

The Mark is the Name of the Beast or the Number of His Name

13: 16-18

DIG: What does the false prophet force everyone to take upon themselves? Where is the mark taken? What does it mean? Who will need wisdom?

REFLECT: Does this have anything to do with you? Why or why not? What about your loved ones? Friends? Co-workers? Sometimes you will be the only Jesus they will ever see!

Chapters 11 through 14 are parenthetical. They add some detail about the middle of the Great Tribulation and show us why the bowl judgments will be so necessary.

In order to better control the activities of the people of his world empire, each person will be required to register and receive a **mark** that will identify that person as a loyal follower of **the beast**. No one, no matter how wealthy or influential, will be allowed to avoid being marked. And as usual, Satan will counterfeit what **God** had already done.

To **mark** the idolaters in the city of Jerusalem during **Ezekiel's** ministry, **the LORD** told a **man clothed in linen to go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the spiritual adultery that was being practiced in it**. Then he and five other **men** were ordered by **ADONAI** to **slaughter** everyone who did not have **the mark (Ezekiel 9:1-11)**. In the end times this scene will be reversed. Instead of the children of **God** being marked and idolaters slaughtered, the idolaters will be marked, and the children of **the Lord** will be slaughtered (except for the 144,000). To counterfeit the seal of **the Holy Spirit on the foreheads** of the holy ones, **the false prophet** will introduce his own counterfeit **mark**. It is the famous **mark of the beast** out of the sea (**13:1-10**). By placing **the mark** on their **forehead** or **right hand**, the unbelievers of the earth will place themselves under the authority of **the antichrist** and worship him as **God**.

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead. No one will be exempt. To refuse **the mark** will mean death, and a countless multitude will undoubtedly be martyred (**7:9-17**). The **mark** will not only serve a religious purpose, it will also serve an economic purpose. During the 70th Week of Daniel the commandments of the Torah will be reinstated. **The Holy Spirit** warns us: **Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves** (sometimes I feel like posting this scripture at the mall), **I Am ADONAI (Leviticus 19:28)**. From ancient times idolaters marked themselves, especially on their foreheads, in honor of their deities.

The mark will serve as a passport to business. **No one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.** Scanning people's foreheads or hands will identify them to a central computer system. People will be unable to buy or sell anything unless they have **the mark** of the beast. Only those who have this number will be able to make a living. Life will be virtually unlivable, some people will bow to **the antichrist**, not prompted merely by religious deception, but also economic necessity. **John** gives us more details about **the mark** and notes that it will be made up of either **the name of the beast or the number of his name.** **The beast** will probably have a universal designation within **the mark**, along with the individual's name. As a result, both **the antichrist** and the individual will probably be identified together within **the mark.**

This mark calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is a man's number. His number is 666. The number of the beast is the number of a man because the antichrist will be a man who will be the last ruler of the fourth Gentile kingdom (see Aw - The Fourth Stage: The Antichrist Stage). In addition, this **number** will be **the number** of his very own name, and the numerical value of that name will be **666.** This sobering passage is not intended to be the source of fruitless speculation about its details. Rather, it stands as a warning to the unbelieving world and challenges believers to lead careful, watchful, godly lives (**First Peter 4:7; Second Peter 3:11**), and to evangelize a hopelessly lost world headed for destruction.³¹²

The Bible is written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. All three languages have numerical systems that correspond to their letters. Thus everybody's name in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek has a numerical value. So **the number** that will be stamped on the **right hand or on the forehead** of the worshipers of **the antichrist** will be some form of these numbers. In fact, the sixth letter in the Hebrew alphabet is *vav*, so the number **666** could be written *vav, vav, vav.* Likewise, the sixth letter in the Greek alphabet is *zeta*. So the number **666** could also be written *zeta, zeta, zeta.* Since an unlimited **number** of calculations can equal **666**, it is impossible to figure out who it is in advance. But those who are wise *at the time he appears* will have **insight** into who **the antichrist** will be.

There is a striking difference between **the mark of the beast** and **the seal** of the Lamb. Those who reject **Christ** in the end times will have the **mark of the antichrist** stamped on their **right hand or on their forehead** as a **seal of his ownership.** Their end will be **death in the lake of fire (20:14-15).** But each one who is saved is **anointed** at conversion when **Christ sets His seal of ownership on us, and puts His Holy Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing that we are God's property, protected by Him (Second Corinthians 1:21-22).** This allows us to **stand firm in Messiah** and guarantees us that our home will be in heaven with **Jesus, who said: In my Father's house are many places to live. If there weren't, I would have told you; because I am going there to prepare a place for you. Since I am going and preparing a place for you, I will return to take you with me; so that where I am, you may be also (John 14:2-3 CJB).**

The body of **Christ** will have nothing to do with **the mark of the beast** because every single believer will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air before the Great Tribulation begins (see **By - The Rapture of the Church**). Jesus says to all those who have the seal of the Holy Spirit: **I will keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth (3:10).**

The problem is that down through the centuries **the mark of the beast** has been linked with literally hundreds of different people. After discussing various false identifications of **the antichrist** prevalent even in his own day (around AD 180), the Church father Irenaeus of Lyons wrote, "It is, therefore, more certain and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves." What excellent advice that the Church through the centuries should have listened to! If history has taught us nothing else about the coming of the antichrist and this mysterious number, it's that we cannot identify him until he signs a seven year covenant with the Jewish leadership and the nation of Israel (see **Bz - The Signing of the Seven Year Covenant with the Antichrist**). Only then will **the man of lawlessness** be revealed (**Second Thessalonians 2:3**).

*Jesus, You have called me by name and put **Your seal** of ownership in my heart. I am **Yours**. Help me to bear **Your** name with dignity. I want to represent **You** so well. Help me to live fully as your adopted child, with **Your** love flowing through everything I think and do.*