

Will You Be Ready to Reject the Mark of the Beast?

Where there is prophecy, there is plenty of speculation. People wonder: When will the “end time” be? Who will be the Beast prophesied in Revelation? What nations will comprise that final union the Beast will head, and when will that government arise?

by Rick Shabi

Perhaps no passage in the Bible has drawn more speculation than Revelation 13:16-17:

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive 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*” (emphasis added throughout).

The mark of the Beast has long fascinated readers of Revelation. What will the mark be? Will it be a literal mark like the Jews had to wear during Hitler’s Third Reich? Will it be a figurative mark, such as worshipping a false god on a false Sabbath day? Or as some modern theories suggest, will it be a computer chip that is implanted in each person, allowing him or her to “buy and sell” once he or she has “pledged allegiance” to the Beast power?

Speculation makes for interesting contemplation and conversation, but among the many questions we might ask about the mark of the Beast, there is one very important thing we should ask ourselves: *Will I* be ready to reject the mark of the Beast when that time comes?

The purpose of the mark

The society that inflicts the mark of the Beast differs significantly from the world we know today. In *that* future time, there will be no distinction between the “small and great, rich and poor, free and slave.” *No one* will be able to “buy or sell” *anything*—that is, conduct any commerce—unless he or she publicly accepts the precepts, supremacy and ultimate authority of the government led by the Beast, thereby receiving its “mark” of approval.

What kind of government will hold such sway over the people of this world?

Revelation 13 offers a striking description of the world-ruling system of that time.

“Then I saw a Beast coming up out of the sea. *It had ten horns* and seven heads, and there was a *crown* on each horn. A name against God was written on each head... And *the dragon gave the Beast all of his power and his throne and great authority*. One of the heads of the Beast looked as if it had been killed by a wound, but this death wound was healed. Then the *whole world* was amazed and followed the Beast. *People worshiped the dragon* because he had given his power to the Beast. And they also worshiped the Beast, asking, ‘Who is like the Beast? *Who can make war against it?*’” (Revelation 13:1-4, New Century Version).

Here’s a future governmental system that arises out of the sea, is a union of 10 lesser authorities, derives its power and authority from Satan (the identity of the “dragon” is revealed in Revelation 12:9), captivates the imagination of the world and exerts such military might that it appears invincible.

But there’s more. “The Beast was allowed to say proud words and words against God, and it was allowed to use its power for forty-two months. *It used its mouth to speak against God, against God’s name, against the place where God lives, and against all those who live in heaven*. It was given power to make war against God’s holy people and to defeat them. *It was given power over every tribe, people, language, and nation*. And all who live on earth will *worship* the Beast—all...whose names are *not* written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 13:5-8, NCV).

This future government and world-dominating military power is the adversary of the God of the Judeo/Christian Bible. It

Christ admonished His disciples to settle it in their hearts ahead of time that they would rely on Him for the words, strength and courage they would need to endure the time of the end—the time when mankind will have to choose between loyalty to God and accepting the mark of the Beast.

The Mark and Number of the Beast

The second Beast of Revelation 13 will cause “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive 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” (verses 16-17).

What is behind this strange-sounding practice? How will it affect people as the time of the end draws near?

There is historical evidence that, in the ancient Babylonian culture, slaves “were identified...[by] some kind of mark, either tattooed or branded on the face or the back of the hand...” (H.W.H. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon*, 1962, p. 173). There may be parallels between this ancient practice and what God reveals will happen in the end time.

Many have speculated about the meaning of this puzzling prophecy. Some interpret it in terms of supercomputers, unique personal identity numbers and even microchips embedded under the skin.

However, we should consider that receiving a mark on the hand or forehead could well be figurative. Remember from Revelation 7:3 that God’s servants were sealed

on their foreheads. And in Deuteronomy 6 Moses told God’s people to “keep all His statutes and His commandments,” noting, “You shall bind them as a *sign on your hand*, and they shall be as frontlets *between your eyes*” (verses 2, 8). The hand and forehead here represent one’s actions and thoughts respectively—which should be dedicated to obeying God.

Likewise the mark of the Beast is evidently a mark of disobedience to God. Many Bible students have pointed to God’s seventh-day Sabbath as an identifying sign of His people in Exodus 31:12-17 and see the mark of the Beast as running counter to it.

They believe that forced observance of Sunday—a day originally dedicated to the worship of the sun as a god instead of the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath—could be involved. This view is strengthened by the fact that other prophecies in the book of Revelation show a great counterfeit religious figure and system will play major roles in leading people away from the true God and play into Satan’s hands at this time.

The Bible does not explicitly define the *specific methods* that the Beast will use to identify those free to participate in commerce

at the time of the end. Some sort of advanced surveillance may be involved.

As to the number of the Beast, 666, we are told to “calculate the number” and that it is “the number of a man” (Revelation 13:18).

One early explanation is attributed to John’s disciple Polycarp, who, according to his student Irenaeus, said this number is derived from adding together the numerical equivalents of the letters in the word *Lateinos*, the Greek word for “Roman”—this being the name of the Beast empire, its ruler and everyone in it. So the number may well denote this general distinction, though it could also be more specific.

However this prophecy is fulfilled, it is clear that it will involve compromising and contradicting God’s commands. Having proof that one is officially associated in some way with the Beast will be necessary for one to be allowed to engage in commerce.

Exactly how the end-time number of the Beast, 666, will be used and applied is not yet clear. But in some way it will be associated with the Beast’s name and applied to his evil activities.

(From the booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.) ❖

stands in opposition to all He stands for and seeks to extinguish His way, His laws, His people and His purpose from the earth. It exists not for the benefit of all mankind, but only for those who “worship” it and serve its ungodly mission.

This coming system will not be based on individual freedom, as Western countries are today. It is not “one nation under God” or “a government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

It is a governmental system of state and church that is subtly influenced and guided by none other than the spiritual force of Satan (“the dragon,” Revelation 13:4).

This corrupt spiritual being uses this system to deflect worship away from the source of life, the Creator God.

This system’s policies thwart the activities of God’s people and turn the populace of this world away from the true God. Thus unwittingly people are in essence indirectly worshipping Satan, who has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9). God does not mince words in calling Satan a “dragon.” God sees through the web of Satan’s guile and deceptions and lets us know this ahead of time so we will be alert as the world around us becomes darkened and confusing.

(To learn more about this prophesied world-ruling system, read or request our free booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* at wnponline.org.)

Can you imagine such a world?

Can you imagine living in a world where you are the enemy of the state because you believe and worship the true God?

Can you imagine having to choose between God and the access to money and credit so you can buy groceries, clothing or *anything* for your family? Can you imagine a world where your family is in need, and the “things” of life are abundant and readily available, but the price tag is your life?

“If anyone worships the Beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:9-11).

Such a world is coming. As world leaders grapple with the global economic crisis, ideas and considerations emerge that could suddenly and dramatically reshape the structure of the world’s economies and financial systems, leading to the time of the mark of the Beast.

“German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have said the G20 meeting of rich and emerging nations needs to produce ‘concrete results for reinforcing international financial regulation’ and an action plan aimed at strengthening the role of global financial institutions. *‘The top priority is the putting in place of a new global financial architecture,’* the two leaders wrote in a joint letter to the Czech EU presidency on Tuesday, March 17” (“Merkel, Sarkozy Reaffirm Stance on Overhauling Financial Systems,” dw-world.de, March 18, 2009).

Earlier this year, in a speech to the World Economic Forum, Merkel remarked, “The *state* is the guardian of the economic and social order so it has a very clear role. Competition is necessary but it is something that also needs a certain discipline and principles.” Sarkozy has made similar comments.

They are not alone in their sentiments. Current and former British Prime Ministers Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and financial experts in the United States and Europe echo the need for global oversight of what has become a truly global economy.



Reuters/Pascal Lauener

German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a special address to the participants of the World Economic Forum Jan. 30, 2009, where she identified the state as the guardian of economic and social order.

As the reality sinks in of a global economy where all nations are affected by the corrupt actions of a few, can a global currency with global banks and regulations tied to a global authority be far behind?

Will you be ready when that time comes?

Will you be ready to literally stand against the power of this anti-God, world-dominating government? How can true believers of Jesus Christ “endure to the end” in a society that requires their betrayal of Him in order to assure their lives?

When the apostles asked Christ about the end time, He told them that His believers would have to take a stand for Him.

“And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, *they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.*

“But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. *Therefore settle it in your hearts* not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist” (Luke 21:11-15).

Christ admonished His disciples to settle it in their hearts *ahead of time* that they would rely on Him

Recommended Reading

The book of Revelation remains mysterious to most people today but offers great insight into the events leading up to one of the world’s most momentous events—the return of Christ! For more information, request a free copy of The Book of Revelation Unveiled.



Contact any of our offices listed on page 15, or request or download it from our Web site at www.wnponline.org

for the words, strength and courage they would need to endure the time of the end—the time when mankind will have to choose between loyalty to God and accepting the mark of the Beast.

We would be well-advised to follow His admonition. When the ancient Israelites sought God to deliver them from the Philistines, Samuel said, “If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, *and prepare your hearts* for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines” (1 Samuel 7:3).

The Israelites heeded what Samuel said, and the Philistines were defeated.

As Ezra was returning from captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem, it is recorded, “Ezra had *prepared his heart* to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). He was mentally and spiritually prepared for his mission, and he accomplished it.

As King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned home safely after aligning himself with King Ahab of Israel, Jehu son of Hanani the seer said to him, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you. *Nevertheless good things are found in you*, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, *and have prepared your heart to seek God*” (2 Chronicles 19:2-3).

Meanwhile, the deeds of King Solomon’s son Rehoboam, who knew God, were pronounced “evil, because he *did not prepare his heart* to seek the LORD” (2 Chronicles 12:14).

Preparing your heart to choose God

Are you preparing your heart *now* so God can develop in you the character you will need to remain steadfastly loyal to Him when the time of the mark of the Beast comes?



Winston Taylor

This future governmental system is a union of 10 lesser authorities that derives its power from Satan and captivates the imagination of the world, exerting such military might that it appears invincible.

“Here is the *patience* of the saints; here are those who *keep the commandments* of God and the *faith* of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

Are you asking God to prepare your heart

so that you choose Him and His promises over the temporary physical pleasures, appeal and comfort offered by accepting the mark of the Beast?

“LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; *You will prepare their heart*; You will cause Your ear to hear, to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may oppress no more” (Psalm 10:17-18).

Will you be ready to reject the mark of the Beast, in whatever antibiblical form it takes, when that time comes?

More about how these end-time events fit together and the response God wants from His people can be found in our booklet *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. Read or request it free at wnponline.org. ❖