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MINISTRIES

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What is the Mark of the Beast?

If there is a topic within the scope of Biblical end times that dominates interest and discussion, there is no doubt that the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation 13:16 would be near at the top of such a list.

Several verses in Revelation make reference to this mark. The most cited reference is Revelation 13:15-18.

Revelation 13:15-18

And it was allowed to give breath to the **image of the beast**, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, **to be marked on the right hand or the forehead**, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

There is a lot to cover in that set of verses. In this teaching we will provide some brief insight on the image of the beast, buying and selling, the mark on the right hand or the forehead, and the number of the beast. This teaching is by no means going to go into all the detail and depth that these deserve. Our goal here is simply to form an interpretative perspective that might serve well when these prophetic events take place, whether in our lifetimes or not. We want to propose some key ingredients to look for, and if you do not see such key ingredients in any given theory, then you are better equipped to exercise discernment.

While Revelation 13 is the dominant chapter that comes to mind regarding the mark of the beast, subsequent related verses emphasize the extreme consequences individuals face should they take this mark. As we read these verses, note how receiving the mark is correlated with worshipping the beast, or also known as the antichrist. This will be important later in the teaching.

Revelation 14:9-12

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, **“If anyone worships the**

beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus [Yeshua].

Revelation 15:2

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast **and its image and the number of its name**, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

Revelation 19:20

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had **received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image**. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur...

Revelation 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus [Yeshua] and for the word of God, **and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands**. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Proper and full understanding of the beast, false prophet, the mark, and 666, at least in terms of specifics, might not be fully revealed until these events transpire. Regardless, there is no shortage of theories on any of these. Take the mark of the beast for example, the last few decades have generated several theories about the mark of the beast. We will cover a few of these theories, but this is by no means an exhaustive list.

Bar Codes on Consumer Goods

When bar codes or UPCs were first introduced as a means to use coded numbers as part of the buying and selling process, there was immediate speculation that bar codes would eventually become the mark of the beast. Some still believe it to this day.

Credit Cards

Then there were credit cards. Because they facilitated buying and selling with numbers, they consequently became associated with the mark of the beast.

Implanted RFID Chips or Microchips

More recently, as technology progressed, RFID and microchips were suggested to be the mark of the beast, and began to dominate many mark of the beast theories.

COVID-19 Vaccine

More recently, with the COVID-19 pandemic in progress at the writing of this teaching, there has been increased speculation that vaccines could be the mark of the beast. It is proposed that a person might not be able to buy or sell without the vaccine.

There have been countless other theories as it relates to the mark of the beast, and we are simply offering some of the more common examples from the last few decades.

It should be noted that a common denominator in all of these theories is that there is some actual or proposed relationship to buying or selling. The proposed reasoning for that takes us right back to Revelation 13.

Revelation 13:16-17

Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, **to be marked on the right hand or the forehead**, so that no one **can buy or sell** unless he has the mark, that is, the **name** of the beast or the **number** of its name.

There is a reasonable motive for wanting to know the specifics of the mark of the beast. Experiencing God's wrath and a promise to be tossed into the lake of fire would compel any reasonable person in the faith to make every attempt to avoid taking the mark of the beast. So, we cannot fault any person for seeking out theories that define the mark. It is easier to avoid something if you know exactly what it is, right?

We are often asked, "What is the mark of the beast?" or sometimes, a particularly troubled or frightened person will contact us and declare that they believe they have already taken the mark of the beast and believe that they are now doomed for all of eternity. Hopefully, by the end of this teaching, it will be clear that a person in the faith taking the mark of the beast accidentally is not really possible. The mark of the beast will be clear to those who follow the law of God, the Torah, when it arrives.

So, how can we gain some reasonable clarity around this subject?

John, the author of the book of Revelation, affords us a mysterious clue.

The mark of the beast is the name of the beast and/or the number of his name:

Revelation 13:17

no one **can buy or sell** unless he has the mark, that is, the **name** of the beast or the **number** of its name.

Following that statement, we are provided a little more detail.

Revelation 13:18

This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and **his number is 666**

Wow, what in the world does that mean? What does 666 mean? It has only been discussed for about 2,000 years or so, and this is not to say that we have it fully figured out. But, let's begin to work through this a little. Hopefully we provide you some better understanding that makes some sense.

The process of working from a number to a name was an ancient process called *gematria* in Hebrew. It was not uncommon for ancient languages to use the letters of the alphabet for their numerical systems. Such a system was well known by those who could read and write.

Sometimes this process was used to hide the identity of a particular person in written statements.

For example, the graffito from Pompeii (about 79 AD) reads "I love her whose number is 545." Only those who knew the name or the pool of candidates could work out the riddle.

The history of interpretation concerning the correlation of a person with the number 666 has only resulted in endless speculations.

One of the most prominent candidates has been the first-century Roman emperor Nero. A rare rendering of his name into Neron Caesar, which is transliterated into Hebrew as nrwn qsr, renders the number 666 (nun/50, resh/200, waw/6, nun/50, qof/100, samech/60, and resh/200 = 666).

This rare form of Nero's name was actually found in an Aramaic document from Qumran. It is also noteworthy that a variant reading in Greek New Testament manuscripts exists that cites the number as "616" rather than "666." The transliteration of the normal Nero Caesar into the Hebrew nrw qsr, renders the number 616. There was also a belief in a revived Nero as the antichrist from the first century (cf. book 5 of the Sibylline Oracles) to the time of Augustine, who cites this idea in *The City of God*.

Whether Nero was or was not a type of the antichrist is unclear, as there are some similarities. We mentioned Nero because many are familiar with that theory and the supposed connection to 666. Most believe there is still a final antichrist to come, and this is what John had in mind. It is also doubtful that the usage of gematria is what is intended to unlock the meaning of 666.

If you recall, John stated that we would require wisdom to solve the mystery of the name of the beast and its number of 666.

Wisdom is not only knowledge, but the experience and discernment needed to apply such knowledge.

When John said we needed wisdom, one might be wise to consider that John was referencing the ability to properly apply and discern the knowledge of the Scriptures. Biblically speaking, true wisdom comes from knowing and correctly applying the Word of God.

How does knowing Scripture relate to the number 666?

The only other instance in which 666 appears in the Scriptures is related to Solomon.

2 Chronicles 9:13

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold,

Some might arrive to the conclusion that this mention of 666 is simply a coincidence. On the surface, it does not appear to offer much insight, nor does it seem to connect to Revelation. Perhaps it is just a coincidence and means nothing. However, for those who doubt coincidences in the Bible, consider the following.

In the law of God, the Torah, Deuteronomy 17 lays out an interesting command specific to kings of

Israel. It prohibits the king from multiplying horses and chariots, wives, and wealth. This is exactly what Solomon is doing in 1 Kings 10-11.

Chapter ten begins by commending his great wisdom, but then, step by step, we see a gradual decline - that is, he begins violating the rules for kings by multiplying gold (666 talents a year). He begins multiplying horses and chariots, and finally multiplying wives. If that was not bad enough, these numerous wives turn his heart away from following YHWH. He sets up centers of false worship for all the foreign gods of his wives.

So, using the Bible to interpret the Bible, it could be reasonably deduced that the number 666 is associated with Solomon in his fall, his abuse of power, and his turning away from the true worship of YHWH.

This conclusion should not seem like much of a stretch, because, interestingly enough, that is exactly what Revelation already says:

Revelation 19:20

received the mark of the beast **and those who worshiped its image**

Revelation 20:4

those who had **not worshiped the beast or its image** and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.

So, here is the point we are attempting to establish. Whatever the mark of the beast might be, it will be founded on the blatant false worship and an anti-Torah alignment with the beast. There will be no mistaking it.

But what about the restriction of buying and selling as it relates to this mark?

That is a good and fair question. So often it is reasonably assumed that the buying and selling is economic in nature. Perhaps it is. However, there is a certain contextual economy already established in Revelation and might be better supported when a continuous stream of context is kept in mind and applied.

In Revelation, Yeshua metaphorically establishes transactions of worship as business transactions - buying and selling.

Revelation 3:18

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

This appears to connect back to chapter 13 with reference to worship of the beast - the image set up by the beast which must be worshiped to avoid the threat of death. Everyone must worship the image, but no one may do so without the mark. The buying and selling referred to here is of the same kind established by Yeshua in chapter 3. It is worship – metaphorically as spiritual transactions.

Revelation 13:15

And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might

even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

Of course, verse 15 flows right into the context of the mark of the beast verse we read earlier.

This kind of forced worship of an image set up also has ties back to Nebuchadnezzar.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits, which appears dangerously close to the infamous number of 666.

Daniel 3:4-5

And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

Nebuchadnezzar is acting as a beast and sets up an actual image to be worshiped. Again, we have six and sixty associated with worship of a false image with the threat of death.

All of this comes together in the name and number of the man - 666. This sums up man in his fallen state. The number carries with it the fallen glory of Solomon, his degraded wisdom, his failure to follow the word of God, his abuse of power, and his allowing himself to be turned aside to the worship of false gods.

The worship of false gods is the exact opposite of following the Torah. When we follow the Torah, we are pledging allegiance to YHWH as the supreme authority over our lives. In fact, it is the following of the Torah that is the image of God. When Adam was created, he was created in the image of God. He followed the Torah. When he sinned, he was no longer in the perfect image of God. Someday, at the resurrection, we will be restored to that perfect image. For more on this, we would suggest our teaching, [“Returning to the Image of God.”](#)

Likewise, the beast has his own image, and that image is an anti-Torah image. It will become mandatory to conform to that image and conforming to the image of YHWH will include the threat of death.

In fact, for those who know that prophecy is revealed in cyclical patterns, consider examining the Maccabean period. After Antiochus Epiphanes set himself up as a type of antichrist by sacrificing a pig in the temple, an anti-Torah image was established as law under the threat of death. Jews were forced to eat pig and abandon the Sabbath and feast days. They were not permitted to study or practice the Word of God. Circumcision was forbidden. If they violated this anti-Torah image, they risked death, and quite often, a painful death.

This is also why Nero, who was mentioned before and did similar things, could have also been a type of the antichrist. Many of these things have happened and are promised to occur again. What has happened before will happen again. Breath will be given to the image of the beast, and the image will go forth. The image will be animated to life in a sense, and carry authority behind it.

Revelation 13:15

And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

For more on what “giving breath” means in an Hebraic sense, we would suggested watching the

teachings “[The Life After Death Series - Part I](#)” or the “[Hebrew Root of Spirit](#).”

For whatever it is worth, the point is this. The image of the beast does not appear to be a physical image. It appears to be an anti-Torah mandate from a governmental authority, just as has happened several times before, as a shadow of what is to come. By following this anti-Torah image, it is placed in your mind and thus written on your forehead. That is the mark on the forehead. Once it is in your mind, then you do what is in your mind. You do what is against the Torah. Your actions are represented by your hands. By following and doing the anti-Torah image you are taking the mark.

Revelation 13:15-18

And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, **to be marked on the right hand or the forehead**, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666

So, this is not to say that there is not a physical mark. Perhaps there is. However, historically and cyclically, this is the pattern we should be looking for – that is an anti-Torah image to take life under the authority of some governmental structure.

Likewise, YHWH also has a mark on the forehead and on the hand. That mark, or image, is the Torah.

Deuteronomy 6:1;8

“Now this is the **commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord [YHWH] your God commanded me to teach you**, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it... You shall bind them as **a sign on your hand**, and they shall be as **frontlets between your eyes**.

That is the mark we want, the mark of YHWH, which is the Torah.

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

And there is the mark of the beast, which is a mark of anti-Torah.

Revelation 13:16-17

It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

Historically, when this has occurred before, it took shape just as Revelation metaphorically describes. Could there be physical elements? We suppose that is possible, but it is not necessary. What is necessary is that the mark of the beast, when it arrives, will unmistakably be connected with the worship of an anti-Torah mandate under the threat of death. If you do not see those clear elements, then it is not the mark of the beast.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

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