

THE MARK AND THE IMAGE



And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Revelation 13:14

Preface

In the book of Revelation, the mark and the image are always mentioned together. There is never a mention of one without the mention of the other. This would indicate that although they are two distinctly separate things, they are inseparably connected. When people write about the subject, however, there is usually an inordinate focus on the mark and precious little, if anything, written when it comes to the image. I would expect that the reasoning for such is a failure to understand what the image is and how it works together with the mark.

The kingdom of darkness has influenced the affairs of mankind for the past several millennia. Their ruling of the world will soon come to an end, but not without a fight. Their last-ditch effort will be an attempt to “break” prophecy and prevent the return of Jesus. The overarching context of end time prophecy is spiritual regime change. When Jesus returns, He is going to destroy the kingdom of darkness and establish the kingdom of God on earth. The world will have its rightful ruler and the days of restoration will begin. The mark and the image will be an integral part of that transition in that they will have caused everyone to have chosen sides ahead of time.

The cover art is a scene that depicts the Satan-possessed false prophet calling down fire from heaven to destroy the three kings that decided to attack him. His kingdom appeared to be dead because of the overwhelming forces brought against him, but his command of the supernatural was something they hadn't anticipated. The signs and wonders that he will perform will bring his seemingly dead kingdom back to life and set the stage for the debut of the mark and the image.

Ruling the World

The concept of exercising dominion over the earth is an important one to understand regarding prophecy, especially when trying to make sense of the mark and the image. A significant amount of prophecy, including the very first one, relates to this concept in some form or fashion making it a major theme in the history of the world.

God created the earth and He still owns it as well as all that's in it. However, **authority over** the earth has changed hands. Initially given to Adam and Eve, it was subsequently usurped by Satan through deception. God owns His creation and can reassign dominion over it to whomever He chooses.

The human race took on a fallen, sinful nature through Adam and Eve which disqualified any of their offspring from being found worthy to be given dominion. So, God sent His anointed one, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, into the world. This came to pass in the person of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, who lived a sinless life and was found worthy to be given authority over the world. Dominion over the earth was removed from the unrighteous and given to Him.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:18-19

Although Satan has lost the dominion that he usurped from Adam and Eve, he is still allowed to influence the affairs of men for a season in order to serve the greater purposes of God. That will all come to an end though when Jesus returns to rule the nations. Satan knows that it's true and it's the reason why he'll try desperately to keep that from happening.

Adam and Eve

After God created the earth and all that's in it, He put Adam and Eve in charge of it. They were the first to have been given dominion over His creation.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28

He also instructed them that they could eat from any tree in the garden of Eden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their spiritual and natural lives depended on their obedience to this command. If they were to disobey and eat from that tree, they would die.

After Adam and Eve were instructed concerning the forbidden tree, Satan shows up and entices them to disobey what God had told them. We know from Romans 6:16 that we are servants to the one whom we obey. They chose to act upon the council of the deceiver and as a result, he became their new master. Their dominion over the earth became his dominion and they became his slaves, slaves to sin in the kingdom of darkness.

The deceiver succeeded in usurping dominion from Adam and Eve and in effect he became the god of this world. In response to this, God immediately reveals His intention to restore dominion back to those who will obey Him in the first recorded prophecy.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:15

In hindsight, we know that this spoke of the conflict that happened some two thousand years ago when Jesus first came to earth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Satan was able to bruise His heel in that through Judas, he successfully schemed to put Jesus to death. Jesus bruised Satan's head in that by virtue of His sinless life and death on the cross, He was found worthy to be given all authority in heaven and on earth. This put an end to Satan's **claim** as the god of this world even though he is still allowed to function in that capacity for the time being. The return of Jesus will bring about the manifestation of Satan's defeat when he is cast into the abyss and the kingdom of God is established on earth.

Satan the Serpent

Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 are passages that describe the fall of Lucifer, how he became known as Satan or the devil. They tell of how he held a high position among the angels in service to God until his beauty corrupted his wisdom to the point where he planned to exalt his throne to be like the most high God. It's reasonable to assume from those passages, and others, that he negotiated with other angels for their allegiance in exchange for positions of influence in this “new order” he was planning to establish.

Those passages tell us that Lucifer's scheme failed miserably and that He was immediately cast down from the mountain of God and will eventually be cast down to the pit. Matthews 25 tells us that the lake of fire was prepared for Satan and his angels and it is where they will ultimately exist for eternity and they know it. Because they know it, they are desperate to try and find a way to keep it from happening.

It's likely that what motivated Satan to try and usurp dominion from Adam and Eve was that he saw the potential to forestall his demise. If he and his angels could gain dominion over the earth, then they could conceivably have a legitimate claim to remain within their domain and avoid being cast into the lake of fire. Regardless as to whether that's accurate or would have worked, God had a plan to counter Satan's meddling.

Whenever God would reveal part of His plan, Satan would try to counteract it in an effort to keep it from coming to pass. When God declared that there would be a seed of the woman who would bruise his head, Satan sought to corrupt mankind, especially the reproductive functionality, through angelic manipulation. This led to the catastrophic event of the flood.

When God further revealed that the seed would come from Abraham and subsequently Jacob, Satan narrowed his focus to the sons of Israel. This is why Satan is pictured in Revelation as a red dragon having seven heads. Each head represents a kingdom that subjugated or sought the destruction of the sons of Israel in an effort to prevent the prophecies concerning the promised seed from coming to pass.

These kingdoms were influenced into a place of exercising dominion by certain evil angels for that specific purpose. The first two kingdoms were Egypt and Assyria. The next four kingdoms are the subject of the prophecies in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. They are a succession of kingdoms that conquered Judah and the city of Jerusalem. They are Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The fourth kingdom has two manifestations in the natural realm but those two have a common supernatural origin. The promised seed of the woman was born during the time when the Jews were being subjugated by Rome.

Of course, this had Satan's full attention and derailing God's plan was his top priority if he was to keep his dominion over the earth. At first, he tried the same tactic that he used on Eve. Three times he tried to persuade Jesus to act on suggestions of his by appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Three times Jesus rebuffed him. Realizing that trying to deceive Jesus into becoming his slave wasn't going to work, he had to switch tactics.

Satan was apparently conflicted about how to handle the situation. At one point, he influenced Peter to voice opposition to Jesus when He was telling His disciples that He was going to be killed and raised on the third day. Later on, he enters Judas for the purpose of betraying Jesus to His death. I guess that in the end, he chose the option that he thought would get Jesus out of his domain.

By virtue of His sinless life and death on the cross, Jesus was found worthy to be given dominion. Satan failed at stopping the seed of the woman from bruising his head. The reason that Jesus didn't straightaway banish Satan and his angels to the lake of fire after receiving all authority in heaven and earth likely has to do with prophecies yet to

be fulfilled to Abraham and Israel. Jesus echoes this when He says that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached to all the nations and then the end would come.

The fourth and final kingdom, which has two manifestations, was interrupted during the first century when its evil angel prince was cast into the abyss. This prince was restrained there until the gospel was preached to all the nations. He has since been released and is now exerting his influence worldwide to set the stage for the revealing of the man of sin. It is this evil angel who will cause him to exercise dominion and it is this evil angel that the image is of.

Based on what God has told us of Satan's future activity, he is fixated on destroying Israel, apparently in an attempt to derail God from keeping His promises to them. We know that his attempt to destroy them fails and he becomes infuriated. He then attempts to rid the world of those who are true to God by forcing people to either worship the image or be put to death. The mark is used to expedite the purging.

Jesus the Messiah

Dominion over the earth was initially given to Adam and Eve. Satan usurped their authority by deceiving them into disobedience and consequently he became the god of this world. Immediately after this happened, God began revealing His plan of restitution. Authority would be restored to one who was worthy to receive it.

Jesus the Messiah was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of woman. He lived a sinless life of obedience to the Father and offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is the one spoken of by the prophets, the deliverer, whose kingdom and dominion will have no end. The Jews of His day were expecting their Messiah to be a savior who would deliver them from the oppression of the Roman empire and restore the kingdom of God to Israel. Jesus, however, was focused on delivering them, and the rest of the human race, from the bondage of sin.

When He came to earth nearly two thousand years ago, He did bring the kingdom of God to earth, but only in a spiritual sense. He demonstrated His authority over Satan's kingdom of darkness by casting out demons and restoring people's health. He confirmed His deity by forgiving sins. He spent most of His teaching ministry explaining the new covenant that He would establish with the sons of Israel.

By virtue of His sinless life and death on the cross, the new covenant was made and Jesus was found worthy to be given all authority in heaven and on earth. He commissioned His disciples to take the good news of His victory over sin and death to all the nations. Anyone who would repent of their sins and believe in Him would be forgiven and receive eternal life. They would no longer be a slave in the kingdom of darkness but would become a servant in the eternal kingdom of God.

The great commission has been completed and events are now taking place that will culminate in the return of Jesus to establish the kingdom of God on earth. His return will be the end of Satan's exercising dominion over the world. It will literally be the ultimate regime change. Those who chose to believe in Jesus will be made immortal and will reign with Him for 1000 years.

The Trio of Evil

There are three evil beings that work together in the days leading up to the return of Christ. They are referred to in scripture as the dragon (the devil or Satan), the beast, and the false prophet. Of these three, only one is a human, the false prophet. The other two are evil angels.

And I saw coming out of the mouth of **the dragon** and out of the mouth of **the beast** and out of the mouth of **the false prophet**, three unclean spirits like frogs.
Revelation 16:13

And **the devil** who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where **the beast** and **the false prophet** are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Revelation 20:10

The interplay between these three is such that the lines of distinction between them tend to become blurred. Revelation 13 describes how the dragon gives his power, throne, and great authority to the beast, how the false prophet speaks like a dragon, and how the false prophet performs signs and wonders in the presence of the beast. Because of this integration, worship of one is considered worship of all. It is an unholy trinity of sorts.

This trio of evil works together for the purpose of pulling off the biggest ruse in human history. Their goal is to prevent the return of Jesus because His return is their demise. In order to accomplish this goal, they will try to derail prophecy by making it impossible to fulfill.

The Dragon

The dragon is identified in Revelation 12 as the devil, or Satan. He is the one formerly known as Lucifer who was created perfect but whose wisdom became corrupted because of his beauty. He convinced other angels to join him in a coup against God which was unsuccessful. He, and the angels that joined him were cast down from the mountain of God. They are no longer a part of God's kingdom and never can be again.

The dragon is described as having seven heads. These heads represent seven kingdoms that have subjugated the children of Israel. The last five are described in Daniel as having come into existence through the influence of specific evil angels. The seventh kingdom is being shaped now and will lead to the rise of the false prophet.

Whenever Satan and his angels get cast out of heaven and are confined to earth, they realize that their time is short. That's when the evil trio make their final desperate push to derail prophecy as described in Revelation 12:13-17. They try to destroy Israel and

when that fails, they continue their persecution of the elect and set out to purge the world of believers through the use of the mark and the image.

The Beast

The beast of the evil trio is a reference to the beast in Revelation 13 that comes up out of the sea. He is an evil angel that is in charge of setting the stage for the false prophet's rise to power. We know that he is an evil angel and not a human because Revelation 17 states that he comes up out of the abyss. The abyss is only ever used in the context of evil spirit beings, never in reference to humans.

This is the same beast that is pictured in Daniel 7 as coming up out of the sea and having 10 horns. This beast influenced the rise of the Roman empire and was there with Satan trying to derail God's plan. They, of course, failed and the beast was cast into the abyss, removing him from a position of influence. He stayed in the abyss during the time of the Gentiles when the gospel was being preached to all the nations. When that was completed, Jesus opened the first seal of the scroll and he was released from the abyss to go forth conquering and will again join up with Satan for the purpose of trying to derail God's plan.

The beast works through 10 horns, or leaders, to lay the groundwork and set the stage for the rise of the false prophet. These 10 horns are evil angels themselves that are subservient to the beast. They also have counterparts in the natural realm, 10 human leaders that the ten angels use to do their bidding. The ten human leaders are not heads of state but work behind the scenes covertly to accomplish their goal.

The False Prophet

The false prophet is the only human of the evil trio. He is pictured in Revelation 13:11 as the beast that comes up out of the earth. We know this beast is the false prophet because when we compare what he does with what the false prophet does, it's identical.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast. Revelation 13:14a

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Revelation 19:20a

We know that he is a human because Revelation 13:18 says that his number is that of a man. Also, the imagery of him coming up out of the earth in contrast to coming up

out of the sea or abyss indicates a natural origin in the sense that Adam was from the earth.

Revelation 13:11 also states that the false prophet speaks like a dragon. This would indicate that he is possessed by Satan, the dragon. This is in keeping with how Paul describes the man of sin.

The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders. 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Notice that the false prophet is always ***in the presence of the beast*** when he is described as performing the signs and wonders that deceive the world. This would explain the reason for Satan giving his power, throne, and great authority to the other evil angel, the beast. He does so to enter the false prophet and coordinate with the evil angel beast to bring about the supernatural signs and wonders that will deceive the world into believing that he is God. At some point, he goes to Jerusalem and actually declares himself to be God. His mark, and the image, will then be used to purge the world of those who refuse to worship him.

The false prophet is also known as the man of sin, the son of perdition, or the Antichrist. All of these terms are synonymous and refer to the only human of the evil trio who is described in Revelation 13 as the beast who comes up from the earth and is referred to as the false prophet.

Their Plan

The primary goal of the evil trio is to keep prophecy from coming to pass, to somehow derail the return of Jesus. His return is their demise so all the forces of wickedness are singularly focused on keeping that from happening. Based on the activity of Satan described at the end of Revelation 12, he plans to accomplish that by destroying Israel. If Israel doesn't exist, God's promises to them can't be kept, or at least that *seems* to be his rationale.

We know that his plan to destroy them fails which causes him to become infuriated. He is forced to change his strategy so he decides to wage war on the saints, that is, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. This war is carried out through the use of the mark and the image.

Jesus stated in Matthew 24 that the gospel would be preached to all the nations and then the end would come. The centuries that it took for the gospel to make its way all around the world is known as the time of the Gentiles. After that was completed, God turned His attention back to Israel in order to fulfill what He had promised to them.

The time of “the end” that Jesus said would follow the time of the Gentiles began unfolding when He opened the first seal. This isn’t a reference to the end of the world, but rather to the end of human government and Satan’s influence thereof. The kingdom of darkness will end when Jesus returns to establish the kingdom of God on earth and rule the nations.

When the first seal was opened, the evil angel beast of the evil trio was released from the abyss and went forth influencing world affairs in such a way as to set the stage for the Satan possessed man of sin. We have to rely on the cause and effect nature of the supernatural on the natural to realize that this has happened. Looking at the events that have transpired since the early twentieth century, it’s reasonable to assume that the first seal was opened at some point around that time.

The forces of wickedness can no longer rely on the subjugation of Israel as a means to thwart God’s plan of sending a Messiah. That strategy failed when He proved victorious over sin and death. After He rose from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven until such a time when He will return to fulfill prophecy that was made concerning Israel. Satan’s goal this time is to eliminate Israel, not just subjugate them, in order to prevent those prophecies from being fulfilled.

When you look at what all has happened in the world during the past several decades, things are clearly moving in a direction that aligns with biblical prophecy.

- The singling out of the Jewish race for persecution during WW2 and continued hostilities against Jews and the nation of Israel.
- The formation of a world kingdom (the United Nations) that fulfills Daniel’s prophecy of the feet of iron and clay.
- The establishing of the state of Israel by U.N. resolution.
- The gathering of the Jews back to their homeland, and the reclaiming of Jerusalem from gentile control.

These are just some of the things that pertain to the Jews and Israel. There is also a global initiative being pursued on several fronts by the beast with the help of 10 angelic kings that are working together with him to set the stage for the rise of the false prophet. A lot of what they do has to be inferred based on what the Bible reveals is **going** to happen because their agenda and motives are often obscured.

The primary goal of these 10 kings was, and still is, to undermine the truth of God’s word so they can advance their deceitful, ungodly agenda. Inasmuch as they are successful in accomplishing that objective, they render people susceptible to their chicanery. Several times in Matthew 24 Jesus cautioned against being misled, and Paul said that the man of sin comes with **all** the deception of wickedness; so, we have been forewarned.

Their agenda is complicated and multi-faceted but they are ultimately seeking to undo what God did at the tower of Babel when He confused the people's language and consequently created the nations. They are out to destroy nationalism and replace it with a global, neo-Babel type of existence that the false prophet will eventually reign over.

The United Nations could probably be considered the first step in that direction. As an international organization, it would facilitate the pursuit of global initiatives that would transcend nationalism. People would start to think from, and give precedence to, a global perspective. It has been an effective strategy over the decades as nationalism is now marginalized and those who support it are denigrated. There are pockets of nationalist movements but mass immigration and the media bias in favor of globalism may prove insurmountable. The plan of the evil trio doesn't allow for independent, isolated nations to exist outside of their control.

There is also an economic aspect to their plan. We know from Revelation 13 that the false prophet is going to have a mark that people must receive in order to buy or sell anything. The shift toward globalism over the past several decades has also spawned the prevalence of interconnected economies. Ultimately, there will be a global commerce system that will come under the control of the false prophet, and in order for anyone to engage in it, they must have his mark. His mark is a means of control that will be used to quickly identify those who will submit to his authority and those who won't.

In a nutshell, the evil trio seek to retain the dominion that the kingdom of darkness currently exercises over the world by preventing the return of Jesus. Since many prophecies yet to be fulfilled pertain to the people of Israel, they attempt to make prophecy impossible to fulfill by destroying them.

They also seek to create a neo-Babel existence for the Satan possessed false prophet to rule over. There will be no room in his kingdom for those who belong to the kingdom of God so he wages war against them. His means of control and persecution are carried out through the mark and the image. Revelation 12 sums it up succinctly.

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 12:13-17

When Satan is banished from heaven, he persecutes the nation Israel in an attempt to destroy them, however, they are divinely protected and flee to safety. He continues to pursue them in an attempt to destroy them by any means possible but he fails. He becomes enraged and then wages war with the spiritual people of God; those who keep His commandments and maintain the testimony of Jesus. He uses the mark and the image in an effort to identify and get rid of them.

The Mark and the Image

The first thing to notice about the mark and the image is that they are always mentioned together. This would indicate that while they are two separate things, they are inseparably linked. They work together to cause people to choose whether they will become part of the false prophet's kingdom or not. Everyone will be forced to decide one way or the other, so it's best to understand what the mark and the image are ahead of time along with the consequences of accepting or rejecting them.

The Mark

The mark is described in Revelation 13.

And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six. Revelation 13:16-18

The "he" being referred to here is in the context of the beast that comes up out of the earth, who is the false prophet. He is the only human of the evil trio and it is his mark. This mark is commonly referred to as the mark of the beast, but since there are two beasts being described in Revelation 13, a more accurate term would be the mark of the false prophet. The mark has the following characteristics:

- It is universal.
- It is given on either the right hand or forehead.
- It is required to buy or sell.
- It is the false prophet's name or number which is 666.

There is endless speculation as to who this person is who will require everyone to receive his mark. Suffice it to say that he will be known by his ability to perform amazing signs and wonders that will deceive the world into believing his declaration that he is God. Only those with spiritual discernment will not be taken in by the ruse that the evil trio are going to bring about in the last days.

The mark of the false prophet is specific to him, being either his name or number. It is not technology per se although it may utilize technology in its implementation. It is somehow integrated with a global commerce system since it is universally required to buy or sell, and it is given on the right hand or forehead. There will undoubtedly be attempts to obfuscate the true nature of the mark but the mark of the false prophet will have all of the above specifically mentioned characteristics.

The Image

The image is described in Revelation 13.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Revelation 13:14-15

It is absolutely imperative in order to understand what the image is, to first understand what the image is an image of. Based on the above passage, the image is a likeness of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, who is the evil angel that came up out of the abyss when the first seal was opened. The image is of the beast of the evil trio.

The beast, in conjunction with the ten horns, has spent the past several decades influencing world events and perceptions in such a way that will ultimately lead to the rise of the false prophet. The Satan possessed false prophet will exercise dominion over the world in an attempt to prevent the return of Jesus. He will perform signs and wonders in the presence of the beast in order to deceive the masses into willing subjugation. It is the beast who causes the false prophet to exercise dominion over the world and his image will do so likewise. The image of the beast has the following characteristics:

- The deceived people of the world make it.
- It is an image of the beast with seven heads and ten horns who is an evil angel.
- The false prophet breathes life into it.
- The image speaks to identify those who won't worship it.
- Those who are identified as refusing to worship it are killed.

The image of the beast is a collaborative effort by the deceived people of the world that will reflect the dominion that the false prophet exercises. It will be a code of laws that people are required to follow that will affirm his deity and their submission to him. This code of laws will have in it a provision that those who don't comply with its mandates are to be killed.

The means of determining initial and ongoing compliance is accomplished through the use of his mark. I expect that when those who wish to receive his mark go to wherever it is that they will receive it, that they will at that time also collaborate on this code of conduct. After a short grace period, the false prophet gives breath or life to the image by enacting this code of conduct into law and compliance becomes mandatory. The

mark is how the image will then speak and identify those who don't engage in the worship of the image.

The beast is the one who causes the false prophet to exercise dominion over the earth. The **image of** the beast will likewise give him authority. Since the beast is an evil angel, an image of him won't reflect his physical appearance since that's unknown, but rather his image will be an extension of his purpose to elevate the false prophet to a position of authority and dominion over the world. The people of the world will construct this image after a series of events leave them vulnerable to the masters of deception, the evil trio.

It might help to understand this concept of the image if a parallel is drawn with Romans 8:29. That verse states that we are to be conformed to the image of Jesus. The way that we go about that is through our behavior. The false prophet will require behavior that conforms to the image of the beast.

Setting the Stage

For the past several decades, the beast and his ten angelic leaders have been influencing the affairs of men for a specific purpose. They've been setting the stage for the rise of the false prophet to become the world leader. Their efforts include the undermining of God's truth, promoting a neo-Babel global agenda, and structuring a global commerce system that can be controlled by one person. All of these things began to be come about when the first seal was opened and the beast with ten horns was released from the abyss, presumably near the beginning of the twentieth century.

It has taken roughly a century for them to get their global agenda to where it is today. However, things will take on a quickened pace when the second seal is opened. The opening of the second seal correlates to when the ten human leaders decide it's time to implement their new world order. I don't think it's likely that these ten human leaders realize that they are just being used by their counterparts, the ten angelic leaders, for the beast's purposes. I expect that they plan on being the rulers of this new world order of theirs for a very long time, but such will not be the case.

When the second seal is opened, the ten human leaders destroy the world's capital per Revelation 17:15-18 and declare themselves to be the rulers of a new order. Their actions will shock the world and accentuate their "out with the old, in with the new" mentality. They have spent countless hours and resources designing and implementing a global economic system through which they plan to rule, and when the second seal is opened, they determine that the time has come. Their reign is brief, however. They realize that they have lost control over their system before the dust even settles and that they've been double-crossed. A time of war ensues.

The ten angelic horns had planned all along to give control of the global economic system to the false prophet. Usurping the control of this system from the ten human leaders is the means by which he begins his rise to becoming world leader. Immediately after the ten human leaders destroy the world's capital, the false prophet condemns their actions and declares them unfit to rule. He says that he has taken over their economic system and that he will now be in charge. Of course, this doesn't sit well with the ten human leaders and three of them decide to attack the false prophet, who is somewhere in the Middle East, with an overwhelming force. This is what is perceived as the fatal head wound in Revelation 13:3, the apparent death of the false prophet's fledgling kingdom.

The three human leaders that attack him are seen as the aggressors in this confrontation because they are the ones who destroyed the world's capital and now they're attacking the person who took action against them on account of their atrocity. Other wars are breaking out around the world as well and order quickly descends into chaos. People are convinced that the end of the world has come and are worried over this sudden turn of events.

Just when he is surrounded by hostile forces and it seems that his days are over, the false prophet calls down fire from heaven and destroys the forces arrayed against him. He, with support from the beast, supernaturally revives his kingdom from its death throes. The whole world is amazed at this and concedes that no one else can perform the signs and wonders that he can; neither is anyone able to wage war against him. Consequently, the time of war comes to an end as he demands the restoration of order. He then goes to Jerusalem and takes his ruse to the next level by declaring himself to be God.

The amazing signs and wonders that he performs deceives everyone into believing that he actually is God and has come to save the world from certain destruction. They have no reason to doubt his claims. He performs amazing signs and wonders that no one else can and he has restored order to a world plunged into chaos. It is against this backdrop that the mark and the image are introduced.

Not everyone falls for this ruse, however. There are people who know the truth of the situation and are capable of unmasking him for the fraud he is. He sees them as a threat to his dominion so he wages war against them by calling on the deceived people of the world to collaborate on a code of conduct that will affirm his deity and dominion over the world. That code of conduct is the image of the beast and is made into a global law.

The mark of the false prophet will serve to expedite the decision-making process. If people want to buy or sell, they will need his mark. After a grace period, those who do not have his mark will be confronted and if they refuse to align themselves with him,

they are to be killed. The mark will likely also serve as a means of monitoring people's activities in order to ensure continued compliance with the image.

This time of persecution takes place when the fifth seal is opened and is known as the great tribulation, a time when a multitude beyond number will choose to die rather than worship the man of sin. At some point after everyone has made their decision, God opens the sixth seal and brings an end to the great tribulation. The events of the sixth seal will cause those who have chosen to side with the false prophet, and put to death the innocent, to fear in anticipation of what is to come.

When the seventh seal is opened, the seven plagues begin to be poured out on those who chose to align themselves with the false prophet by receiving his mark and worshipping the image. The purpose of these plagues is to convince people that they have made the wrong decision and that they should repent.

Repenting of the Mark and Image

Contrary to a widely held teaching, a person can be forgiven if they repent of receiving the mark and worshipping the image of the beast, just as they can be forgiven of any other idolatry that they repent of. Idolatry is not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit so according to the words of Jesus, it will be forgiven if repented of. That fact in itself should cause those who claim that receiving the mark is unforgivable to reexamine why they think the way they do. In teaching that the mark is unforgivable, they are essentially teaching something contrary to what Jesus said, and it goes against the whole message of the new covenant which is essentially repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Receiving the mark and worshipping the image of the beast is a serious sin. Those who persist in it come under God's judgment. They are the ones affected by the seven plagues and will continue to be so until they quit receiving of the benefits of the mark and quit worshipping the image. They have to utterly and completely forsake the false prophet regardless of the consequences.

The plagues are meant to convince the people of the world that they were deceived into believing that the false prophet is God when in fact, he's only a deceiver. God will send two witnesses to confront the false prophet and declare to the world the truth of what's taking place. They will have a role similar to that of Aaron and Moses when they confronted Pharaoh and sent the plagues on Egypt. The first four plagues will affect the fresh water, the seas, the sun, moon, and stars in order to demonstrate that the false prophet is no God at all, that he is powerless against the true God, and that anyone worshipping him should repent.

There will come a time during the plagues when people's hearts will harden beyond repentance but that point isn't reached until the end of the fourth plague, which is very

late in the progression of the plagues. Until then, God is demonstrating His power over His creation in contrast to the false prophet's impotence in hopes that people will see through his deception and repent. When Jesus returns at the seventh plague, all decisions are final.

For a more in-depth look at repenting of the mark and the image please visit the booklets section at www.thelastdaze.com for a free download.