

How To Avoid Satan's Mark

The previous chapter defined Satanism in its basic form and the point was made that, even genuine Christians, can be tricked into aligning with Satan at times if not careful. Any discussion on this issue will eventually get around to the “The Mark of the Beast.”

Revelation 13:16-14:1 (KJV)

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Most people who have read this passage have imagined a scenario where they had to choose between taking the mark or not. What is this mark? How will it manifest? Is it a tattoo, an electronic microchip, or something else? The speculations are endless. But notice that there is another mark mentioned in Revelation, the mark of God. Everyone has a mark, the choice is between the mark of the beast or the mark of God. [1]

The Mark of the Beast and the Mark of God

The mark of the beast is mentioned eight times in the book of Revelation. Each time, the word mark is from the Greek word *charagma*. It is a root from which we get the word character. The definition of this Greek word *charagma* is: *a scratch, etching, i.e., a stamp* (as, a badge of servitude). Three of the eight times where the mark of the beast is mentioned, it also mentions the mark being on either the forehead or the hand (see Rev 13:6; 14:9; 20:4). However, the same word is also used to describe the mark of God on the foreheads of *His* people (See Rev 14:1). This Greek word for mark, *charagma*, is used one other time in the New Testament in the Book of Acts.

Acts 17:29 (NASB)

29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

In this verse, *charagma* is translated as *image formed* [2] (The King James Version uses the word graven, as in a graven image, instead of image formed). Thinking of the mark as an image formed brings to mind several scriptures that speak to us about being conformed into Christ's image which is receiving the mark of God. Notice the references to image and the different variations of the word formed:

- Romans 8:29 says we are to be conformed into the image of Jesus.
- 1 Corinthians 15:49 tells us that we will bear the image of the heavenly.
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 says that as we behold the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of God.
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 and Hebrews 1:3 say Christ is the image of God.
- Romans 12:2 tells us not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- Colossians 3:10 says we are to put on the new man which is renewed (reformed) in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

Both Romans 12:2 and Colossians 3:10 refer to our thoughts, speaking of our minds and our knowledge, which are inward things. We also see in Acts 17:29 that the image to which we should be conformed to is the divine nature.^[3] As we know, the divine nature is also an inward thing, an invisible attribute that produces outward effects, i.e., good works.

Therefore, if the mark of God is internal, might the mark of the beast also be internal? If the mark of God is His divine nature being formed in us by renewing our minds, then might the mark of the beast be the unholy nature of the beast being formed in people through vain philosophies such as the satanic sacraments addressed in the previous chapter? If the mark of God on the forehead speaks of renewed minds, godly doctrines, and a godly belief system, then the mark of the beast on the forehead would speak of unrenewed minds, satanic doctrines, and an ungodly belief system. ^[4] The mark of the beast on the hand would then speak of evil works resulting from an ungodly belief system.

When Jesus is described as the express image of God's person (see Heb 1:3), the word for image in the original Greek is *charakter*, essentially the same as mark (*charagma*). Strong's Greek Dictionary defines it as: *an engraver (the tool or person) by implication, an engraving, [character], the figure stamped, an exact copy or representation.*

This brings to mind the idea of characters being formed on paper through pressure by the old printing presses. The type was set and then pressure was applied using the leverage of a large screw. This presents us with a graphic image of how God's character is formed in our lives, through pressure, and explains why we must sometimes endure suffering if we are to reign with Him in His Kingdom. ^[5]

2 Timothy 2:12 (KJV)

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

Since the words *charagma* and *charakter* are where we get our word character, the mark of the beast, or his image, is a reference to one's character. In short, mark speaks of the moral makeup or character of men.

Jesus said that He did nothing of Himself, only as He was instructed by His Father (John 8:28). This is how Jesus was an exact representation of the Father on earth. This means that Jesus thinks the Father's thoughts and does the Father's deeds, which speaks of the mark of God

on the forehead (thoughts) and on the hand (deeds). [6] The opposite would be true for the mark of the beast. Jesus confronted the Pharisees saying;

John 8:38,44 (KJV)

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

The Pharisees' father was the devil and their thoughts and deeds reflected that. This means that those who bear the mark of the beast are those whose character is imprinted by their mentor, Satan. People with the character of the world system (those being conformed to this world) bear the mark of the beast on their foreheads (thoughts) and on their hands (deeds).

One day we may indeed be presented with the choice to receive a literal "mark of the beast." But one thing is sure, our ability to resist it will be determined by the content of our character. Therefore, to avoid the mark of the beast our attention should primarily be on developing Christlike character and being conformed to His image by the renewing of our minds according to God's Word.

The Number of Man

Revelation 13:18 (NKJV)

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.

If the mark of the beast is literally an external mark, like a 666 tattoo for the forehead or hand, or an electronic chip embedded under the skin, then people's choice will be clear, take it or not. But like most temptations, this choice may be presented in a series of small compromises that lead to the final choice. If that is the case, accepting it or not might not be such a clear or easy choice. This is why we need to be training ourselves now to think like God instead of thinking like man. [7]

The mark of the beast is the number of a man, or as the New International Version says, "...man's number." I do not wish to speculate here as to who this man is, whether he is an historical figure or a future one, whether one man or man in general. But scripture tells us that the number of the beast, 666, is man's number. With that in mind, it is interesting that, in the Greek, the word for 6 is spelled just like the preposition, meaning from or out of. Could 666 (man's number) be a riddle or puzzle meaning a way of thinking from or out of man? Consider again Matthew 16:23 which gives us some understanding by which to calculate the beast's (man's) number. Consider once again Jesus' reply when Peter's thoughts were from man instead of from God:

Matthew 16:23 (KJV)

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me:

for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Peter didn't want Jesus to suffer and die; he wanted Jesus to go to Jerusalem, take His place as the king of Israel, and rule the world. After all, Jesus had taught his disciples to expect that and had even promised them places of authority in His government. But based on what Jesus said, selfish ambition tainted Peter's motive. Peter was probably thinking about his own place of authority in the Kingdom of God. He was ready to conquer the world by force but it was not yet time for the Kingdom to appear. Jesus had come to seek and save that which was lost. Peter didn't know what manner of spirit he was speaking from. He was mindful of the things of men, not God.

James 3:13-16 (KJV)

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

An earthy feeling-based (sensual) man-centered attitude is more evil than we might think. Where there is a lack of meekness and where self-seeking or personal ambition motivate our thoughts and words, there is potential for every evil thing! Peter thought he would offer Jesus a word of wisdom, but his wisdom turned out to be earthly, sensual, and demonic. This shows how setting our minds on the things of man, as Peter did, is to risk becoming a spokesperson for Satan!

As we engage in preparing the way for the Kingdom of God and realize that filling positions of rank and authority in His Kingdom is a factor in that preparation, let us remember that selfish man-centered motives will not accomplish the task. Our motives must come from a true love for our King and His Kingdom, not selfish ambition, and our works must reflect the same. [8] This requires that our character be formed according to the image of Christ and this is how we avoid Satan's mark.

Paradigm Builder

To avoid the mark of the beast our attention should primarily be on developing Christlike character and being conformed to His image by the renewing of our minds according to God's Word.

Before reading this chapter, how would you describe your position regarding this concept?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

How would you describe your position regarding this concept after reading this chapter?

1 Strongly Disagree - 2 Disagree - 3 Neutral/Unsure - 4 Agree - 5 Strongly Agree

The Kingdom Paradigm, Common Sense Theology for Politically Minded Christians
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