



The Mark of The Beast

The mark of the beast is certainly one of the most intriguing subjects addressed in the Bible. It has inspired numerous books, articles, and sermons and even a few Hollywood movies. According to the book of Revelation, this mysterious mark will be used by the end time beast as a means for preventing people from buying and selling if they have not received this mark (Rev 13:16-7). The Bible also indicates that this mark will be used by God as a means for determining who receives His wrath and who makes it into His Kingdom (Rev 14:9-11; 15:2-4; 20:4). Numerous theories have been presented regarding what exactly this mark is. This mark has probably been the focus of more speculation than any other Biblical subject, but what does the Bible itself have to say about what exactly this mark is?

The Two Beasts of Revelation 13

The mark of the beast is explained in Revelation 13. To properly understand the reference to this mark in Revelation 13 we first need to understand the two beasts addressed in this chapter. The first half of the chapter addresses a beast described as having seven heads and ten horns. It then goes on to add that this beast also possesses qualities similar to a leopard, a bear, and a lion.

Rev 13:1-10

¹ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. **And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.** ² **Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.**

³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped **the dragon who gave authority to the beast**; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who

dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

If we compare this description to the description of Daniel's dream recorded in Daniel 7, we see that the beast described in Revelation 13 obviously includes a compilation of all four of the beasts included in Daniel's dream. Daniel was told that the four beasts he saw represented four world dominating kingdoms that would dominate the world at various times throughout history (Dan 7:17). This tells us that the beast described in Revelation 13 is also speaking about a series of world ruling kingdoms. While it is true that some aspects of the description in Revelation 13:1-10 specifically have an end time application, it is important to remember that the description presented is obviously a compilation of a series of world dominating empires all throughout human history. This fact is important because it shows us that the mark of the beast is not just an end time concept but rather a concept that has applications all throughout human history.

Another important observation to make is the fact that this series of world ruling kingdoms get their power and authority from "the dragon" (Rev 13:1-4) which is a reference to Satan. In addition, the description of this beast as having seven heads and ten horns is identical to the way Satan is described in Revelation 12. So, while the various seven heads of the beast can be connected to specific world dominating kingdoms throughout human history, it is also important to remember that Satan's influence has dominated mankind throughout all of human history.

Rev 12:3-9

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: **behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.**

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days. ⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ **So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent**

of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The second half of Revelation 13 describes “another beast”. This beast is described as working in conjunction with the first beast and as having “two horns like a lamb” but speaking “like a dragon”.

Rev 13:11-18

¹¹ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. ¹² And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

¹³ He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ **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, ¹⁷ 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.**

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

We have already seen that the Bible symbolically refers to Satan as a “dragon” (Rev 13:3-17; 20:1-3). The Bible also symbolically refers to Jesus Christ as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29-36; Rev 7:14-17; 12:11; 13:8). So, Revelation 13:11 is telling us that this second beast has the appearance of Jesus Christ but speaks like Satan. This second beast symbolically represents a false religious system that works in conjunction with the world dominating kingdoms described in the first half of the chapter to deceive “those who dwell on the earth” and it is this religious system that causes people to take on the mark of the beast. So, Satan not only gives the beast its power and authority, he also directly works through a false religious system to deceive mankind into accepting the mark of the beast.

A Mark Used By God As Well

As we have seen, the end time beast power will utilize the mark of the beast as a means of identifying the individuals that it will target for persecution. Those that refuse

to receive this mark will be denied the right to buy and sell which will have a severe impact on their ability to obtain the basic necessities of life. However, it is important to notice that God also utilizes this mark as well. God uses this mark to determine who will receive His wrath and who will be allowed to enter into His Kingdom.

Rev 14:9-11

⁹Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **“If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.”

Rev 20:4

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, **who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

Revelation 20:4 is describing the Firstfruits that will be resurrected to eternal life at Christ's return and will then reign with him for a thousand years (For more information on the Firstfruits, please see the paper entitled “The 144,000 and The Great Multitude”.) Notice that this group is specifically identified as being those that did not receive the mark of the beast. The resurrected Firstfruits are also mentioned in Revelation 14 as standing before the throne of God the Father.

Rev 14:1-5

¹ Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴ **These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from**

among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

In the next chapter this group is again mentioned as being before the thrown of God the Father, but this time they are specifically described as those that refused to receive the mark of the beast.

Rev 15:1-4

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. ² **And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name**, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

The resurrected Firstfruits will include everyone from the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden until the time of Christ's return that were offered salvation and successfully endured to the end and made it into the Kingdom of God (1 Thess 4:16-18; Heb 11:39-40). The fact that this group is collectively described as those that did not receive the mark of the beast clearly demonstrates for us that the mark of the beast is not just an end time concept. It is a concept that has applications for all of human history.

The Hand and The Forehead

Revelation 13 describes the mark of the beast as something that is found on the right hand and the forehead of all those that receive this mark. Often this is interpreted as meaning that the mark of the beast is a physical mark such as a tattoo or a barcode or possibly some kind of implanted computer chip. However, this interpretation ignores the fact that the Bible also mentions that God marks His chosen people on their foreheads as well. Notice the following examples:

Rev 7:1-3

¹ After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel ascending from the east,

having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, **“Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”**

Rev 9:1-6

¹ Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. ² And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, **but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.** ⁵ And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶ In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

Rev 14:1-5

¹ Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, **having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.** ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³ They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

In addition, God told the Israelites that His laws and His Holy Days would be a sign on their foreheads and their hands that they were His people.

Ex 13:6-10

⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. ⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. ⁸ And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, “This is done

because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ ⁹ **It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes**, that the LORD’S law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

Deu 6:1-9

¹ “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—“a land flowing with milk and honey.’ ⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ **You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes**. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deu 11:16-18

¹⁶ Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, ¹⁷ lest the LORD’S anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. ¹⁸ **Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes**.

Obviously, by making these statements God was not telling the Israelites to tattoo a list of His commandments on their foreheads and their hands. He was speaking metaphorically. He wanted the Israelites to internalize His laws and put them into practice in their daily lives. So, when he told them to make His laws a sign on their hand and between their eyes (i.e. their foreheads), He was metaphorically referring to their actions (their hands) and their thoughts (their foreheads).

With this understanding in mind, we can understand what exactly the mark of the beast is. We have seen previously that Satan is the power behind the beast. The succession of world dominating empires symbolized by the beast of Revelation are physical empires carrying out the will of Satan. Satan is also the power behind the false religious system that causes people to accept the mark of the beast. So, the mark of the beast being placed on the forehead and the hand is a metaphorical statement referring to those who are following the way of Satan in their thoughts (their forehead) and their actions (their hand). This is why the resurrected Firstfruits are described as those who did not receive the mark of the beast. The resurrected Firstfruits will be a group of people who faithfully obeyed God thus they will have God laws as a sign on their hands and their foreheads rather than the mark of the beast.

Revelation 13 tells us that the end time beast will prevent those who refuse to accept the mark of the beast from buying and selling. So, obviously there will be some physical means of carrying this out. However, this persecution will be based on an individual's behavior (i.e. whether or not they are living a life of obedience to God) rather than whether or not they have received some kind of tattoo or have been implanted with some kind of computer chip. So, no one needs to worry about trying to avoid some physical mark being placed upon them. The way to avoid the mark of the beast is to faithfully live a life of obedience to God and His laws.

The Number of The Beast

Revelation 13:18 tells us that the "number of the beast" is 666. Speculation regarding the meaning and significance of this number has been the inspiration for countless numbers of books, articles, and sermons and even some Hollywood movies over the years. One of the more popular ways to interpret this number is to use a numerology approach. This approach is based on taking a name of a particular political leader and then looking at that name in a language that assigns numerical values to the letters of the name and then adding up the numerical value of the letters to see if it totals up to 666. However, not only is this approach totally inconsistent with how numbers are interpreted in the Bible it typically results in just reverse engineering a conclusion that one has already come to. In other words, it is a method of trying to make the Bible say what one wants it to say rather than looking to the Bible to reveal its own meaning.

We have already seen that the mark of the beast being placed on an individual's hand and forehead is simply a metaphorical way of saying that this individual is following the way of Satan in their actions and their thoughts. So, we would expect to find a similar application for the "number of the beast". If we look at the verse where this number is found, we see that it is "the number of a man".

Rev 13:18

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, **for it is the number of a man**: His number is 666.

The Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ by Walter Scott has the following commentary to explain the significance of this number

“Six hundred and sixty-six (666) is man’s number; the unit *six* being impressed upon him at his creation and on his subsequent history. Man was created on the sixth day. His appointed days of labour and toil are *six*. The Hebrew slave was to serve *six* years. For *six* years the land was to be sown. Under the *sixth* Seal an appalling and universal catastrophe upon mankind ensues. As the numeral seven denotes what is *perfect* or *complete*, six being short of that signifies *human imperfection and toil*. But in the growing development of man’s history he goes from bad to worse, hence six combined with six increases in moral significance, till man is witnessed in open and direct opposition to God. Goliath and his brother giant were men of abnormal strength and height, and open enemies of God and of Israel. The numeral six is stamped upon both (1 Samuel 17:4-7; 1 Chronicles 20:6). In the yet further development of man in his progressive evil history the culmination is reached in the ominous signification of 666, the number of the Beast. There is an obvious connection between the first and the last of the world powers. In character they are identical, save that the last is the *worst*. The image of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar for his own glorification was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad (Daniel 3:1-30). No doubt the image on the plain of Dura was meant to consolidate and unify the numerous and diversified religions of the mighty Babylonian empire. Under threats of an awful death the image of gold must be worshipped. Surely Daniel 3:1-30 points forward to the yet even deeper and truly satanic evil of Revelation 13:1-18. The one foreshadows the other. In both Scriptures the pride, self-will, and haughty independence of God by men placed above human law is the sad picture. It only remains to ask: What is the signification of this trinity of six? *It is the fullest, highest development of man under direct satanic control*. It is the combination of civil, religious, and political power satanically inspired. It is, so far as man can do it, the complete setting aside of God as the Supreme Ruler and a man taking His place, not in heathendom, but in Palestine itself, and in the wider range of Christendom. Beyond what is signified in this trinity of evil 666 man cannot go. We here reach the *height* of human folly, of human pride, of human arrogance, of human unbridled will. Such, we believe, is the meaning of this mystic numeral 666. It is not a conundrum to be solved by ingenious minds, but it contains a wisdom which the spiritual in that day, as now, may understand and profit by the knowledge thereof.”

So, we can see that the number 666 is just an emphasis on the “number of man” which is the number 6. The number 666 just symbolically represents mankind in complete rebellion against God. So, no one needs to do complicated mathematical formulas to interpret this number or look for someone with some kind of tattoo or physical marking of 666 on their body. The number of the beast is just like the mark of the beast. It symbolically represents someone that is living a life of rebellion against God and is following the way of Satan in their actions (the hand) and their thoughts (the forehead). The way to avoid the mark of the beast is to faithfully live a life of obedience to God and His laws.