

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. Brown, Mr. Dowling, Mr. Garner, Mr. Hadley, Ms. Donna Law, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Owens, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

Oak Grove Church of Christ Bulletin
2922 NW 76th Terrace, Jennings, FL 32053

March 27, 2022

The Mark of the Beast

By Derek Long

The Bible contains passages which are harder to understand than perhaps other passages in the Bible are. 2 Peter 3:15-16 speaks about this fact and points out how people have a tendency to twist these more challenging passages to their own destruction. As a person studies the Bible, it is important they take care to rightly divide or handle aright the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). The book of Revelation as a whole and those passages mentioning the mark of the beast may be in the category of harder passages to understand. It could be some of the meat of God's word which requires some basic, fundamental knowledge in order to rightly understand (Hebrews 5:11-14).

The mark of the beast is mentioned in the following passages:

- Revelation 13:17 - "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" (NKJV).
- Revelation 14:11 - "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" (NKJV).
- Revelation 15:2 - "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" (NKJV).

- Revelation 16:2 - “So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image” (NKJV).
- Revelation 19:20 - “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (NKJV).
- Revelation 20:4 - “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” (NKJV).

Many of these verses tell us what happens to those who receive the mark of the beast or what happens to those who do not receive the mark of the beast. It is clear those who received the mark of the beast received some temporary benefits like being able to engage in economic activities others were prevented from participating in (Revelation 13:17). However, God would bring judgment (perhaps temporal) upon those who received the mark of the beast (Revelation 16:2) and ultimately eternal punishment was in store for those who received the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:11). Those who did not receive the mark of the beast might suffer in the present like not being able to engage in certain economic activities (Revelation 13:17). However, those who did not receive the mark of the beast are pictured as being blessed with being in the presence of God or being victors with Christ (Revelation 15:2; 20:4).

The question most people have about the mark of the beast though is: What is the mark of the beast? I have heard people claim debit/credit cards, vaccinations, etc. as being the mark of the beast. People also wonder if the mark of the beast is something they can receive without being aware they have received it. Here are some thoughts which might help us with these questions people have.

When a person interprets a challenging passage of Scripture, it is important to consider the context surrounding the passage. Revelation is a book which deals with things which were shortly going to take place (Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6). It was written to help encourage Christians in the first century and shortly thereafter to remain faithful to God in spite of the persecution which was about to come their way (Revelation 2:10). In Revelation 13, where the mark of the beast is first being introduced in the book, we read about a beast who is given power, a throne, and great authority from the dragon (Revelation 13:1-6). Beasts are often used in prophetic literature to symbolize world powers or nations. For example, read about Daniel’s vision of four beasts in Daniel 7. It is evident the beast is somehow connected to a nation based upon statements about a throne and authority. The dragon in Revelation is a reference to the devil (Revelation 12:9). The devil in other words is using a nation, “to make war with the saints” (Revelation 13:7, NKJV). In the second half of Revelation 13 we read about another beast which attempts to force people to worship the first beast (Revelation 13:14-15). People who worship the beast receive a mark and as a result can continue to engage in buying and selling. The mark they receive may not be something literal as the book of Revelation is using signs and symbols (Revelation 1:1). One might compare it to how God knows who are His (Revelation 7:2-3; Ezekiel 9:3-11; 2 Timothy 2:19). The point seems to be those who do not participate in the idolatrous worship of the Roman empire or emperor will experience persecution of an economic sort. One was not unaware he worshiped the Roman emperor and so it seems like something one was aware they were doing or not doing.

Hopefully these thoughts can help us have a basic and accurate understanding of what is involved in the mark of the beast!