

## 7.

## THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Seemingly, the evidence of each person's submission to the worship of the beast will be some kind of mark. This mark comes in three varieties. It can be the Beast's "mark," his name, or the number of his name (Rev 13:17). Without this mark, no one can buy or sell. Having this mark will be necessary to continue to participate in any and all commercial transactions.

Why is it that the Antichrist will demand the use of this mark? We must remember here that his main purpose is religious. He wants everyone to convert. His goal is that all the world would worship him, his image and the dragon. So, how could he go about accomplishing his end? How could he get everyone to participate in this worship? How could he have so many instant converts?

It is probable that, outside the Muslim world, most people would be resistant to this

religion. Of course there will be a lot of spiritual power behind it, but nevertheless, many people of the world today are atheist, agnostic and/or just plain opposed to the thought of worshipping a superior being. Also, anyone who today is not a Muslim would no doubt object to the idea of being converted.

Persuading people to change their religion is not an easy thing, as many missionaries know. Such changes do not come quickly. Even with the devil's anointing on it, it is not likely that the religion of the Antichrist will be instantly embraced by the whole world. As persuasive as the Antichrist might seem to be, he will still have a lot of trouble convincing everyone. In fact, it would seem that there would be quite a bit of resistance to him.

Consequently, the Antichrist will have to apply some pressure on people to impel them toward his goal. We must remember here that he is not going to have huge armies with which to conquer the world. So, applying direct, physical pressure would be very difficult.

But, one way to control people is to control their money. If you can get hold of their pocketbook, you then have power over them. Securing control over their ability to buy and sell would seem an ideal way to have dominion over anyone.

How might such a thing work? Here we will again indulge ourselves in a little specula-

tion. We have hypothesized that the Antichrist will control much of the world's oil. Using this control, he could then pressure the various governments of the world to do his will in order to receive their oil. This pressure will be extreme due to the desperate dependence of the modern economies on petroleum.

One tactic he could use would be to demand that the various governments pass a few new laws regarding banking. These new rules would affect all the financial institutions.

These regulations could work something like this: in order to continue to use the services of any financial institution, each citizen would be required to supply proof of their conversion to the Beast religion. This proof would be some kind of mark. This mark would be their ticket to continue to buy and sell.

People would have to show through documentation or actual, physical examination that they had received the mark, whatever this mark proves to be. If anyone does not submit the required proof within a certain time limit, then he or she will no longer be able to use the services of any financial institution.

Let us say that you refused to cooperate. This would then mean that your bank account would be frozen. You could no longer write checks to pay for what you wanted to buy, including food, clothing and gasoline. You would no longer be able to pay your bills sim-

ply by writing checks and sending them through the mail. You could not transfer your money anywhere, including to another country.

Also, you would have difficulty liquidating your assets, especially if they had a mortgage or loan on them. Any loans, including home mortgages, might be called in. No financial institution would be able to do business with you.

Next, your credit cards would be canceled. You could not simply call up some company or store and order what you needed. Your credit card would no longer be valid. This would then put anyone who had this happen to him or her in a very difficult position. Their mortgage, if they still had one, would not get paid. If their home was already paid off, they still could not pay their taxes or utility bills.

Soon, they would have no place to live. They could not buy food, so their family would begin to go hungry. They could not travel unless they had cash, so they could not easily escape to some place else where the influence of the Antichrist would have less impact.

Then, more laws could be passed regarding businesses or individuals buying or selling to those who did not have this mark. They would be prohibited from doing business with anyone unregistered. Even if you had cash, officially stores would be reluctant or unable to sell you anything. The results would be far-reaching and catastrophic.

In this way, tremendous pressure, unbelievable pressure would be brought to bear on anyone who did not conform. Those who refused to worship would be subjected to the most extreme circumstances and difficulties.

Even more than this, those who continued to refuse to cooperate could be imprisoned and put to death. Eventually, it is very possible that governments would be required to round up the holdouts and turn them over for execution or execute them themselves.

Such a scenario might seem remote to you. Perhaps you cannot imagine your government being involved in such practices. Maybe you live in a country where you believe your rights are guaranteed. But take a moment to contemplate this: the coming days are going to be extremely trying. Your government will be under great duress. Without oil, the economy will collapse. Food will become scarce. Citizens will riot, demanding that the government do something.

In such difficult circumstances, leaders will be forced to take steps which they would never consider in a time of peace and safety. The worse the situation gets, the more world leaders will be willing to compromise to escape the consequences.

It is probable that in such conditions a sort of black market would suddenly appear. There will always be those who are ready and willing

to profit from the misfortune of others. So, profiteers and gougers would materialize out of the woodwork. These would be people who would buy for you what you need and resell it to you at an exorbitant price.

If you refused to receive the mark, but had various valuables in your home, you might survive for a while. Cash, gold coins, jewelry, antiques, tools and other items of intrinsic value might be traded at a fraction of their true worth for food, gasoline and other things which you might need. Yet such trade would only last so long or take you so far.

Such circumstances would certainly try your faith. Your commitment to Jesus would be severely tested. If you found yourself in such a bind, what would you do? Are you ready and willing to sacrifice your life and even the lives of your family to remain faithful to Christ? Is your love for Him such that it would withstand such tremendous pressure? Have you settled in your heart that you are ready to suffer and even die, rather than deny Him?

No doubt, believers in countries where there is or has been severe persecution have dealt with these issues already. They have been forced to do so. But how about you? Where is your heart today?

There is no doubt that the Antichrist will make it as easy as possible for people to accept his way. He will certainly propagate many lies

to make his religion seem palatable. He may even insist that his way is somehow compatible with Christianity with only a few, slight adjustments. Not only will the pressure to conform be enormous, but the lie which the Antichrist puts forth will seem very attractive. It may seem to be a fairly innocuous, small thing to do to conform to his way. Remember, all of the devil's deceptive power will be thrown behind this new religion.

### THE "HOLY" MICROCHIP

Many, many Christians have spoken to me about the possibility of a microchip being implanted under their skin. This they think will be the "mark" of the beast. They imagine when they make any financial transaction that this chip will be scanned and then the information transferred to a computer in the possession of the Beast or which might even be called "The Beast." Then, they suppose the Antichrist will be able to keep track of all their transactions. Please bear with me as we examine this idea together.

There is nothing in the Bible which indicates a microchip. There is simply no verse which demands or even points to this conclusion. This is merely modern fiction and imagination. The fact that bar codes have three sixes on them (if indeed they do) is not scriptural proof of any-

thing. So much of modern eschatology is based on nothing more than mere imagination.

Not only this, but there are many problems with the microchip idea. First, the logistics of the implementation of such a scheme are astoundingly complicated. Secondly, it would be enormously expensive to achieve.

In order to accomplish this, the Antichrist would have to manufacture billions of chips for everyone in the world. Then he would have to individually program each one of them to identify the wearer. Then he would have to surgically implant billions of these chips. Next he would have to make and install special scanners to read these chips in every point of sale in the world, costing possibly trillions of dollars and involving millions of hours of work. If you stop and think about this sanely, this method is not practical.

No world ruler would invest so much time and money in this project. It simply is not necessary. There is no compelling reason for the coming Antichrist to set up such a scheme. It is impractical, expensive and unnecessary. Also, we must remember that he will not have this power over the world for very many years. Therefore, it is a good bet that he will not do it.

The truth is that this method would not function in about half of the world today. In many places, if you would tell them that in order to make a purchase, they would have to

have their chip scanned at the store, that this information would be transmitted by telephone and then money would be deducted from their bank account, they might die laughing.

Their stores have no scanners. There are few, if any, telephones. If there were, many citizens have no bank account from which the money could be withdrawn. Such a system would be impossible for them. This situation is true for much of the world.

For example, there are places today where just a few people in a town have phones. These are cell phones. Others come from miles around and pay to use these few phones. There are entire cities of thousands of people in today's world with only one bank of telephones at one location to serve them.

Many people are not familiar with other parts of the world. They think only in terms of where they live, which may be modern and convenient. But there is a large portion of the world where such things simply would not work. To modernize all nations to the point where such transactions were feasible would take decades or even centuries, if it were possible at all. A few countries in the world today are not only not developing, they are going backwards. In some places the infrastructure which once existed is falling apart.

A microchip simply is not necessary. The Antichrist will have no need to track all your

purchases as if he were your credit card company. There will be no necessity for you to be continually tracked anywhere. He will have no interest in your day-to-day activities.

All he will require is for you to show up once to try to buy one item without a mark. From then on, you won't be thinking about spending any more money. If you submit, well and good. If you don't, they won't need to track you. They will know where you are. You will probably either be in their custody or dead.

When the situation becomes very critical, whenever you try to buy or sell, whoever is responsible will check to see if you are qualified by examining your mark. This might work much like the clerk checking your driver's license to verify your signature. If you don't have a mark, then you might be carried away to another place to await another fate.

Huge computers also are not necessary to carry out this scheme. The Antichrist will not be like "big brother" watching your every move. He will have no desire to be leering into your living room, bedroom or bathroom like the recent television program. He will have other things to do.

The only thing that interests him is if you have submitted to his worship and accepted his new religion. If so, you will have a mark to prove it. If not, then you will either take one or face the consequences. Trying to buy without a

mark will only need to happen once. After that, there will be no need to track you or your purchases. Your fate will already be decided.

This mark or sign of your allegiance does not need to be a complicated affair. It need not require special electronics. Any sort of identifying mark might work. But it seems logical that something readily visible might serve the Antichrist's purposes the best.

The necessity for a mark in order to buy or sell is simply the easiest way to check people for their submission. For example, instead of going house to house, checking to see if everyone is practicing the correct religion, the authorities responsible can simply monitor the points of sale where people buy their goods. Then the clerks who are running the register would have to verify a person's mark before completing the sale. If someone does not have the mark, then they would summon the store security or some kind of officer to take care of the situation.

Also, a visible mark would work better in other situations. For example, officials could monitor public places such as malls or grocery stores to see if those entering and leaving were marked. Also, friends and neighbors could much more easily tell if you had a mark or not if it were visible.

No doubt the Antichrist will have to have his minions in every country verifying compliance. Since many governments and even the

populations might resist such efforts against believers, the Antichrist would be required to send some of his representatives to check on things. They would need to verify that no non-worshiper was getting away.

Fortunately for the Antichrist, many countries of the world have embraced a substantial population of Muslims who might gladly volunteer for these positions. They have immigrated in large numbers to many of the world's nations. Perhaps they would be grateful for the employment and the opportunity to spread their religion.

In any case, a plainly visible mark would be much faster and easier to show and to verify. I know that many, many people will argue with me about this microchip. It has been taught so much that it has become holy. To deny the microchip has almost become equal to denying Christ.

Nevertheless, it has not one verse to substantiate it. Also, it is not necessary. Think about this a minute. If you were in charge of a worldwide crackdown on believers, how would you do it? What would be the simplest, cheapest way? Technology is expensive and difficult to implement. Simple marks or even documents could be very cheap.

If our Lord tarries for many decades or even centuries, perhaps the world will reach a point where the microchip idea will become feasible.

This is not impossible. My point here is that it is not necessary or demanded by the scriptures. Therefore, it is not a good idea to be focusing on it as a means to identify the Antichrist or his schemes. There are other ways – more convenient, less expensive and easier ways – for the Antichrist to make his mark. Don't be caught looking in the wrong direction.

The Antichrist will rule ten nations in a part of the world that is less developed. He will have little interest in where you go or what you do after work. He will not care about your personal habits. His one goal is to make converts of all inhabitants of the planet. How can he do this in the quickest, easiest way?

I do not insist that his system will be fool-proof or even that it will be universal. I would only care to point out that Christianity today has been taught many things about the last days which are composed largely of speculation and imagination and have very little, if any, biblical basis. Consequently, a great many believers are making a lot of commotion about things which will prove to be a waste of time and energy.

### WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Interestingly, there are two words in the Greek language for "mark." One of them is STIGMA. This word means, according to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: "a

tattooed mark” or “a mark burnt in, a brand.” This refers to some kind of physical mark which could be put on the skin of a person.

The other word translated “mark” is CHARAGMA. This word means, according to Vine: “a stamp” or “impress.” This word refers to the form which is left in hot wax after a seal or stamp has been pressed upon it. It is this Greek word from which we get our English word “character.”

The word found in Revelation 13:16,17 for the mark of the Beast in the Greek is CHARAGMA *not* STIGMA. Therefore, we can conclude from this that the mark of the Beast is not simply a physical tattoo or brand. It is something which is directly related to our mindset, the formation of our thinking or character.

To accept this mark means that we have chosen to adapt our thinking to that of the Antichrist. We have, due to the pressure put upon us, modified our character to conform to the impression of the Beast. We have chosen to change our way of thinking to conform to his image. To accept the mark of the Beast is to accept his religion.

We don't really know what the “mark” of the Beast will be. But we can learn from this discussion that taking the mark will be intimately related to our character, our way of thinking. In the book of Revelation, the verse speaking about the Beast's mark is found shortly before

another verse about some saints who have "...His Father's name written on their foreheads" (Rev 14:1).

It is not likely that these people have "Daddy God" or something like that, written literally on their foreheads. This verse undoubtedly speaks to us about the mindset of these people.

Here are some folks whose minds have been renewed (Rm 12:2). Their thought processes have been transformed to be in harmony with the ideas and attitudes of Christ. Their thoughts, opinions and reasonings are controlled by the Holy Spirit. They have subjected their minds to the control of Jesus Christ and He is reigning over them.

Therefore, the decision to take or not to take the mark of the Beast will be an intense battle. It will be a struggle for who will control and dominate the minds of men. The physical mark, if there is one, will only be the evidence that someone has decided to allow the image of the Antichrist – his religious programs and purposes – to be impressed upon his malleable mind.

Any believer who has not submitted his or her mind to the complete control of Jesus Christ, will find themselves in an intense struggle. They will have to decide whether to let their natural impulses and physical needs dominate their decisions, or to let the Lord govern their thoughts and decisions. You see, if your

mind is now conformed to this world, if you are loving and pursuing all the things and pleasures of earth, suddenly someone is going to get in between you and what you think you need and want.

The Antichrist will, by gaining control of the financial system, also gain control of your access to your desires. In order to continue on with your lifestyle, you will have to go through him. To continue to buy and sell, you will have to conform yourself to his religion. Your mind and your character will have to take on the image of the Beast.

This will be an hour of intense spiritual battle with very high stakes. You see, in order to survive, many will be pressured right up to and including the point of death, to take this mark. If they have lived a life of self-serving and indulging their natural appetites, then this decision will be extremely difficult.

Those who love this world along with its things and pleasures will be in a bind. But those who have already learned to deny themselves and submit to Jesus, will be victorious.