

The Mark – Rev. 13:16-18

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Story*

1. It's crucial as we study the bible, specially the *narrative passages*, to try to put ourselves *into* the story.
 - a. it helps immensely to remember what we find in the pages of scripture isn't just the product of someone sitting down and saying, "I think I'll write some stuff about religion and make up some stories."
 - b. what we find here comes out of a specific historical context.
 - c. there was a *need*, some *challenge*, an *issue* all this addressed.
2. While the book of Revelation is mostly a record of the visions the Apostle John had of the last days, we mustn't forget that these visions took place in a unique setting.
 - a. John was an elderly man and a prisoner on the rocky island of Patmos just off the coast of modern day Turkey.
 - b. Patmos was a Roman penal colony and John had been sentenced there because of his bold and vocal leadership in the Early Church.
 - c. life was extremely tough and it's not hard to imagine that John began to wonder how the Church could *survive* the growing hostility of the Roman Empire.
 - d. then God comes and begins to give him visions, spiritual movies if you will, of the future and how as time goes on the hostility between the world and the kingdom of God will grow, reaching a climax in what we now call the Great Tribulation.
 - e. Christ's victory over the rebellious kingdom of satan will be complete,
 - 1) even though the devil will have managed to unite the entire world under his bid to oppose the Lord and the emergence of His kingdom on earth.
 - 2) when all is said and done, Christ will reign victoriously for a 1000 years.
 - 3) the curse placed on the creation will be removed
 - 4) sin will be virtually banished, and paradise will be restored!
 - 5) Blythe will be like Maui!

- 6) and every taxicab in New York will have written on it –
“Holiness to the Lord”
3. So this morning, let’s put ourselves back into the story here and begin by remembering where John was and what life was like at that time.

B. The Advance of Technology

1. He’s on a barren and desolate penal colony, on island called Patmos.
2. His clothing is little more than a large towel which is wrapped around him in the shape of a tunic.
3. The technology of his day was *extremely primitive*.
 - a. as far as transportation was concerned, the fastest conveyance was a horse;
 - 1) and far more common was the mule;
 - 2) yet even then, the vast majority of people went by foot.
 - 3) sea-going vessels were powered by the wind
 - b. the engine of economic was agriculture – farming!
 - 1) and the tools of farming were the most basic and simple
 - 2) the plow & sickle
 - 3) there really were no machines that helped the farmer, it was all done by hand.
 - c. in fact, as far as *machines* went, they were few and far between
 - 1) there was no such thing as mass-production so machines were extremely difficult to make
 - 2) and their main materials were wood, and stone
 - 3) metal-working was still a crude science and industry
 - 4) so machines were not really a factor in life at this time.
 - 5) the few that did exist were more a novelty than seen as something to use on a wide scale.
 - d. in terms of buying and selling, *barter* was still more common than the use of money.
 - 1) Farmer Aaron would trade 50 bushels of barley to merchant Joshua for a new cart.
4. Imagine lifting someone from that time *out* of that setting, and plunking them down in the appliance section of *Best Buy*.
 - a. then taking them over to the computers and phones and video departments

- b. then walk them out to the parking lot and show them the freeway.
 - c. point at the sky and a plane flying overhead.
5. How long do you suppose it would be before their eyes would roll back into their heads and they'd pass out from the sheer shock and overwhelming impact of modern technology?

C. Today

1. Our text this morning has proven to be a *mystery* to the students of the Bible throughout most of Church history.
2. The reason why is because it presents a picture of the future that until our modern era has seemed impossible to sort out.
3. The technology of previous generations did not permit a *literal* fulfillment of what we find here.
4. Not only has that now changed, today's technology has set the stage for a *quite literal* fulfillment of what we find here, and moves us to realize that we do indeed live in the last days.
5. The diligent student of Bible prophecy knows that there are certain actors and props that need to be in place before the curtain can rise on the last 7 years of history as we know it.
 - a. but that student also knows that each and every one of those actors are on their mark
 - b. the stage has been set with each prop in place
 - c. and the angelic orchestra is already playing the overture.
 - d. the stagehands are gripping the rope that will lift the curtain
 - e. there is only one last thing to be done before that curtain rises – the Christians need to leave the theater – the Rapture of the Church needs to take place.
6. When it does, when the Christians are lifted out of this world to stand before their Lord and Savior, will you be going?
7. If you can't answer that with a confident and quick assurance, then this message is especially for you.

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 16-18

16He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on

their foreheads, ¹⁷and 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.

1. Earlier in this chapter, John was given a vision of two dangerous and wild beasts.
 - a. the first one is that character popularly referred to as the antichrist.
 - b. the second beast is known as the false prophet.
2. We took an in-depth look at the career of these two in our study Wednesday evening and I'd encourage you to get a copy of the tape if you weren't here so you can see how the things they seek to accomplish are already well underway in the conventional wisdom of our time.
 - a. as John says in his first epistle the *spirit* of antichrist is already at work in the world preparing for his emergence
 - b. in 2 Thess 2, Paul says the mystery of lawlessness is already here and growing
3. What we find in these last 3 verses of ch. 13 is the culmination of their plan to unite the human race with the rebellion of satan.
4. The "he" of v. 16 is the false prophet.
 - a. he's the leader of *institutional religion* who fulfills his role of chief priest by leading the entire world to offer worship to the antichrist as god.
 - b. in vs. 14 & 15 we read that he leads in the making of an image to the antichrist which he then somehow supernaturally gives life to.
 - c. this image becomes the focal point of worship, much like the image Nebuchadnezzar made and demanded be worshipped as a sign of loyalty in Daniel 3
 - d. this image of the antichrist is an idol that people must show devotion to or be executed.
5. But the antichrist isn't interested in just gaining control of the *religious sphere*.
 - a. vs. 1-7 reveal that the antichrist will seek control over the world

- in the *political & military* spheres as well.
- b. that leaves just one more area of control for him to dominate, and these verses describe it.
 - c. here we see him gaining control over the *economic* sphere.

B. The Mark

16He [the false prophet] **causes all,**

1. Then John describes who he means by ‘all.’

both small and great,

- a. the ruled & their rulers
- b. the common people & the elite

rich and poor, free and slave,

- c. in other words – everyone!
- d. there isn’t a sector of society not included in this list

[he causes them all] **to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and 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.**

2. It’s important we understand *why* the false prophet institutes this program.
 - a. while it establishes the antichrist’s control over the economic livelihood of the world
 - b. there’s a deeper *reason* behind that control
3. It has ever been satan’s desire to be *like* God.
 - a. in Isaiah 14 as we read about Lucifer’s fall and the ambitions that led to his demise --
 - b. we see them summed up in his boast, “I will be like the Most High.”
4. But there is one thing the devil could never be like God in – and that is Creation!
 - a. there is only one Creator – the rest is created!
 - b. only God possesses the power of genuine creation, to make something out of nothing.
 - c. the closest creatures can come to creating is to *fashion*, to manipulate and alter.

- d. the closest satan can come to creating is *imitating* – and so he has ever sought to imitate God and His works.
 - 1) that's what drugs and alcohol are – imitations for being filled with the Spirit
 - 2) that's what sexual immorality is – an imitation of the joys of the marriage bed.
 - 3) all religion is nothing but a demonic parody of the truth to be found in Scripture and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- e. ch. 13 of Revelation shows how in the last of the last days, this satanic parody of God will reach its final and most ambitious form.
 - 1) the devil, the antichrist, and the false prophet constitute an unholy trinity that parrots the Trinity of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) the image the false prophet makes and then animates is an imitation of the Church whom the Holy Spirit has birthed and then fills.
 - 3) and now here, the marking of the earth-dwellers with the name of the antichrist is an imitation of the way God marks the 144,000 faithful Jewish believers that we read about in ch. 7, and encounter at the beginning of ch. 14.

¹Then 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.

- 5. But at the bottom of all the devils' desire, and the main goal all his imitation of God is aimed at, is to possess the **CONTROL** God possesses.
 - a. God is sovereign over creation – that's why He's called, the MOST High!
 - b. there can only be **ONE MOST** High – and that is the position the devil aspires to.
 - c. so control, sovereignty, is what he lusts for more than anything.
- 6. His scheme to gain control began long ago and has been moving forward throughout history.
 - a. crucial to his plan was to secure the assistance of the human race, which bears the image of God.

- b. that's what the Fall in the Garden of Eden was all about – getting mankind to join *in* with his plan to become the Most High.
 - c. but make no mistake, he sees humanity as merely a tool, something to be used till he secures his objective,
 - d. once that's achieved – he'll cast the tool aside, if not worse.
7. During the Tribulation, God will remove the restraints that have been placed on the devil's bid for power and his long plot will come together in the career of the antichrist and false prophet.
8. Under their leadership, inspired and empowered as it is by satan, they will unite the world's economies under one basis of control.
9. From other passages we see that the antichrist tries to exert political and military control over all the earth as well – and it's at that point some of the nations of the world balk and resist his power-grab.
- a. they meet in the valley of Megiddo to decide the fate of the nations
 - b. and it's in the midst of that last great and bloodiest battle of history that Jesus comes again.
10. But here in v. 16, we see that while the antichrist does *not* succeed in gaining world-wide *political* control, he *does* gain world-wide economic control, and we may wonder how this is possible.
- a. it's simple really – we see it today.
 - b. modern technology and the rules of banking have turned economics into far more of a *global* issue than a national or political reality.
 - c. the banking industry has become, not just international, but *super-national*; it stands *above* the issues of individual nations.
 - d. we all know about this!
 - 1) we've heard how people can put their money in untouchable off-shore accounts where no nation can go after them.
 - 2) wire transfers from one place to another half-way around the world take place the speed of light.
 - 3) telecommunications and the conversion of cold hard cash into electronic funds have turned banking from a local function to a global one.
 - e. and today it stands at the place where *even enemies* may use

- each other's banks and financial markets.
- 1) that's precisely what Al-Qaeda did prior to 9/11
 - 2) they were invested in some US airline & other stocks, but cashed out just prior to the attacks, knowing a dramatic drop would come in those markets.
 - 3) though Russia has been the premier enemy of the US for the last 70 years, today, many US citizens are heavily invested in Russian industrial & commercial ventures,
 - 4) just as many of the new rich in Russia are invested in *American* industry
 - 5) many of us here today work for a company whose parent-company is a European, Asian, or Canadian business.
- f. treaties like *NAFTA* and groups like the *World Trade Organization* work together to overcome national borders and unite the world through economics.
11. So we can see how the antichrist could exert *economic control* over everyone without also possessing control over the entire world in the political and military realms.
 12. And yet, total control is what he will desire.
 - a. this explains why the spirit of the world is already well under way toward what is called *globalization*.
 - b. the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass-destruction have caused more and more people to demand a one-world government.
 - c. the idea of the globalists is that danger only exists when there are different nations who hold each other to be enemies.
 - d. if individual nations would surrender their sovereignty to one over-arching governing agent, then peace would finally come because there would be no one to go to war with.
 - e. while this may seem like merely wishful thinking to us today – please understand that the globalists are already well on their way to achieving their agenda.
 - f. two of the biggest and most popular globalists in recent memory are Mikhail Gorbachev and Bill Clinton.
 - 1) the list of globalist accomplishments pushed through during the Clinton era are staggering.
 - 2) and while it may not seem as obvious, even the *War on Terror*, uniting as it does, so many different nations under

- one alliance, is going far to advance the cause of the globalist agenda.
- 3) you see, the globalists are not opposed to *using force* against those who want to retain their independent and national sovereignty.
 - 4) don't get me wrong – I'm all for the War on Terror.
 - a) it's part of the God-given mandate of our civil government to protect it's citizens
 - b) and Islamic terrorism is a very real threat to our nation
 - c) what's troublesome is the way the *War on Terror* is being used to promote and enforce the globalists' agenda.
13. The point in all this is the way the world stage is being prepared for the emergence of the antichrist and the power grab he will make in the last days.
- a. it won't be something totally new.
 - b. it will merely be the *culmination* of a strategy that has been well-prepared and long in the making.
14. But let's return to what we find here in vs. 16 & 17
15. The word "mark" is the Greek word *charagma*.
- a. what makes this interesting is that since it's clear the false prophet is *imitating* the *seal of God* placed in the forehead of the 144,000 *why* the same word for *seal* isn't used here.
 - 1) the answer is that while God's seal is a *supernatural* thing -
 - 2) this mark is *manufactured* and placed by man.
 - b. this word "mark" means to *scratch* or *etch*, as in the etching done on a stone or piece of wood when one carves their name.
16. As I was studying, I decided to do some digging because I found John's *change of terms* here provocative.
17. What I discovered gives us an interesting clue as to precisely *what* John SAW in his vision.
- a. you see, the noun 'charagma' comes from a root word which means to *sharpen to a point, to make a stake.* ^[1]
 - b. the word 'mark' means a scratch that produces a recognizable feature.
 - 1) this word was used in other ancient literature to refer to slaves who had been branded by their employers
 - 2) it was used of those who had tattooed themselves by some

- common mark to show membership in a religious cult
- 3) it was mark formed on the skin meant to show *identity*.
18. In the most obvious explanation, what John may be describing here is simply a tattoo the earth-dwellers take that identifies them as the worshippers of the antichrist.
- seeing that tattoos are given by a hollow needle that injects dye into the skin fits perfectly with the word he uses for 'mark' here.
 - that's exactly what a tattoo is – something placed in the skin by scratching.
19. What will compel people to take the mark is the law that without it, they won't be able to buy or sell.
- just as now, if you want to use your credit card you have to prove the card belongs to you by also showing your driver's license –
 - so then, you'll also have to show your antichrist-tattoo.
20. Have you noticed the youth culture's growing acceptance of tattoos and body-piercing?
- make no mistake –
 - this is just one more evidence of how the world spirit is moving strategically forward to prepare people to accept the mark of the beast.
21. But there's an even *more* interesting possibility for what John saw in his vision of the mark.
- and it seems to fit more adequately with what he says here about the mark being *necessary* for one to buy and sell.
 - it has to do with the world's economy rapidly moving toward a cashless system of buying and selling with numbered accounts.
 - think about it – how many of your purchases are actually done with cash?
 - whether we're using a credit card, an ATM card, or a check, it seems with each year that passes the need and use of cash becomes less and less necessary, and in some cases, even an option.
 - just this week I saw that they're taking ATM's now in the drive thru at Del Taco!
 - more and more businesses are making it ever more convenient to use electronic funds transfers instead of cash.

- 1) Mobil and other gas stations have the wand
 - 2) there's pre-paid calling cards and throw away cell phones
 - 3) they are even testing vending machines that you buy product through by calling the number on the front of the machine and punching the button for the selection you want. Your cell phone account is tied to your bank account and the money for the item is deducted from your account and put in the vendor's.
- g. there's a concerted move by *authorities* to move toward a cashless society.
- 1) it's thought this will cut down on a lot of crime, since most criminals like to use cash so it can't be tracked
 - 2) drug dealers will have a hard time without cash, as will terrorists
 - 3) the government would love to go to a cashless society so they can keep tabs on everyone's earnings and make sure they are paying income tax.
- h. so everything from convenience, to law enforcement militates toward the advancement of the cashless society.
- i. the biggest concern in moving to a cashless society is that your entire banking & credit accounts are tied to cards that can be easily stolen or lost.
- 1) having a PIN – personal identification number – helps add security,
 - 2) but far too many people are careless in guarding their PIN, and write it right on the card.
- j. the easy solution is to attach you account information directly to your body.
- k. so, instead of understanding the mark to be simply a tattoo – it may be a microchip, injected under the skin of the right hand or forehead.
- l. the technology is already in place for implantable personal smart chips.
- 1) in fact, they are already being used.
 - 2) as far back as 1998 in England, *Dr. Kevin Warwick* was the first to implant a chip that interfaced with his computer, simply by walking through the doorway of his office.
 - 3) two years later he implanted a more complex chip that

interfaced with his nervous system and kept tabs on his health, communicating with diagnostic equipment via radio waves. [2]

- 4) *Wired News* recently carried the story of the Jacobs; a family of three who volunteered to become the first to receive the *Verichip*. [3]
- 5) *Applied Digital Solutions* in Palm Beach, Fla., is the developer of the *Verichip*, which is about the size of a grain of rice and is powered by movement and the body's own electrical field.
 - a) the *Verichip* contains a unique identifier that is then read by a hand-held scanner, which is in turn linked to a database with a vast amount of data on the subject.
 - b) Keith Bolton, chief technology officer for ADS, says that the VeriChip is only the beginning.
 - c) ADS is working on uniting their *Digital Angel* device with the Verichip which monitors the health of a person and is linked to the GPS system.
 - d. this would allow an agency to track the whereabouts of someone anywhere in the world to a location of about 30 feet.
- 6) now, let's think about this – why the rash of child abductions lately?
 - a) actually – per a report released by the FBI just this week, the number of child abductions is actually *down* from last year
 - b) why then all the media coverage and attention?
 - c) I'll tell you why, it's one more evidence of how the world-spirit is grooming people to accept the dramatic changes the antichrist will propose
 - d) condition people to see the need for tracking kids, then present the tools to do it – implantable chips.
 - e) then, once you have all kids being implanted, just as in many places pets are,
 - f) then you explain the reason why ALL people need to be implanted.
 - g) and finally you make it mandatory and a sign of loyalty

to the World Dicator.

h) *crisis* and *gradualism* have always been the tools for foisting upon the public major changes – it will be the same with the mark of the beast.

7) lest you think I'm only repeating the lunatic ramblings of some wild-eyed prophecy nut, let me quote to you from an ABC News report - [\[4\]](#)

To some, this may sound far-fetched. But the technology for such chips is no longer the stuff of science fiction. And it may soon offer many other benefits besides locating lost children or elderly Alzheimer patients.

"Down the line, it could be used [as] credit cards and such," says Chris Hables Gray, a professor of cultural studies of science and technology at the University of Great Falls in Montana. "A lot of people won't have to carry wallets anymore," he says. "What the implications are [for this technology], in the long run, is profound."

And the interest in testing embedded chips has been steadily increasing — especially since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Dr. Richard Seelig, a former surgeon but now a medical consultant for ADS, became the first to embed a VeriChip in his arm and hip on Sept. 16. He says his decision to become a willing guinea pig came when he saw World Trade Center rescue workers scrawl information on their skin as an identifying marker should they get hurt in the wreckage.

"There is a clear need for a more secure [form of] identification," says Seelig. "This was another useful application for VeriChip and to move the process along and [help] evaluate the possibility, I had the chips inserted."

And Seelig isn't the only one who feels this way.

According to ADS' Bolton, about 50 people have already signed up with the company to become part of the VeriChip experiments. Some volunteers, such as the Jacobs family in Boca Raton, Fla., believe that the technology will provide for a much needed additional security and safety.

"What it does for me is give me a peace of mind because it speaks for you when you can't," says Leslie Jacobs, a journalist in Boca Raton, Fla. Her 14-year old son, Derek, had first heard of the VeriChip on a local newscast and had persuaded Leslie and her husband that this new chip technology would be the wave of the future. And after looking into the technology, she believes that her son was right. "I really think this could help make the world safer in the future," she says.

22. In July of this year, Hitachi released news of their newest technological breakthrough
 - a. their new mu chip is the world's smallest RFID circuit – meaning it's capable of being read by a wireless scanner at some distance away from it
 - b. it's less than a half a mm square and so thin it can be imbedded in a single piece of paper!
 - c. this chip is so small it can be easily implanted by using a hypodermic needle = MARK!
23. That no one may buy or sell without the mark seems to push us in the direction of seeing the mark as something *instrumental* to buying and selling.
 - a. it's not at all hard to imagine the day when you'll go to the store, and instead of paying for your items with a credit or ATM card,
 - b. you'll just wave your hand or forehead over a scanner.
 - c. they're already scanning the bar codes on your items & your cards!

III. CONCLUSION

A. Don't Worry – Be Ready!

1. Now, don't worry – your ATM card is NOT the mark of the beast!
2. What we're reading about here in Revelation 13 is yet future.
 - a. and the mark of the beast is something someone takes as a way to *identify* with the antichrist.
 - b. it's a mark of *loyalty* to him and his rebellious system.
 - c. it's received in full consciousness and awareness that they are allying themselves with the one who defies God.
3. In ch. 14:9-11, we read that God sends an angelic messenger to make it utterly clear to the people of earth that *if* they receive the mark of the beast they are eternally doomed; there remains no hope of salvation for them.
4. So no one will take the mark without full knowledge of what they are doing and the consequences.
5. Furthermore, this all takes place in the last half of the Tribulation and the Christians will all be out of here over 3 years before all this comes down.

6. The point is, the technology and the plans for its implementation are already in the works –
7. Once again indicating the lateness of the hour.
8. So let me ask you – when the Church is raptured, when Jesus comes for His own, will you be going or staying?
 - a. will you escape the Tribulation
 - b. or will you be one of those who goes on in to it?
9. There was a song some years ago that went – “Don’t worry – Be Happy!”
10. Let’s change that – “Don’t worry – Be Ready!”

B. More Here

1. We haven’t even looked at the last half of v. 17 or any of 18 and we’re out of time so we’ll pick it up at this point this coming Wednesday.
2. But we need to end at this point and with this point challenge –
3. There has been no other time in history when the things foretold in scripture have been so literally and potently fulfilled.
4. All signs indicate these are the last days and the only event we wait for, indeed, the NEXT event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture of the Church.
5. Skeptics and critics like to point out the fact that for hundreds of years, Christians have been saying they lived in the last days.
 - a. that’s partially true
 - b. but there’s a major difference between previous generations and our own.
 - c. people who looked at what the Bible said about the last days and their own times had to *spiritualize* and give strange and twisted interpretations to scripture in order to make it fit their time.
 - d. we don’t – as we’ve seen today!
 - e. modern technology, combined with the flow of world history has brought us to the place where even the youngest and most uninformed believer can read the prophecies for the first time and say, “Well, sure, I can see how that can happen!”

C. Track Record

1. The Bible’s track record with fulfilled prophecy is 100%

2. In fact, prophecy has long been used as one of the premier proofs for the Bible being the Word of God.
3. Just as it's track record has been 100% to date, so it will be in all those things yet to be fulfilled.
4. So, the question is – are you ready?

[1] Charasso, charax, charagma

[2] © 2000 CABLE NEWS NETWORK PROFESSOR TO WIRE COMPUTER CHIP INTO HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM DECEMBER 7, 2000 WEB POSTED AT: 12:55 PM EST

[3] © Copyright 2002, Lycos, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Wired New They Want Their ID Chips Now
By Julia Scheeres 2:00 a.m. Feb. 6, 2002 PST

[4] Copyright © 2002 ABCNEWS Internet Ventures I, Chip? Technology to Meld Chips into Humans Draws Closer

By Paul Eng