

**Revelation 13: 16-17; “The Mark of the Beast”, Sermon # 97 in the series –
“The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
On March 15th, 2009, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

I hope that it is evident to you, after all the sermons that I have preached on this blessed book, that the Antichrist which is spoken of in this chapter is a political and ecclesiastical system, as well as being a person. It is a system which rests upon a person, even as the true Church rests upon Jesus Christ. The only trouble is that the whole system is false. It is a system which perverts the true in order to set up the false. I have showed you in past sermons that initially this system drew into its web of deception the 10 kingdoms of the fallen Roman Empire. It is a system which has continued now for over 1200 years if I am right. It is a system which has exercised political power and influence over many nations besides those 10 kingdoms, down through this time period of the 1260 days prophecy. Its control and influence comes from having asserted that that which is false, is to be established as true. It is a system by which the Devil wants to deceive all the nations of the World. It is important that we understand this in light of all the conjectures as to who the Antichrist is and what his purposes are. The purpose of the Devil in raising up this great system of Antichrist has not only been to place a false, visible, substitute of our Lord Jesus within the visible Church of Jesus Christ. His purpose has also been to raise up a false visible church to take the place of the true one. The Devil's purpose is to deceive all men through presenting to their five senses a Christian religion which appears to be true, when really it is not. The system which I am speaking of is, foundationally, the Roman Catholic Church's system of doctrine and authority. The Roman Catholic system of doctrine places great emphasis upon the taking of the sacraments in order to obtain eternal life, when, really, it is only by grace through faith in the living risen Lord Jesus Christ, that anyone can be saved. A person who takes the sacrament of the Mass believes that they are really receiving the body and blood of Christ to themselves and that this is salvation. The priest assures this to them with many words and in many visible rituals and ceremonies. But the Bible knows nothing of this. It speaks of a living faith in Christ.

The Roman Catholic system of authority places great emphasis upon a Pope, a Vicar of Christ, who can be seen by men. People who listen to him can look upon his robes and feast their eyes upon his earthly glory, and his supposed spiritual glory, at the Vatican. They can receive his blessing and some may even kiss his ring. And even though they do not know how he came to be in such a position of power and wealth, they are willing to believe that the things which he says have that authority because he has been given this authority by other men who are also the supposed true priests and cardinals of the true and living God. And Satan has a purpose in this. He would dazzle the minds and eyes of those who would be religious with an earthly glory, the glory of a mere man in the office of a Pope. Everything in Rome is designed in their worship and in the exercise of their authority in the priesthood, to speak to the earthly senses of the one who looks on. The attire of the priests and the

Pope, the majesty of the cathedral and basilica, the ability to enter in to it all by looking on in humble submission at those who supposedly know better than you do what true spirituality is all about. But there is deception in this display of Rome. It is because of this dazzling display of order and authority that it is then assumed that the Pope is infallible in his judgment; just like our Lord Jesus actually was and is. He is held up before all the people who enter into the worship of the Church of Rome, as Christ's visible and representative head of the Church here upon the earth. The danger of eternal deception is so very great here. There is the danger that anyone who is sincerely searching for the truth will be deceived and take the mark of this beast and perish forever. Yes, I am saying that the mark of the beast exists in our day. And it has existed in every generation every since this false system first had its rise. We want to look at this subject this afternoon so that we will not be deceived and so that others who we might be able to share the truth with, will not be deceived and perish. With the time that I have remaining, I want to ask first; what is the mark of the beast, and then, secondly, where is it received?

1st – What is the mark of the Beast?

Verse 16 says, “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to received a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. The mark of the beast is that indication on the forehead or on the hand that shows that the beast possesses their soul's obedience. They are, in effect, his property. Even as a master in the old days might put a mark on a slave, to denote that that one belonged to him. Even as a soldier might receive the mark of his general, or the one devoted to his heathen god might receive a mark on the hand or on the forehead; even so, the Papal Antichristian system has a mark which they expect will be taken by those who are the true worshipers of God in their estimation. It is not a physical mark per se, but a spiritual mark. Notice the wording. “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark...” It is the Roman Church's expectation with force behind it, that a person “receive” this mark. This mark is a mental blind submission to the doctrine and authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and the expectation is, that in converting to that church there will be a blind allegiance. When I say, “blind submission and allegiance” I am not meaning to say that all Roman Catholics today do not look at their church's doctrine or the authority that is exercised. They may, or they may not. They may agree with it or privately disagree with it. But the expectation is; that the person who joins this church is to receive its authority and its doctrine without questioning the system and how all of it came about. This is the mark of the Beast. And it must be repented of if one is aware that they have taken it. It is those who willfully take this mark, realizing that they are accepting this form of submission without checking it out in relation to the truth of the Bible, and without changing to receive the truth of the Bible; it is these persons who will perish eternally. It is the Church attempting to play God. In the Bible it is only God who can place marks upon men to denote a true spiritual reality. Think of Genesis Chapter 4 and verse 15. Cain had murdered his brother

Abel. He was afraid that he would be killed by others who heard of it. And God said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." "And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him." He would protect Cain from injustice and violence. The mark of our text is the very opposite in the Beast's mind.

The mark here in our text is the reverse of God's work. It is something that is imposed upon the worshiper by this beast coming up out of the earth. It is saying that they are the follower of the Beast. This beast, however, preaches a "different Jesus" to his adherents, either as they grow up in that false church or as they join it for whatever reason, in order to find God or to be religious. This Jesus whom Rome preaches is not truly the Jesus of the Bible, as is fully evidenced by their emphasis on the ceremonial, and their followers being outwardly religious. Rather than the Pope and their clergy preaching the gospel and the simple straightforward doctrines of the Bible, they are preaching a gospel of allegiance to the doctrines and the authority of Pope, clergy, and church. You come into a false system when you come into Roman Catholicism, rather than coming into the teaching of Christ and the Bible. "He causes all...", the text says. The Pope and the clergy force people to the conclusion that they had better worship in the way that they proscribe, or there will be certain implications that would come to them that would be very unpleasant. "There is no salvation outside of the Church of Rome," it is said. Actually there is no salvation inside it unless one has not received the mark. A person can possibly be saved and be a Roman Catholic if he believes in Jesus, but he cannot be saved by holding to the system of Roman Catholic doctrine and authority. The authority that the Christian submits to is the Bible. He does submit to his pastor or elders, but that is in accordance with Bible truth, and not the traditions of men. The true Christian does not accept a system of men, but the living risen Christ when he believes. He is following Jesus not a Pope or Priest. He believes the Apostle's doctrine. He believes in a form of doctrine which is delineated by the Bible. The receiving of the mark is the choosing of the false religious system over the Bible's truth, and then living out the implications of this to please the priest, the Pope, or even one's self. There is no pleasure to God in a person's worshiping Him in that way. Rather, in Revelation 18: 4 it says, "Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." This system of forced acceptance of Roman Catholic doctrine and authority was what prevailed in the worst days of the 1260 years, and why the Reformation really had to take place. In those days a person was forced to worship God in the Roman Catholic way, or they suffered many consequences. They could not buy or sell without the mark.

An example of this is given to us by Ebenezer Smith in his commentary on Revelation. He says, "The general council held at Rome in the year 1179, called the third Lateran, led the way." "If any of the heretics held public offices, they were to be turned out of them as soon as they were detected." "All intercourse with them was forbidden; there was to be no buying or selling." "Contracts with them were declared

null and void..." "No advocate was to be permitted to plead for them when they were placed on trial." "On conviction, they were to be delivered over to the secular power to be burned." "And all magistrates and judges were warned that if they did not faithfully execute these decrees, they would be executed." As we look at the passage that we are studying in verse 15, we find that this same kind of force was mentioned in terms of establishing the worship that should be given to the image of the beast. "He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed." I told you the last time that I preached to you that the one of the aspects of the image of the beast was the Council of Trent; that document put forth by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in response to the doctrines of the Reformation. That document, which is still in place, anathematizes (places a curse upon) those who would not worship in accordance with the supposed truth of the doctrines enunciated in that document. Many hundreds of thousands of people, I said to you, were tried and put to death, for their faith, by the courts of Inquisition; the ecclesiastical-political courts set up by Rome to try, and to persecute and put to death, those who would not give their allegiance to Roman Catholic system of belief and practice.

Then 2ndly, We need to think about where this mark is taken.

I have said that it is a mark made upon the soul of those who will and do submit to the false doctrine and teaching of the Church of Rome. Our text describes it as being on the person's right hand or on their forehead. I believe that these are symbols for the way a person thinks and what a person does in their worship. This does have some obvious ceremonial implications for the sincere Roman Catholic. Their genuflections as they enter and leave a place of worship are an indication of their symbols of their allegiance; the motions of the hand to the forehead and then to the heart and then to the shoulders. Their allegiance is to their Church and to traditions of that Church first of all. Then there is the sacrament of Baptism. People entering the Roman Church are baptized, usually not as an adult having professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but as an infant in the arms of the Priest and godparents. I got on line yesterday and obtained information on the current mode of Roman Catholic infant baptism. I think that the information will be helpful here. On a site called Baby.love to know.com I found this: "In the year 416 the Roman Empire made infant baptism compulsory." "For centuries the Roman Catholic tradition taught that if a baby died without being baptized they would go to a place called limbo." "However, in April of 2007, Pope Benedict reversed this teaching on limbo." "He also declared that the church would not revert to St. Augustine's teaching that infants who die without being baptized go to hell." "Instead the Pope created a new doctrine: infants go to heaven baptized or not." The site goes on to relate how the sacrament of Baptism is performed. "The rite of Catholic Baptism can be broken into four stages, with each taking place in different parts of the church." "Each stage symbolizes a part of the process of the child's initiation into the Church." "In the entry way of the Church building the questioning of the godparents begins and the

priest breathes into the child's face three times recalling the Spirit breath of God." "The Priest traces the sign of the cross with his thumb on the baby's forehead and chest." "The Priest places hands on the baby's head and prays for the kindling of faith." "He places a few grains of salt in the baby's mouth as a symbol of wisdom." Being admitted into the Church building an exorcism takes place. "The priest makes the sign of the cross over the child three times and prays for the exorcise of the unclean spirit in the name of the Trinity." Then the sign of the cross is made again. "This time the priest traces the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead as a symbol of the protection of the mind from the devil's violation." "Again the priest lays his hands on the child's head." Then "the Priest places the end of his stole on the baby symbolizing his priestly authority, and admits the baby into the church building." Then entering the Nave, "the priest once again prays for the exorcise of unclean spirits." "Traditionally, the priest takes spittle on his finger and touches the ears and nostrils of the baby, but today for health reasons this step which comes from Mark 7: 33-35 may be omitted." The Godparents then take an oath renouncing Satan for the child." "Then the priest anoints the baby with oil on the heart and between the shoulders tracing a small cross." "This represents the oil of salvation in Jesus Christ." Then coming to the font, "The godparents carry the baby to the font together, but the godmother holds the baby while the godfather places his right hand on the baby's shoulder." "The priest pours consecrated water three times over the baby's head, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Then there is anointing with a consecrated oil or Chrism. Then "a white linen cloth which symbolizes purity of the baby's cleansed soul is placed on the child's head." "The priest then gives the godparents a lighted candle, and gives the last words of good will." There is an awful lot of ceremony here and absolutely no spiritual substance. The child does not have a cleansed soul by this means. All infants who die in infancy are cleansed only by the blood of Christ, not by the ceremony of Baptism. But this Romish ceremony is all the work of men trying to convey that which only God can give spiritually to a person old enough to understand.

Now in tying this together with our text concerning the mark of the Beast let me relate to you a few words from the Council of Trent. In the section on the Sacraments and Baptism it says this. "Whoever shall affirm, the sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify; or that they do not confer that grace on those who place no obstacle in its way; as if they were only external signs of grace or righteousness received by faith, and marks of Christian profession, whereby the faithful are distinguished from unbelievers: let him be accursed." And another point: "Whoever shall affirm, that a character—that is, a certain spiritual and indelible mark, is not impressed on the soul by the three sacraments, baptism, confirmation, and orders; for which reason they cannot be repeated: let him be accursed." And another statement on Baptism: "Whoever shall affirm that the true doctrine of the sacrament of baptism is not in the Roman church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches: let him be accursed." (I found these statements of the Council of Trent in J.M. Cramp's book – A Text Book of Popery) I conclude

when I read statements like these that this is the mark of the Beast. It is that the Roman Catholic Church would convey to men grace, through the Sacraments by their own authority; the authority of their own false system of doctrine and practice. There is a twisting and wresting of the Scripture that of necessity must take place to come to these conclusions and then anathematize those who would bring forth the truth of the Bible to show them that they are wrong. A person simply cannot be saved through the Roman Catholic system. He most certainly will be damned if he does not renounce it. “He who believes and is baptized (in that order) shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned.” (Mark 16: 16) It does not say that a person who is not baptized shall be condemned. Let us resolve to hold fast the truth of God’s Word, and to oppose and refute the tradition and error of infant baptism. Let us take care not to receive the mark of the Beast; the supposed validity of the baptism of the Church of Rome, and allegiance to her false teaching and false offices of spiritual authority. Let us rather pray to be found, having upon us the mark which God’s angels placed upon those in Ezekiel 9: 4 – “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” Let us sigh and cry over these abominations that we have spoken about today, and pray for the Reformation begun by Luther and Calvin to continue.