

The Mark of the Beast



Harold Barber

"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. "

Revelation 13:18

In these days of war and chaos, much is being said about the "mark of the beast" and a world dictator. "Would-be" prophets have spun fine theories to the public, telling them that a time will come when we will be brought under a world dictator and be compelled to receive a mark in the forehead or the right hand before we can sell or buy anything. This theory is based upon a misinterpretation of the Scriptures and has no Biblical foundation whatsoever.

In Revelation 13:16-18 John the Revelator was speaking of the image of the beast, and the power he has to "cause ... all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 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. 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." In these verses John has told us how we can locate the beast. When we begin to look for this man with the number six hundred three score and six, where else could we look in the spiritual world than to the Pope of Rome? The lettering on the crown of the Pope of Rome is "Vicarius Filii Dei." The numerals, as used by ancient Rome, made up from the lettering on the Pope's crown, make a total of six hundred three score and six, the same figure John gives in verse 18.

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The Scriptures point the Pope out particularly as the "man of sin" and "the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He is the head of the Roman Catholic Church, who claims himself to be the visible head of the true church here in the world, the vicar (deputy) of Christ. The Latin words "Vicarius Filii Dei" represent his official title and name, and mean "Vicar of the Son of God." He is the official head of the Church of Rome, and John said the number of the beast was the number of a man. Then the Scripture points directly to the Roman Catholic Church as the first beast John speaks of in Revelation, Chapter 13. Study the nature and characteristics of the beast, place them beside church history, and you will find the Roman Church fits in the picture perfectly.

The Second Beast

Revelation 13:11 and 14 we read: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. . . . And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." The first beast of Revelation, Chapter 13, is Papal Rome, and John saw him rise up out of the sea (meaning people, multitudes and nations, Revelation 17:15). Papal Rome originated out of the ruins of pagan Rome, which crumbled before the onward march of Christianity. Pagan Rome denied Christianity and finally was subdued by it, and then Papal Rome came acknowledging it.

Now, the second beast John saw came up out of the earth (the earthly institution of Catholicism) and caused the people to make an image to the first beast. This second beast symbolized Protestantism. During the period of time between A.D. 530 until A.D. 1530, the entire world was held under the power of Papal Rome, without a Christian nation on earth, but the bursting forth of the sixteenth century Reformation brought about a new era in the world of religion. It was at this time that the second beast appeared on the scene, the two-horned beast symbolizing

Protestantism.

Martin Luther and other reformers began preaching the Bible as best they understood it and according to the light they had. They preached, "The just shall live by faith," and many accepted it and broke loose from the bondage of Catholicism. England and Germany became Christian nations. Many declared their freedom from Catholicism through the preaching of the sixteenth century reformers. Then came the days of sect making, the birthday of Protestantism, or sectarianism. The reformers could not agree on some doctrinal points, so they broke away from one another and divided the people and created sects of their own. The first Protestant creed was produced in 1530, the "Augsburg Confession," and was the result of the reformers breaking away from one another and dividing the people. They were divided into hostile sects and began to oppose one another, and even put armies on the battlefields to support their creeds. Hence, the second beast formed into an ecclesiastical organization in imitation of the hierarchy of Rome, the first beast. The Bible pictures the close relationship of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. In Revelation 17:5 we have a symbol of Catholicism as a vile prostitute and the mother of harlots. Protestantism is her harlot daughter, for she came out of Catholicism and bears its image. The Roman church is a humanly organized institution governed by a group of fallible men who make and prescribe the theology her members believe. Protestantism is also a humanly organized institution governed by man or a conference of men who also make and prescribe the rules of faith, the creed and doctrines, and practices for each of their members. Hence, we see the exact image of Catholicism in present-day Protestantism.

The Mark

The image of the beast (which is sectarianism) was to cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads; 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. In making the sect image in imitation of the papal original, the principle of marking was also copied. Papal Rome marks her subjects by instilling the teachings of Catholicism in their minds and acknowledges as Christians only those who subscribe to her belief. Hence, the mark in the forehead and in the right hand. When one wishes to identify himself with any Protestant church today, he must receive the mark. In other words, he must agree to conform to their rules of faith (creeds), and practices; which marks or distinguishes him from members of other denominations. If he does not know their teachings, he must agree to support and maintain them and is accepted into fellowship on these grounds, thus receiving the mark in the right hand. He then goes out to live by a set of manmade rules and practices; and supports and maintains them, thus becoming a beast (sect) worshiper instead of worshipping the Lamb of God who died for him.

"No Man Might Buy or Sell"

This does not refer to the buying or selling of literal goods but has direct spiritual application. Members of every denomination are marked by the belief that they have and will not accept (buy) another doctrine, neither will they give out (sell) any other doctrine. Also, each denomination requires a minister who wishes to work among them to preach their particular doctrine, and to do this, he must take courses in the seminary of that particular denomination. They are buying (receiving) the doctrinal teachings of that denomination and then going out to sell (preach) it to that same denomination. He can not buy or sell among other denominations.

Protestantism, as a whole, is a manmade system of worship; its doctrines and practices are based upon manmade creeds. The creeds are the thing that builds a middle wall of partition between them, thus demanding some system of marking the subjects to distinguish them from the member of other sects. The Bible strongly condemns division among Christians (1 Corinthians 1:10). It teaches that Jesus is our peace, Who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (Ephesians 2:14). "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13). Jesus prayed that His people might all be one so that the world might believe that the Father sent Him. Reader, are you a true child of God, worshipping the Lamb of God who died for you or are you merely a member of some denomination, living by and supporting their manmade creed? God has a people today who are separate from all the "isms" of men, who neither have received the mark of the beast, nor the name of the beast, nor the number of His name. They are standing upon the Sea of Glass (the Word of God), shouting the victory, for they have victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name.

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