

The Mark of God or The Beast

By Cindy Coates

"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 forehead." (Revelation 13:16). "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out..." (Revelation 14:9-10).

The qualifying statement that begins the book remains throughout the whole, everything that unfolds is toward one central purpose, to bring forth "The revelation of Jesus Christ." It is not focused upon calamities, ultimate destruction, etc. but upon the total REDEMPTION and RESTORATION of all mankind, as wrought through our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. All that He does reveals more of His nature and character. Particularly is this so in regards to "the mark." Much speculation by man has viewed this solely from the negative, interpreting it in the light of natural events. This causes people to cast an apprehensive eye towards any event that might be construed as having application to this supposed negative fulfillment. Precious indeed, therefore, is the quickening of the holy Spirit which gives a positive view of the ultimate triumph of Christ in this matter.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rising up out of the sea." The sea-- bespeaks the mass of humanity, out of which rises the bestial systems which have placed their mark upon "ALL, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond." The fact is every creature bears this mark of the bestial nature, until such a time as the cross cancels out the old Adamic nature, and we are born anew with the Christ nature, to bear THE MARK OF GOD, being partakers of the divine nature, and conformed to the image of The Son.

The Greek word used here for "mark" is "charagma." Eight times, and all in the book of Revelation, it is translated as "mark," and means: an engraving, an impressed mark. Then once it is given as "graven," in Acts 17:29, and it is in this latter reference that we find the explanation or key as to what the MARK involves in its relationship to man, for this mark is brought about by ART and by MAN's DEVICE.

"For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, GRAVEN by art and man's device."

The Greek word for "art" is techni" meaning: art, skill, craft, technology; and thus speaks of the work of the hands, or handiwork, and has its correlation to that which is received in "the right hand," as spoken of in Revelation.

The word "devices" is from the Greek "enthumesis" meaning: INWARD THINKING, or inner thought, which deals with our mental activity, and pertains to the forehead.

Thus we have the ENGRAVING BY HANDIWORK, and the CONTROLLING OF OUR THINKING. That which would seek to place its image upon us, dealing with the work of our hands, and the brainwashing of our minds, to think according to its nature and purpose.

Pursuing this a bit further, we find another Greek word closely akin, it is "charakter", translated as "express image." Hebrews 1:3, "Who being the brightness of glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE of His person..." Speaking, of course, of Christ Jesus, and then by extension, of His anointed ones who partake of His divine nature and are conformed to His image, so as to also become expressions, or manifestations of the substance of God, as revealed through His, and our character. Thus, the MARK speaks of that handiwork and the inward thinking which brings forth an expression of character in line with the very source from which the mark comes. Either we will express the character of God, or the character of the bestial system of this world. It is not speaking only of an outward form, which could be covered with a masquerade for a time, but it refers to that INNER QUALITY OF CHARACTER WHICH IS BEING DEVELOPED IN US, which in due time shall be revealed, for "the day shall declare it."

The "mark of the beast" is the direct opposite to the "MARK OF GOD," and is an imprint of the nature and character of this world's bestial system. The challenge to OVERCOME this mark of the bestial has been with us a long time-- ever since "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to KEEP (guard) it." (Genesis 2:15).

There was a beast waiting to place its mark upon the Adam. "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." (Genesis 3:1). And in Revelation we again have this charge to guard against the beast, and the system which it represents.

We find that the IMPRINT was made when Eve responded to the serpent's argument, which caused her to "take of the fruit," which had been forbidden her. Immediately the mark was in her forehead, and then in her hand. Adam joined her in this receiving of the mark. And having taken the imprint-- they began to manifest the nature, character of the bestial, in selfish, rebellious, minding the flesh behavior.

In Revelation, again the hand and the mind are involved with the mark of the beast-- the influence that causes one to think and act according to the ways of the world.

It is this flesh nature that identifies us with this world's carnality. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: - they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." But then in contra-distinction to such negativism, we find that the new Christ nature bears a far different imprint, for "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Galatians 5:19-23). O, to bear the mark of God!

Not only is the bestial mark stamped upon the nature of man, to influence his thinking, and his handiwork, but we live under the mark of the beast by living in this commercialized world order. "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." If we buy a car, a home, clothes, food, pay taxes, etc. it is all under the mark of the beast. Whether we use a barter system, or silver coins, we have to do business according to our culture and order of society.

The name, nature, character of the beast touches every facet of our natural life. Yet Jesus had no trouble with this, and He instructed the people to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Mark 12:17). So when faced with the demand for tribute money, He said to Peter, "Lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee." (Matthew 17:27). He used the money of the system to pay the tribute of the system, and in doing so, He made sure that no one could say He owed them anything. Even though HE TRULY BELONGED TO A DIFFERENT ORDER, THE HEAVENLY, yet He submitted to the present order, while He maintained a PURE SPIRIT un-touched by that order. He did not rebel against that society, for such rebellion would have defiled Him, having partaken of the world's spirit of rebellion. He gave the system its due, and therefore was free of any obligation to it.

Paul reaffirmed this, when he said, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another." (Romans 13:7-8).

Another aspect to be considered is the governmental mark. "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." Again we find this beast first mentioned in the Old Testament, in Daniel's vision. He saw "four great beasts come up from the sea diverse one from another... like a lion... like to a bear... like a leopard... and a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible." (Daniel 7:3-7). These have long been understood to represent governmental systems which imposed their order upon the people of their day. But each one also represents a spirit-characteristic that is part of this world's order. In John's vision all the beasts were

combined into one, indicating that no matter which phase or time one considered, they all were a part of the over-all bestial system.

The lion "was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." This indicates the beast's approach to reason and humanity, appearing as if to benefit man, and to understand the needs of man, but secularism and humanism are a part of this world, and they have nothing in common with the mark of God. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9). His WAYS and THOUGHTS reveal His mark, and are an expression of His character.

The second beast was given the command to 'Arise, devour much flesh. " Whether by war, oppression, religious persecution, paganism, or whatever, you have to "buy and sell" according to its order, or be devoured. Indeed, if you want to climb the corporate ladder of success, you will have to devour all those that get in your way. The spirit of this beast is "devour, or be devoured." And yet in the final analysis to take this mark is to be consumed thereby.

Of the third beast, the leopard, "dominion was given unto it." The lust for power and control, to rule over others, is a strong characteristic of the bestial system of this world. The spirit of this beast is found in every avenue of society-- religious, political, economical, etc. It craves dominion-- and so opposite of the Spirit of Christ, Who said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11). There is no building of a personal kingdom today, without the mark-- i.e. the actions and thinking of this beast.

The fourth beast has no name, but is dreadful and terrible, and exceeding strong-- made to destroy, for "it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet." The tyranny, the cruelty, the ravenousness-- "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." The end thereof are the ways of death! Gladly do we turn from its mark, to receive the mark of God, for He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

It matters not which traits of the mark of the beast are found in us, thank God, He can erase, purge, take away that image, and then humble us, transform us, mold and shapen us into a new image-- for "As we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Corinthians 15:49).

The very subtleness of this bestial system is that it deceives men into thinking they will have life only if they yield to its spirit, and do things its way. If you want to get ahead in this world, you must conform. And so they "worship the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him." Put it in present day language, "who can fight city hall?" Day by day allegiance is paid "to the system." Yet if we are motivated by this SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, we will surely bring forth after its kind.

The mind-control of the beast produces character manifestations which are so unholy. Mental imagery that is far opposite of the truth. God gave Ezekiel insight concerning "what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chamber of his imagery," and what he saw was "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about." (Ezekiel 8:12, 10). They BORE THE MARK, and they THOUGHT according to its kind-- bestial. What went on in the chambers of their imagery was totally unholy, displeasing to God.

Thank God we can "be renewed in the spirit of our mind," (Ephesians 4:23), and when we BEAR THE MARK OF GOD, we will THINK according to His kind. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, (we will) think on these things." (Philippians 4:8).

No doubt about it, there is a real warfare going on-- and to this bestial system is given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." But it is a momentary victory, "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." (Proverbs 24:16). Therefore, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness,

the Lord shall be a light unto me." (Micah 7:8). The ultimate victory belongs to our Lord, and those who put their trust in Him.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

And that there shall arise those who OVERCOME this whole bestial system, is sure, for later on John writes, "I saw... them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name." (Revelation 15:2).

The message is one of OVERCOMING-- "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Romans 8:37).

What rejoicing fills the heart when we realize that GOD has a mark which He is engraving upon His people, and it CANCELS OUT the mark of the beast completely. He is bringing forth a new creation order wherein His own divine nature shall find expression in every man.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29).

Thus, "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18).

There is such a desire within to be freed from every trait of the bestial. Even our language reveals how much we have borne its image. Dumb like an ox, stubborn as a mule, sly as a fox, wise as the serpent, silly as an old hen, etc. Character traits of the flesh which reveal the mark of the bestial.

"And all that dwell on the earth worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear." (Revelation 13:8-9).

O let us HEAR IT! If our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, WE WILL NOT WORSHIP THE BEAST, because we will worship our Redeemer who has "made us free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2).

"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."

Six has long been recognized as the human number, the number of man as destitute of God. It is also the number of man's labour as apart and distinct from God's rest. It speaks of the realm of the flesh in all its humanism independent of God. Therefore 666 bespeaks the culmination of human pride in independence of God, and opposition to Christ. It signifies the mark of the beast upon man brought to its zenith. It is flesh in all its wicked, carnal glory.

They who worship the beast, and are under his mark, "the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out." (Revelation 14:10). For, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Romans 1:18). Why this expression of the wrath of God? It is HIS ENERGY FORCE sent forth to cleanse and purge until every man is free from the mark of the beast, and engraved with the mark of God.

The beast symbolizes the flesh, the world, the devil. Its name bespeaks of its nature, its character. And its number depicts it reaching its full expression. Knowing this we understand that the issue is not one of getting a "tattoo" on our forehead or hand, or having a social security number, or any other type of personal identification-- the

challenge is to "gain the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark," by yielding ourselves completely to Christ-- until we are fully ONE IN HIM. Then all the marks of the beast are erased, cancelled out, and only His image will be seen. Clearly John saw the conflict, awesome and terrible, as the beast rises out of the sea-- but the revelation does not end with this negative view. It is a "revelation of Jesus Christ," and He is totally triumphant, therefore John sees the overcomer gaining the victory-- and ultimately all creation freed from the 'tyranny of the flesh, and brought into the fulness "of His life.

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