

# THE MARK

By

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The book of Revelation should give assurance to the Christian of the victory of Christ and His church, but in the hands of false prophets and unbelievers, it is the means of instilling fear, doubt and confusion.

A current example is the movie, “The Omen,” a typical Hollywood product about a child, born of a jackal mother during the 6-day war between Israel and Egypt and found to bear the mark “666” in his scalp. Prophecies are misapplied to give support to the idea that the Jewish state of Israel fulfills them and that the devil is now incarnate and soon to take over as antichrist.

The idea is taken from John’s vision of the Beast. “And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there should be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell save he that has the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:16–17). The number is six hundred and sixty-six (Verse 18).

Each time someone builds a bigger computer or suggests that banking be carried on by number rather than by check, there is a wave of excitement and speculation about the possibility of this being the mark of the Beast. Almost any bureaucratic extension of control arouses new concerns over the mark!

The mark on the scalp of the child in “The Omen” does not satisfy any part of the prophecy, but does add fuel to the confusion and helps to instill fear in the minds of the ignorant and unstable. This is part of the purpose.

It is altogether possible that one of the rulers of John’s day could be identified by that which is symbolized by the number 666. The book of Revelation was written in code, the symbols and mystic numbers to be understood by the Christians with a background in Old Testament types and symbols and Hebrew traditions, but mysteries to the enemy. In fact, Nero was the sixth Caesar and the numerical value of the letters of his name total 666.

By this same token — numerical value of the letters in a name — many people have been identified as the Beast, from the first Pope until some modern day political figures.

**THE SYMBOL.** But what of the mark on the forehead or on the hand? Does this refer to credit cards or to a number assigned by the bank for identification by computer? Or could it be an invisible number to be read at the check-out counter of the supermarket, as some claim? Such a number would be no different in principle from the present system of having an individual number or code on your personalized checks, and, in fact, would serve the same purpose as a signature on a check or charge account. In any case, such numbering would not qualify as a literal mark, for the number is 666, the same number for all who worship the Beast, but the identification numbers would all have to be different.

The overall picture John gives is that of citizens who willingly serve and idolize the world rulers, who marvel at worldly power (Rev. 13:4), who are deceived by the

“great signs” of religious leaders (Rev. 13:13–14) and become their tools. In this sense of willingly serving the Beast, they are marked in the forehead and the right hand. The forehead is mentioned several times in this symbolic way because the frontal lobe of the brain is that part which “wills” or determines personal preference and action. Aaron was to wear a signet on his forehead to declare that he was holy to Jehovah (Ex. 28:38). The signet was worn on the forehead to indicate that he was submissive to God and God’s servant. After the nation’s gross idolatry, God said to Ezekiel that “all the house of Israel are of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart” (Ezek. 3:7). The heart refers to their affections and the forehead to their wills. The people who devote themselves to the Beast are the ones John saw in his vision as bearing the Beast’s mark. Their willingness to carry out his work he saw as a mark on their right, the right hand signifying a man’s work and performance.

The mark which John saw was the symbol of a reality that is much more meaningful than all the interpretations which suggest some physical mark.

**CHRISTIANS MARKED.** Just as the servants of the Beast are stamped with his mark, so the servants of God receive on their foreheads the stamp of approval. “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads” (Rev. 7:3, Compare Rev. 9:4). John also sees the Saints with the name of God written on their foreheads (Rev. 14:1, 22:4).

Jesus, the example for every saint, said that He bore the seal of His Father. “Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him the Father, even God has sealed” (John 6:27). He later explained, “I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me”(John 6:38). Christ’s purpose was to do God’s will by keeping His commandments and thus become the sin-offering that He might give eternal life to all who are redeemed. He was “sealed” in that He had God’s complete approval, not only in what He did, but even in all that He thought and purposed, for it was His will to do God’s will.

Again He said, “If any man wills to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God” (John 7:17) Assurance of one’s relationship to God is not merely by approving of what God said, or even believing it, but rather by submitting one’s will to God’s will. One must bow his will to God and “will” to do all He desires. He may not perfectly perform all that he purposes, but he and God both know that he wills it, that it is his desire to do it, that it is his purpose to do it, and thus he is sealed in the forehead.

Paul writes that in Christ “you were sealed with the holy spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13). Everyone who in true faith will to do God’s will and is obedient to the gospel is given the “gift of the holy spirit.” This was the first promise made by Peter when he preached the first Gospel sermon: “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit” (Acts 2:38). The promise was not an outward mark or sign, such as speaking in “tongues.” Many religions promise that. Even the spiritualists who oppose Christ are often marked by speaking in tongues and prophesying as well. But the seal of the holy spirit is in the mind of the believer. He knows how he has believed and repented. The godly life he lives is the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22) and the outward sign of the seal.

What John saw was a mark or a name on the forehead of the saints; the symbol of the reality which is the literal submission of the saint to God. Our wills are “marked” in

that we will to do God's will. We no longer serve self and Satan or the powers of the world which are devoted to ungodly purposes, but are servants of God. The holy Spirit guides our lives by the fact that our decisions are based upon His revelation of God's will through the Bible.

Contrariwise, those who follow Satan and the Beast are marked, not by a figure which appears to the eye, but by the things they will to do. They obey Satan because they are his servants. "Hos servants you are whom you obey" (Rom. 6:16). They think his thoughts and agree with his doctrine. The reason for corruption of the arts and literature of our day is because the populace willingly thinks evil thoughts and prefers them to the pure, and thus bears the mark in the forehead. The vice, violence and crime flourish because men exercise their wills by their actions, and so bear the mark of the Beast on the right hand.

**FAITH, NOT FEAR.** In the last chapter of Revelation John sees the saints in the holy City, all those who are salvaged from the world and its dissolution and given immortality in the new creation, and say that they have the name of God written on their foreheads. There will be none in that New Jerusalem save those who have submitted their wills to God and have been sealed to Him. In spite of the Beasts mentioned in Revelation 13 and in spite of all the turbulence and tribulation in the world, those who belong to God have the seal of the holy spirit and God's providential care in this world, and the blessings of glorious life with Him in the world to come.

Satan's only power is to tempt and to deceive. We know that God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but "will with the temptation also provide a means of escape" (I Cor. 10:13). This means that you cannot be defeated or deceived by Satan against your will. Paul explains that Satan works "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:9-10). The Christian loves the truth, seeks to know it and **WILLS TO DO IT**. The followers of Satan bear his mark in their minds (wills) and their works. In like manner, the servants of God bear His mark.

God did not give us the book of Revelation to confuse us and keep us in a state of fear and uncertainty. This is the work of Satan, not God, Christ and the apostles all left us with words of assurance that if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness He will provide what is needful, and that we are not to fear what men may do, for not even the gates of death can prevail against us (Matt. 6:33, 10:28, 16:18).

There were many antichrists in John's day (I John 2:18, 4:3, 2:22; II John 7). But John's message was, "You are of God, my little children, and overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). Christians would do better to read the truth of God, rather than the flood of books that speculate on fantastic interpretations far removed from the spiritual purpose of Revelation.

We need to take our eyes off the deceivers and antichrists, and focus on Christ and our own faith and obedience, that we may be found pleasing God in will and action when Christ appears.

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