***The Seal  
  
RV128-01***

We continue our study of Revelation 7:1-3. Our topic is the angelic restrainers. This is segment number three.

Revelation chapter 7, we have seen, begins by revealing to us the extent and the results of evangelism which is to be conducted during the seven-year tribulation era on the earth after the church has been taken home to heaven. The Holy Spirit shows John that there will be a special core of evangelists which will be raised up by God in the tribulation. This divine action will be necessary because all those who know the gospel have already been previously removed from the earth at the point of the rapture. At that stage in human history, everybody on the earth is lost. Everybody is on the way to the lake of fire. In one way or another, God must bring under conviction, with the gospel, a certain number of individuals who may then become the new ambassadors and the new witnesses. While these new witnesses are being brought into existence, God uses the four angels to restrict the destructive effects of the wind which is about to be released on the earth in divine judgment, and which we will read about in detail in chapter 8. History holds, as we have seen, many examples of dramatic events which were determined by the providential use of the power of wind, and of natural forces.

**A Fifth Angel**

So, in Revelation 7:2, we read, "And I saw another angel ascending from the east." The word "saw" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "horao." It is again that word that speaks about an overall panoramic view. John at this time, taking in this whole scene once more, sees a fifth angel that comes on the scene, in addition to the four who are restraining the winds. John himself personally actually sees this angel. He describes him as "another angel," which in the Greek language looks like this: "allos." This is the word for "another," which indicates an angel of the same kind as the previous four, but that he is an additional number. This is "allos" in a numerical sense. So, here we have now a total of five angels that are on the scene. What John sees is another "aggelos." So, he's talking about the same kind of person – these messengers of God who are at God's directive, and who execute His will.

John sees this fifth angel "ascending" (coming up). That looks like this in the Greek Bible: "anabaino," which means "to arise." This angel is arising (coming up) from a specific place. Our translation says, "From the east." What it really says in the Greek Bible is "From the rising sun." It has two words: "anatole," which means "rising;" and, "helios," which is the word for sun. So, it means "from the rising of the sun." Of course, the rising of the sun is the east.

**A Seal**

So, he sees a fifth angel, He is like the other four, but he is an additional one coming from the east. In his hand he sees something. He sees that he has a seal. This is the word "sphragis," which we have had several times. This is the word for an object which makes an identifying mark of some kind. The seal belongs specifically to one that he calls "the living God." The word "living" is the Greek word "zao." This is a word which is the contrasting word to the condition of death, which is the absence of life. This is specifically "the living God," or "the life of God." It is his personal condition which is described here, in contrast to the dead idols of the heathen. The owner of the seal that the fifth angel possesses is the living Creator God, and not a dead idol who cannot give life to anyone.

As you know, we pointed out that in the book of the Revelation, we have topics that are discussed in the frame of reference of the rest of the Bible. So, here we have something called a seal which, in order to get a good picture as to how a seal is used in the Bible, those who read this Scripture originally would have the frame of reference of the Old Testament behind them. In the ancient world, seals were very important. There were several kinds.

**The Stamp Seal**

Number one was called a stamp seal. The stamp type was an engraved gem or a flat bead which was engraved with certain distinctive identifying marks. This was used to make an impression by pressing it into a soft substance like clay. The result then was an identifying mark made with this seal.

We have a reference to this kind of seal in Job 38:14, where we read, "It is turned like clay to the seal, and they stand like a garment." What he is talking about here is the condition of the earth which is actually turning as if it were a seal making an impression. So, here's the stamp type of seal, which makes an impression. That's an easy one to understand.

**The Cylinder Seal**

Seal number two, that was very common in the ancient world, was the cylinder type. The cylinder type was actually just like that. It was like a spool that thread comes on, except that it was flat from one end to the other. It had a small hole that went through the length of the cylinder. This was worn by this string that went through that cylinder on a person's arm, or he would hang it around his neck. This seal could accomplish things. It could cause you to lose money; it could cause you to gain money; it could cause you to make a sale; or, it could cause you to lose a sale. It was your signature. Therefore, it was worn around the neck or on the arm for security reasons.

Across this seal were the markings that were made in order to make the impression. Either they were raised like a cameo, and then it would make an impression as you took this thing and you rolled it across the clay; or, there were indentations cut into the seal (into the cylinder) and then when you rolled it across, it would leave raised places like a cameo. They worked it in both ways. And as we have indicated, Job 38:14 describes the earth as rotating on its axis as a seal rotating in a cylinder.

**The Scarab Seal**

Then there was a third type of seal in the ancient world, and that was called the scarab seal. This was a stamp type of seal again. It was used in Egypt. It originated there because they wrote on papyrus – what later came to be what we call paper. Therefore, it was much like a rubber stamp today. The scarab seal would be dipped into some kind of a die, and then it would be stamped on the papyrus.

This was named after the scarab beetle. The scarab beetle was venerated in Egypt as a symbol of the resurrection. The reason for this was that the Egyptians observed that the scarab beetle had a way of laying its eggs in manure, and then it had a way of wrapping the thing up into a ball, and then pushing it off to someplace where it was going to keep it secure. And the Egyptians looked at that and said, "That's just like the sun. There must be a giant beetle up there that's pushing that ball across the sky every day." So, they associated the scarab beetle, with its little manure ball, as one of the great gods of Egypt. It was this very sacred symbol. The beetle was a sacred symbol of resurrection and eternal life, because every day, after the giant god-beetle would push the sun across the sky, he'd bring it back again. He'd resurrect it the next day. So, the sun god Ra was commemorated by the scarab beetle.

The design of this scarab type of seal was cut again into a semiprecious stone, and it was usually set into a ring, generally worn on the little finger of the right hand, so that the person had it there always at hand to be ready to use it when he needed it as an official stamp. It was dipped in the dye, and then pressed upon the papyrus.

Today, we have a thing called a signet ring. It's a ring that you buy with your initials on it. We call it a signet ring, meaning that it's a signature ring, and you go around wearing this ring that has your initials on it. It is actually very similar to what this scarab ring type of situation was.

The ancient world often buried this ring with its dead owner, and we can understand that that would be a very natural consequence. Once he was dead, he no longer needed this special seal.

**Authentication of Documents or Agreements**

There were several uses for these seals. Number one was for authentication of documents or agreements. This was probably the most important use of seals in the ancient world. It was a way of verifying an agreement, and to establish legal validity for a contract between people. In Genesis 38:16, you have an example of how a seal was used in order to make a legal binding contract. This is the rather sad incident relating to one of the sons of Jacob – Judah, who had given his seal to a young woman named Tamar, who had previously been his daughter-in-law. He gave it to her as a pledge that he would pay her a young goat for sexual relations: "And he (that is, Judah) turned unto her (he has seen her sitting by the side of the road), and said, 'Come, I pray you. Let me come in unto you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law, and she said, 'What will you give me that you may come in unto me.'"

Now, Tamar was setting up a fall for Judah. The situation here was that she had married the eldest son, and he had died. And the second son had refused to become her husband, as the Mosaic Law required, to raise up children to the first son's name. So, he had a younger son. He said, "When he's old enough, I'll give him to you as a husband." Well, he didn't keep his word, so Tamar is setting him up for a fall to get even with him. So he doesn't recognize who she is – that she's his former daughter-in-law.

Verse 17: "He said, 'I will send you kid (a young goat) from the flock.' And she said, 'What will you give me a pledge till you send it?'" He says, "I'll pay you a young goat." But she says, "What are you going to give me as collateral as a pledge that you will indeed pay me in that way." So, what he agreed to do was to give to her, in verse 18, his signet (his seal), and along with it, his distinctive rod. Very often in the ancient world, people identified themselves by a rod which they carried – a staff, which was clearly identifiable as belonging to them. Of course, then the signet ring or seal of some kind that they had would identify them as the owner.

So, verse 18 says, "And he said, 'What pledge shall I give you?' And she said, "Your signet and your bracelets;" that is, the core that went through the signet. It was either a cord holding the ring (that type), or it was a cord through the cylinder type: "'And your staff that is in your hand.' And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him."

So, Judas' staff and his seal came into the possession of Tamar. Now she could always identify the one who owed her, in this way, the young goat, and authenticate the agreement. Well, the rest of the story continues downhill, and it is sad as the act of immorality bears bitter fruit. But the thing we're interested in here is how they would authenticate an agreement between two people. One could hold your seal. So, the seal was very important.

In Genesis 41:42, we have a seal that belonged to the Pharaoh, and we can see how he used it. It was a ring-type seal to mark the authority that he gave to Joseph: "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrested him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck." Well, this ring indicated that Joseph was now entrusted with the king's authority. Whenever Joseph used the seal of this ring, he was authenticating an imperial act. He could speak for the king. Joseph was thus able to act in the Pharaoh's name in storing the food for the seven years of plenty in preparation for the coming famine. All he needed was that Pharaoh's seal in the form of that ring, and he was in top command. There wasn't anybody superior to him except the king himself. The seal was a very significant authenticating mark.

In Song of Solomon 8:6, you have a very interesting reference to the use of seals. Here, the maiden asks her lover to set her as a seal on his heart to identify ownership: "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm." You wear it around your neck like you would over your heart, or tie it around your arm. These are both ways that they would carry that: "For love is as strong as death," and so on. The point that she's making here is that she is to be the seal of her love for him, which he is to keep secure as he does the seal that he wears around his arm. She says, "Put me (my love) on your heart as the seal." What is she saying? "Put my love as the identifying mark that you belong to me, and I belong to you." So, what she is saying is that their mutual love is to be sealed to each other so that that love was off limits to all others. She says, "Use my seal upon your heart as the authenticating, identifying mark of our agreement between us.

In Jeremiah 32:10-14, we read about Jeremiah, who bought a piece of property from his uncle, who thought that he was putting one over on Jeremiah, because it had now become evident, at this point in time, that the Jews were going to go into captivity. Jeremiah was told by the Lord, "Your uncle is going to come and try to pull a fast one on you – to sell you a piece of property, thinking that he might as well get rid of this valuable property, because he's not going to be able to keep it very long anyhow. The nation is on the skids, and it's going into captivity." The Lord says, Jeremiah, you just go ahead and buy it." So, Jeremiah did, because the Lord said, "I want to tell you something, Jeremiah. I'm going to bring all of you back. When you get back, lo and behold, you're going to be the owner of this beautiful piece of property. You just secure the deed." So, that's what Jeremiah did. He bought the deed, and he put this in a jar to authenticate the transaction, and he put a seal on it. That jar was now secure. Nobody could break into it, and the transaction was authentic and secure.

Jezebel used her husband Ahab's seal, you remember, to authenticate her order to frame the innocent Naboth and to have him executed. She wrote the letter that said, "Set him up so that he is accused of blasphemy, and then take him out and kill him. That will get rid of Naboth, then my husband can buy his vineyard that he wants." Well, after she wrote the letter, she had to take Ahab's seal to authenticate that that was a genuine imperial command.

When Jerusalem was restored and its walls were rebuilt in the fifth century before Christ, the Jewish leaders, we're told, set their seals to an agreement to obey the Mosaic Law. In Nehemiah 3:38, you have the declaration that the Jewish leaders set their seal (their personal mark) to a document that said that they would obey the laws of God. It had been violating those laws that had taken them into captivity to begin with. Now that they were back out of that Babylonian captivity, they started off on the right foot by agreeing to obey the Word of God.

Then you have the Persian king's edict in behalf of the Jews, relative to Esther. You can read about this in Esther 8:8. The Persian king's edict on behalf of the Jews was authenticated by his seal. We're told that once that seal was in place, that declaration could not be changed. It was irrevocable.

Of course, one of the fascinating areas of seals is relative to ourselves and God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit, the Bible tells us, is the seal upon the church page believer, authenticating that he will receive all the promises made by God to the body of Christ, the church. This is why it is important to understand the sealing of the Christian. It ensures that there is no place you can go but heaven. The fact that every Christian is sealed is an important authentication of where he is headed. Corinthians 1:21-22: "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who has also sealed us, and given the earnest (or the down payment) of the Spirit in our hearts."

Ephesians 1:13-14: "In whom you also trusted after you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest (who is the down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. The Holy Spirit is the seal that authenticates the agreement that God has made with us, that if we will trust in him, relative to the payment of the death of His Son, he will take us to heaven.

In Ephesians 4:30, we read, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Then we have one more in 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal. The Lord knows them that are His, and let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." God knows who we are because He has stamped us with His seal. We Christians have God the Holy Spirit as the seal. And when a person believes the gospel, the Bible tells us that what we are doing is setting our seal on the authenticity of the gospel message. Remember that we're talking about the use of seal that authenticates a legal document (an agreement).

Therefore, in John 3:33, we read, "He that has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true." If you receive the testimony concerning the gospel, it is like you taking your seal and stamping approval upon it.

**Protection**

The second use of seals in the ancient world was protection. The king would put his official seal on something, and that something was then protected from any encroachment by anybody else. It was now under imperial supervision.

For example, in Daniel 6:17, we're told that when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, the king put a seal upon the opening to the cave, precluding anybody else going in there to take him out: "And the stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet." Now you know what he's talking about. This was the king's own ring pressed into some soft material like clay to mark that the cave was closed. Furthermore, we read that they did it with: "The signet (the identifying seals) of all of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." No one, now on threat of his own life, could dare break that seal.

You remember that when the Lord Jesus was put into the tomb, the Jews (the Jewish leaders who had murdered Him) were concerned that His disciples would steal His body, and then claim that He had risen from the dead, so, Pilate ordered that a seal be placed upon the entrance to the tomb. Matthew 27:66: "So, they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch." It was a capital crime to break an imperial seal upon something like that tomb. It was there in order to keep anybody from going in.

**Ensuring the Contents**

A seal was also used to ensure the contents of a jar, for example, in business transactions. Whether it was documents or some product, they would cover the top of the jar; tighten around the covering with some string; and, then attach a seal. There was no way you could open that jar without breaking that seal. So, when the customer got it, if the seal is unbroken, he knew that the contents hadn't been touched. That, of course, is the same thing, which is the way seals are often used today.

**Secrecy**

They were also used to indicate secrecy; that is, to protect the privacy of something that was being transmitted. For example, Daniel was told in Daniel 12:4 to put a seal on for this purpose: "But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel was given some information, but he was told that he was to seal up that information.

We have the same thing in Daniel 12:9. He said, Go that way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." What were those words? Well, compare Revelation 5:1-5. The thing that was kept private (put under the protection of privacy with the seal), we have revealed in Revelation 5:1-5: "And I saw in the right hand of Him (that is, God the Father) that sat on the throne, a scroll written within, and on the back sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the skull and to lose its seals?' And no man in heaven, nor in the earth, nor under the earth was able to open the scroll; neither to look on it. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, neither to look on it." John said, "Here it is finally here. Here's Daniel's secret. Here's the thing that had been sealed for protection from public knowledge. Finally, we've got access to it. It contains tremendous information, but there is nobody who can break the seals."

Then verse 5 says, "And one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the line of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. He has prevailed to open the scroll and to lose its seven seals." And Jesus Christ was qualified to do that.

Through the book of the Revelation, periodically, you have other references to seals. In Revelation 10:4 we read, "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, and I heard a voice from heaven saying under me, 'Seal up those things which the seven senators uttered, and do not write them.'" So, we don't know what these thunders said to John, because he was ordered to put that under the protection of a seal (the protection of the privacy of the seal).

Interestingly enough, sometimes God says, "I don't want a thing sealed up." In Revelation 22:10, you have that: "And He said to me, do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book (the book of the Revelation), for the time is at hand." Can you imagine how many preachers; how many churches; and, how many great denominational groups are violating that verse? God says, "Don't you dare keep the book of Revelation a secret from the people of God. Do not seal up the contents of that book." Yet, this is a book that's rarely touched. If you're ever in the church where they put Bibles out in the pews for people to use in the service, the cleanest pages and the cleanest sections you'll find the cleanest sections in the whole Bible (if they've been there for any number of years) will be the book of the Revelation. Nobody ever touches it. Yet, here God says, "Don't seal up this book."

**Ownership**

A third reason for seals in the ancient world was to indicate ownership. Obviously, a person marked his own property with the seal. The seal was used in a distinctive way so that it was associated only with one person. Obviously, that's very similar to the modern method of marking tools or branding cattle.

**A Trademark**

Then there was a fourth use of the seal, and that was as a trademark. It was used to identify manufactured goods in the ancient world to indicate who had made them, and thus to give you some indication of the quality. The mark would indicate that this was up to certain levels of craftsmanship and quality in the materials that had been used.

So, the background of seals was very familiar to the people of the ancient world. They were constantly used. They were very important, and they were used in a variety of ways, as we've indicated.

So, with this as the background, we come back to Revelation 7:2. John says, "I see another angel (one that's just like the four that are standing there), but this one comes out of the east, and he has the seal that belongs to God Himself (the living God)." Then we read, "And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels." This word "cried" is the word "kratzo." And you don't want to make the mistake of thinking that he just called out and said, "Hey, fellows, are you listening? I've got something to tell you." When it said "cried out," I mean, he thundered out.

To give you an idea of what "kratzo" means, we can look at how it's used in Matthew 27:23 concerning the crowd which was clamoring for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: "And the governor said, 'Why? What evil has He done (referring to Jesus)? Why should I crucify him?' But they 'kratzo' out (they cried out) the more saying, 'Let him be crucified.'" This is one of those words that sounds like what it means. This is called onomatopoetic" in literature. It sounds like what it means: "kratzo." You can hardly say it without yelling, and that's what it means. It was a strong voice.

In Matthew 27:50, you have this used of the Lord Jesus: "Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up the Spirit." At the point of death, Jesus spoke in a loud, strong, commanding voice, announcing the end.

So, this angel, at a certain point in time, shouts out his command. He does it himself. We're told that this is a "megas" (a loud) shout. "Megas" is an adjective that means "great." We get the word "megaphone" from that. As a matter of fact, that's the other word: "voice" ("phone" in the Greek). There you got the two things that gives you the word "megaphone," which is the thing to enlarge a voice. It's one of those dunce-like tubes that you talk through to amplify the voice. This angel delivers a loud vocal command.

The language of the angel, of course, is understandable. When 1 Corinthians 13 speaks about the language of men and of angels, you must understand that the language of angels is the language of men. Any time angels speak to people, they speak the language of the people they're talking to. That's the language of angels. It's not, as the Charismatics try to claim, some supernatural gibberish talk that angels use among themselves. In any case, this angel is making a communication that the angels that he's speaking to (the four angels) understand it. Furthermore, John understands it.

What he says to these four angels is that he cries out with a loud megaphone-like voice to the four angels, "To whom it was given." The word "given" is "didomi:" "That it was granted." Authority was granted to these angels by God. They didn't take it themselves: "It was given to them to hurt," which is our word "adikeo" again. "Adikeo" means "to do injury." At some point in time, they had been authorized to do injury. To do injury with what? With the four winds that they're going to turn loose on the land and sea areas of the planet earth.

Verse three then gives the communication that this angel, in a loud voice, had been given the authority to shout out. He is saying to them that they should not "adikeo" (they should not do injury to or damage) the land and the sea areas, or to the trees: "Until." The Greek word is "achri." "Achri" indicates "until a certain point in time." He's not telling them not to turn loose the destructive forces of the winds, but he says, "Don't do it for a while."

**A Sealing**

Until what happens? He says, "Until there has been a sealing." Here is the verb form of the word we have been using for seal. This is "sphragizo." It refers here to the divine seal that God has given this fifth angel, probably in the form of a signet rings. He's probably standing there with this seal in the form of a ring with the engraving on the stone. There is something special written on that seal, and it is in the subjunctive mood. It is a potential act that is about to be performed at a certain point. This seal, as we are going to see, is going to be for the protection of those who receive it.

God has, historically, in hazardous times, protected His people. You have that demonstrated in the case of the Jews when they were sitting in Egypt. Egypt was being slaughtered with all kinds of plagues. But over there in Goshen land, where the Jews lived, nothing was happening. Everything was just as fine as it always was. God was protecting. We had this in the case of Noah. When all of the world had become one huge cemetery, Noah and his family were riding high, wide, and handsome. You had this in the case of rehab in the fall of Jericho. When everybody in the city was slaughtered, God moved in and put a seal of protection on her because of her willingness to assist the spies. And of course, in the case of Daniel, while the king put his seal on the outside of the den, God put his seal on the inside on Daniel, so that the lions' mouths were closed and they could not touch him.

This is not unusual, in times of great hazard and life threatening situations, for God just to come in and put a seal of upon you. Some of you have had that personal experience of wondering how you ever made it through something because God came through, and you survived.

It says specifically that this seal is relative to God's "doulos." The "doulos" means "the slaves of God." This is not the church age saints. This is, as we are going to see, beginning at verse 4, a special group of new evangelists which have been raised up, namely 144,000 Jews. They're going to receive this specific seal, and they're going to receive it, it says, "Upon a certain part of their bodies." This is their "metopon." The "metopon" is the "forehead" of the human body. The seal there on the forehead will be there very specifically as a mark to identify these people in a certain particular way.

Now again, the people who knew the Old Testament, when they read this, they had a frame of reference, because the Ezekiel 9:1 talks about that kind of a situation. We have to keep remembering that we interpret the Bible by the Bible: "He cried also in my ears with a loud voice saying, 'Cause them that have charge over to the city to draw near, every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.'" God is going to punish the city of Jerusalem. He calls the positive people together, and he's going to execute those who are negative. He's going to perform a death penalty upon them.

Verse 2: "And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lies toward the north, and every man with a slaughter weapon in his hand. And one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's ink horn by his side. And he went in and stood beside the bronze altar." The men report in for military duty, so to speak. One of them has a scribe's kit hanging on his side. That's what this ink horn means: "And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub upon which he was, to the threshold of the House. That is, God was leaving the holy of holies. The cherub between the two cherubs on the holy sea – the prophets saw God leave that point, "And go to the threshold of the tabernacle." Later he sees them leave the tabernacle; go to the Mount of Olives; and, depart from Israel – the wonderful presence of God finally leaving this sinful people.

"He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writers ink horn by his side. And the Lord said unto him, 'Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of it.'" This scribe was to go and put a mark on the forehead of everyone who was positive to the Word of God, who sighed and cried – who was personally grieved with the sin of the people. So, when they read in Revelation about this angel saying, "Don't turn loose the forces of nature in the form of the winds until we have marked on the foreheads of certain people the signet identifying mark of God," they thought back: "Well, that's just like in the day of Ezekiel." And immediately they knew why the mark was there, because it is being put on these people so that when the executioners are turned loose through the city, they are not going to kill these people. The mark will be a sign of their immunity.

Verse 5: "And to the others, he said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city, and smite. Let not your eyes spare, neither have pity." He says, "Everyone who is guilty of evil, and their wives, and their children – don't look at this little baby and let your heart go out to it. You kill every one of them." The execution is going to be complete: "'Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women. But don not come near any man upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.' Then they begin with the ancient men who are before the house, and he said unto them, 'Defile the house and fill the courts with the slain. Go forth.' And they went forth and slew in the city."

This is one place that you did not tolerate death. If you were a priest under the Old Testament system, and somebody died, and you had to touch that body, you were now defiled for a certain period of time, until you went through a purification process, from ministering before God. It was inconceivable that they were to go into the temple area and to be executing people left and right. But that's what God says. He says, "I'm through with it. I'm leaving." And the prophet saw him move out of the holy of holies. He saw all of the Shekinah glory moving out of that temple area. And he said, "Go in there and defile it. I'm gone. It's no longer My house. Kill them all over the temple grounds," which is what they did, except for those who had the mark on their forehead. This was indicating that they were immune under divine protection.

Those who lack this particular seal that the angel has from the living God then, in the tribulation period that we are reading here, are going to be subject to injury and to death. In Revelation 9:4, we read, "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God in their forehead." When you get to the fifth trumpet, you have God again causing things to happen in nature, and sending creatures of destruction among the population of the tribulation communities which are going to bring death. But what God sends out there is specifically warned: "If you see this mark, the seal of the living God on his forehead, don't touch that person."

The seal of God, of course, here in the tribulation, will be in contrast to the arrogance of the antichrist, who will now come up with his own counter seal to mark those who belong to him. Revelation 13:16: "And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and enslaved, to receive a mark of their right hand or in their forehead." What he's referring to here is a seal. So, the antichrist will put a seal upon those who belong to him. I'm inclined to think that once you have the seal of the living God on you, if you were living in the tribulation, it's a permanent seal. You never remove it. Likewise, if you ever accept the seal of the antichrist, there's no return. You've gone beyond the point of no return, and you cannot again remove that seal. It's a permanent, indelible marking.

In Revelation 14:1, we're told what the seal of the living God is that this special angel comes to apply to the foreheads of these 144,000 evangelists: "And I looked up, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000; (that is, these Jewish evangelists) having His Father's name written on their foreheads." So, the seal (the signet) has the name of God upon it. It will probably be that sacred Tetragrammaton, "Jehovah," the most sacred name of God, which is always translated in our English Bibles with the word "LORD," all in capital letters. That will probably be the name that will be there.

So, this position of the seal on the forehead will be as clearly evident to all men as will be the seal of the antichrist upon his people. So, in the tribulation world, everyone will know to whom everyone else belongs. Therefore, the lines will be drawn very clearly – this world, in which the Christian is so violently and bitterly hated.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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