666 -- THE MARK AND IMAGE OF THE BEAST

In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, the spirit of Antichrist conditions all mankind so that he might gain control over all that they do, and all that they think. This is expressed in the figurative language of giving them a mark on their hand and forehead, signifying his ownership and control.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; [the Spirit of Antichrist]*…And he causeth* [prepares or conditions] *all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive* [literally-- that he might give them] *a mark in their right hand* [signifying all that they do]*, or in their foreheads* [all that they think]*: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or* [or alternatively] *the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666."* (Rev 13:11, & 16-17) (KJV)

The common misconception is that at the end of the age Antichrist, as a person, will control the world, and force people to submit to his authority by introducing a law forcing everyone to receive a mark of some kind, like a tattoo, on their hand or forehead, and without the mark being displayed at shopping outlets, people will be prohibited from buying or selling.

The reading says that *"no man might buy or sell, save he that had* [or - without having] *the mark."* This can be viewed in two ways. The first is that a person must have the mark in order to buy or sell. The second is that buying and selling so conditions a man that it becomes an inevitable consequence that he cannot buy or sell without having received the mark. The second is the appropriate view.

The mark of the beast is not a literal physical mark, but an inner indication of ownership, signifying, by the recipient's overall attitude, that they are under Antichrist's control. The reading says that the spirit of Antichrist *"causes all"…"to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads."* The words *"causes all"* make more sense when the alternative meaning, "conditions all," is used. Man is conditioned by the process of buying and selling until he comes under the control of Antichrist.

The literal translation of the words *"to receive"* is actually "that he may give." The spirit of Antichrist prepares or conditions all so that he can give, or implant in them, the mark of his control and bondage. The word *"all"* is universal, meaning that all mankind has been conditioned to be given the mark. It is not something to avoid because **ALL** have received the mark through the influence of buying and selling. Our responsibility as Christians is to overcome, or to get the victory over the influence of the mark. *"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."* (Rev 15:2)

The continual practice of buying and selling engenders traits like covetousness, self-reliance and self-sufficiency, idolatry, avarice, worldliness, overriding ambition, dissatisfaction, and fear of lack of provision, that turn mankind's allegiance from God to the world, the very area that is under Antichrist's control. The mark is *"on their right hand,"*

signifying a controlling influence on all that they do, and *"on their foreheads,"* or on their mental outlook.

Notice from the reading that when Antichrist conditions all, it is not just so he can place a mark on our hand or forehead. It is so that he can give us *"the mark, OR the name of the beast, OR the number of his name."* It is so that he can impart some of his traits to us, according to our openness in various areas.

The name of the beast - In the bible, a name often relates to the attributes of a person. In receiving the name of the beast, a person takes on board some of the attributes of Antichrist. Such persons reject the faithfulness and power of God, and do not trust Him to meet their needs. Instead, in fleshly self-dependence, they put their trust in their own ability and the things of the world - areas under the control of Antichrist.

Persons bearing the name of Antichrist go their own way, and rather than submitting to Jesus as Saviour and Lord, they cater to their carnal nature, engaging in lawless self-works, and obeying the lusts of the flesh and the world.

The number of the name of the beast - In the reading, the number of the beast is equated with his name, and so it is called the number of his name - *"…the name or the number of his name. 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."* In biblical numerology, certain numbers have symbolic meanings. In this case, the number of the beast, or the number of his name is 666. The phrase, *"number of a man,"* can just as correctly be translated as **"number of man,"** which creates an important distinction.

Six is the number of man because he was created on the sixth day, and six taken to the third dimension is the fullness of man. The embracing of the fullness of man's potential is the basis of the New Age philosophy called HUMANISM. The main tenet of humanism is that man has within himself an inherent power to meet every need, to solve every problem, and to create a perfect civilization. He is independent from God, and only needs to look within himself, particularly his mind, to discover and release a vast reservoir of power. He has all sufficiency within himself, and the scientific wonders he has created, to order and control his circumstances without God.

Gaining control of man through buying and selling is an important strategy of Antichrist. It is the main weapon he uses in his endeavour to destroy man's reliance and trust in God, and to eventually gain control of the world.

Money and buying and selling are not sinful in themselves, but become a potent weapon in Antichrist's control of men.