

WORKING PAPER

The Two Seals

Sequence, visibility, and function in Revelation 7, 9, 13–14, and 20.

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1. Purpose and method

This paper isolates two forehead-signs in Revelation and asks only what the text requires: what each sign is, when each appears, who can act on it, and what happens to people who have neither. The reading is text-constrained. Modern mappings (chip, RFID, vaccine credential, barcode, implant) are treated as overlays, not as facts in the Greek.

Method: keep function ahead of anatomy. Distinguish what John writes from what a later reader must invent in order to pre-plan. Cap overclaim. Where the book is silent, the silence is part of the data.

2. Primary texts

Seal of God. Revelation 7:2–3 — an angel from the sunrise holds the seal of the living God and is told not to harm earth, sea, or trees until the servants of God are sealed on their foreheads. Revelation 9:4 — the fifth-trumpet host may not harm grass, any green thing, or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. Revelation 14:1 — the 144,000 have the Lamb’s name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

Mark of the beast. Revelation 13:16–17 — all, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, are caused to be given a mark on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell except the one who has the mark: the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 14:9–11 — worship of the beast and receipt of the mark are bound together in the warning. Revelation 20:4 — those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received the mark on forehead or hand are named among those who reign.

Prior grammar: Ezekiel 9. A mark on the forehead exempts from a destroying pass. Revelation uses that grammar twice — once as exemption, once as rival brand.

3. Working distinction

Both signs are positive inscriptions of ownership. Neither is described as a blank forehead. The structural pair is not “chip versus natural skin.” It is name versus name.

Axis	Seal of God / the Lamb	Mark of the beast
Locus	Forehead only (7:3; 9:4; 14:1)	Right hand or forehead (13:16)
Content	Seal of the living God; later, the Lamb’s name and the Father’s name written (14:1)	The mark — the name of the beast or the number of its name (13:17)
Agent	Angel ascending from the sunrise, holding the seal (7:2)	The second beast causes the earth-dwellers to be marked (13:16)

When	Before the trumpet harms the earth/sea/trees; before the fifth trumpet host is released	After the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth are on the stage (ch. 13)
Function	Ownership and exemption. The fifth-trumpet host is forbidden to harm those who have it.	Economic lock. No buying or selling without it. Public alignment test.
Human checkpoint	Never used by merchants or soldiers in the narrative	Built to be checked
Readers in-scene	The sealer, the abyss-host, and John-in-vision	The marketplace / system
Refusal class	Not described as optional once applied	Refusals exist (20:4); they are not treated as a neutral middle

Table 1. Two signs, two jobs.

4. Sequence

God’s seal is first. The beast’s mark is later. That order is not a homiletic preference. It is the book’s chronology.

Chapter 7 closes a set of people under a seal before the trumpet sequence is allowed to touch earth, sea, and trees. Chapter 9 then releases a host from the shaft of the abyss. That host is given a targeting rule that already assumes the seal exists and can be discriminated. Chapter 13 introduces a second sign only after the beast system is on the stage. The second sign is not required for the first seal to function. It is required for a human economy to sort people it cannot otherwise read.

Functional gloss, kept as gloss: if a world cannot see who is already named, it can still put its own brand on the table and watch who reaches for it. The beast mark is a revealer of alignment to the beast. It is not the instrument that creates God’s seal, and it is not proof that God’s seal was absent until the chip arrived.

5. Visibility

5.1 What the scenes require

Three readers of God’s seal appear in the narrative: the angel who applies it, the fifth-trumpet host ordered to skip those who have it, and John when he sees the written name in vision. No merchant, soldier, neighbor, or census clerk in the book looks at a forehead and says “sealed — pass.”

The beast mark is built as a checkpoint. Hand or forehead. Name or number. Buy and sell gated on possession. That is public by design. A system that cannot inspect the first seal can still inspect the second.

5.2 Inference, capped

Best fit for the data: God’s seal is **selectively visible**. Readable to the sealer, to the abyss-host, and inside the visionary frame. Not established as a public credential. “Invisible” is too strong if it means physically nonexistent. “Only certain eyes, creatures, or conditions” is the accurate bound.

This also explains the literary need for a second mark. If God’s seal were a stamp every human eye could read, the beast system would not need its own brand to map the field.

6. The unmarked

Revelation does not name a protected third team called “the unmarked.” It runs two binaries at two points in the book.

At the fifth trumpet only one forehead-sign exists: the seal of God. The host may sting whoever does not have it. In that window “unmarked” means **not sealed**. That set is everyone else. It is not a safe middle. The chapter does not ask who will later take a beast mark. It asks who already has the seal.

Under the beast system the live question becomes take versus refuse. Refusals are written (20:4). They are a side, not a civilian class that sits out both brands and walks away clean. The pressure of chapter 13 is economic and cultic: worship and mark, or be cut out of buy/sell.

The gap is real and should stay marked as a gap. John does not write a durable neutral. He writes sealed, marked, and — between those scenes — people who simply do not have the seal yet, which in chapter 9 is already enough to put them in range.

7. Interface with the fifth-trumpet host

The fifth-trumpet figures are named locusts and described as a war-composite: horses prepared for battle, crowns like gold, human faces, hair like women, teeth like lions, iron breastplates, wings that sound like massed chariots, tails like scorpions. They come out of smoke from the shaft of the abyss, smoke like a great furnace that darkens sun and air. They have a king, the angel of the abyss, Abaddon / Apollyon.

Rules of engagement, not order of battle:

- Origin: the opened shaft; they emerge from furnace-smoke.
- Ban on the earth: no harm to grass, any green thing, or any tree.
- Target set: people who do not have the seal of God on the forehead.
- Cap on lethality: torment, not killing.
- Cap on time: five months, stated twice (9:5, 9:10).
- Effect on victims: they seek death and do not find it.
- Exit: not written. The first woe passes; the sixth trumpet begins.

The plant-ban is an inversion of Exodus 10 and Joel. Those locusts eat the land. These are forbidden to be a crop plague. The earth is fenced. Unsealed people are not. That is function, not climate advice. Furnace-smoke supplies heat and concealment as image. It does not give a latitude, a thermal weakness, or a “go somewhere cold and plantless” protocol. The only shelter the chapter names is the seal.

Size is withheld. So is killability by human weapons. So is where they go when five months end. Those three omissions are the variables a staff officer would put first on a prep sheet. The book gives constraints and refuses a weapons package. That cut is data.

8. What five months is doing

Five months is a bound on authority, not a note about how long a bug buzzes. Main text-near explanations, none of which must be promoted to doctrine:

- Locust-season window in the Near East (roughly late spring through late summer) and the ordinary adult span of desert locusts (on the order of two and a half to five months). The book keeps the old plague duration after stripping the host of eating plants.
- Five 30-day months = 150 days. Genesis 7:24: the waters prevailed 150 days. Limited total judgment, then a stop.

- Campaign length before the sixth trumpet, where death arrives at scale (a third of mankind).
- Historicist day-year overlays (150 years) are later systems, not in the Greek.

The host is bound. The book tells you that. It does not tell you how to bind them.

9. Claims this paper does not make

- It does not identify the beast mark as a chip, RFID, implant, or any other device. Those are contemporary overlays.
- It does not identify God's seal as "nothing," "natural," "barren," or the mere absence of a device. The text calls it a seal applied and a name written.
- It does not assign the fifth-trumpet host a species, a genome, a caliber, or a habitat map.
- It does not treat silence about human counterattack as proof they are small, nor war-horse language as proof they are cavalry. Both are inferences. The middle — numerous enough to grind five months, hard to pick off, coordinated enough to have a king — remains a middle.
- It does not place legal names, residences, or court matters in this file.
- It does not claim special status for the compiler. Azriel / GodLock.AZ is the public work layer.

10. Working thesis

Two ownership signs. One earlier, selectively readable, used by heaven and by the abyss-host as an exemption key. One later, publicly checkable, used by a system to force a show of alignment and to lock trade. The unmarked are not a third protected nation. Before chapter 13 they are simply the unsealed, and in chapter 9 that is already the target set. After chapter 13 refusal of the beast mark is a side that costs.

The fifth-trumpet scene is the first operational test of the first seal. Smoke first, then the host already in it: emergence without a clean order of battle. Earth protected. People sorted by a sign most human eyes are never shown how to read.

11. Open questions left on the table

- Is the 144,000 coextensive with all who are sealed, or a specified subset inside a larger sealed set?
- Does the great multitude of 7:9 carry the same forehead-seal, a different protection, or none named?
- Is the written name of 14:1 the same object as the seal of 7:2–3, or a later disclosure of what the seal contained?
- Can a person be sealed after the fifth trumpet begins, or is the gate closed when the shaft opens?
- When the five months end, is the host recalled, destroyed, stood down, or simply dropped from the camera?
- What, if anything, in the sixth-trumpet cavalry is continuous with the fifth-trumpet host?

End of working paper. Citations are to the canonical chapter-and-verse map of Revelation and to Ezekiel 9 as prior grammar. Natural-history notes on desert-locust lifespan are background for the five-month image only. They do not turn the fifth-trumpet host into *Schistocerca gregaria*.

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