professed faith in Christ). Therefore, since 1844, as soon as a professor of Christ died, his case immediately came up in the investigative judgment. When found to have been faithful, the seal could be fully applied almost immediately after death. That individual's case did not have to wait until centuries later to be examined by the investigative judgment.

4 - The sealing is being firmed in on the faithful of advanced age who are nearing death.

"There are living upon our earth men who have passed the age of fourscore and ten. The natural results of old age are seen in their feebleness. But they believe God, and God loves them. *The seal of God is upon them*, and they will be among the number of whom the Lord has said. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' " -7 *Bible Commentary*, 982/1:1.

5 - A servant of God who died faithful to her Lord, in death had the seal.

"I saw that she [Mrs. Hastings] *was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000.* I saw we need not mourn for her; she would rest in the time of trouble." - 2 *Selected Messages*, 263:3.

6 - But the crucial sealing-occurring in the national Sunday law crisis -will be a time of sealing decisions for those of all ages -while they are still alive! That time is yet future.

"In a little while every one who is a child of God will have His seal placed upon him. *Oh, that it may be placed upon our foreheads!* Who can endure the thought of being passed by *when the angel goes forth to seal the servants of God in their foreheads?*" -7 *Bible Commentary*, 969/2:5970/1:0.

7 - Any person, refusing the seal at that time, will receive the mark.

"If the believers in the truth are not sustained by their faith in these comparatively peaceful days, what will uphold them *when the grand test comes and the decree goes forth* against all those who will not worship the image of the beast and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands? This solemn period is not far off. Instead of becoming weak and irresolute, the people of God should be gathering strength and courage for the time of trouble." - 4 *Testimonies*, 251:1.

The placing of the seal of the living God is a momentous experience. It is not something to be treated lightly. Those only will receive it who have been preparing for it

in advance. The seal -will seal in for eternity -a Christian beauty of character.

It is now that we must, by the grace of God, develop that character. It is now that we must plead with our Jesus for divine aid. Submission to the will of God and perfect obedience is the goal to be reached. Through His enabling grace it can be done, for He has promised. Our God never makes a wrong promise, and He never goes back on His promise. As David Livingstone would say, as he repeated a Bible promise which he needed to claim. "It is the word of a gentleman." We can know that we can have the help we need, just as Livingstone had.

May our kind Father bless and keep you, as you move forward, day by day, preparing for - the seal of the living God.

LAST DAYS APPENDIX

The following material was gleaned from our book of unpublished manuscripts, entitled *The Last Days*, and is some of the best material from that volume on topics given in this section.

SEAL

The Sealing Places Saints Beyond Satan's Power. Satan Will Come in Almost Human Shape. -"I saw [that Satan would work more powerfully now than ever he has before. He knows that his time is short and that the sealing of the saints will place them beyond his power, and [therefore] he will now work in every way that he can, and will try his every insinuation to get the saints off their guard and get them asleep on present truth, or doubting it, so as to prevent their being sealed with the seal of the living God; and [I saw] that Satan will ere long come in almost human shape, and that his angels were all around them seeking some way that they might devour them." -Manuscript 7, 1850, pp. 2-4. ("A Vision the Lord Gave Me at Bro. Harris," August 24, 1850.)

MARK

The Acceptance of Sunday While the Sabbath Is Trampled on Puts the Man of Sin's Stamp Upon the World.- "The seventh-day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and man has no moral right to dishonor it by failing to do upon it the work which he should do. God has set this day apart for His honor and glory. . Men have insulted God by accepting as holy a common working day. Nothing can put the stamp of the man of sin so definitely upon the world as the acceptance of a spurious sabbath, while the day God has set apart is trampled underfoot." -Letter 30, 1900, pp. 5, 6. (To "Brother and Sister Hickox," February 25, 1900). [See also: TBC 167.]