

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER    ISA. 55:10    FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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### THE MARK OF THE BEAST

The Greek word for "beast" used throughout the Revelation is **therion**. This is the diminutive form of the word **ther** which if literally translated would be "little beast." This fact alone should keep us from imagining some enormous, terrifying, and revolting creature, especially when it is used of man. The word "beast" has to do with the wildness of the one to whom it is applied, one characterized by lawlessness and lack of restraint in relationship to God. Such a one is certainly portrayed in Revelation 13: 11.

It is in this portion of God's Word that we read of "**another beast that comes up out of the earth;**" and even though it says he has two horns like a lamb and speaks as a dragon, nevertheless, he is a man, one who arises out of the earth, that is, from among the people. And even though he is a man, he is also superhuman, since he is obsessed and energized by satanic power (Rev. 13:12-15).

Among his exploits is one of "**Causing 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 has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**" It is from this passage that we get the phrase, "the mark of the beast," one that has fascinated sensational preachers, prophecy mongers, politicians, and movie-makers down to the present day. Upon reading this passage most rough and ready reckoners quickly come to the crude conclusion that the word "all" here signifies every man living upon the earth. But this cannot be as a look at Rev. 15:2 will clearly show. The word "all" here indicates "all" who want to buy or sell. These must have the mark.

Today, many so-called preachers of prophecy are continually exploiting mankind's fears and anxieties, creating constant worry concerning dire catastrophies which they buttress with misinterpreted passages from the Bible such as the one we are now considering. They see in the words of Rev. 13: 16, 17 a dire situation in which men must either take the mark of the beast or else stand by and watch their families slowly

die of starvation. This appalling situation is then spread out to cover every family and individual upon the earth. They then add to the terror by quoting the announcement made by the third angel as recorded in Revelation 14:9-11:

**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 without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the, holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

If the interpretations that are commonly given to these words are the truth, if all men on earth at some time must face up to one of two dreadful choices, to refuse the mark and watch his loved ones slowly starve, or take the mark and have food but experience the undiluted wrath of God for having done so, it is hideous indeed that God would allow a testing such as this to arise wherein there is no way of escape. Has He not declared that He will not suffer one of His own to be tempted (tried or tested) above what he is able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape? (1 Cor. 10:13). And it cannot be denied that God is involved in this situation since He will be the punisher of all who take the mark.

In view of these facts there is no way of escaping the conclusion that the present-day proclaimers of dire tragedies soon to come have missed the truth of this portion altogether. They have led many to construct "survival shelters" and a far greater number to store up food and water that is supposed to help them survive this stricture of the beast. Others are seeing in every present-day mark, symbol, and emblem the groundwork for establishing a world government by the antichrist. They have concluded that the 666 is his mark, and now they are finding it everywhere. They do not realize that it would be just as easy to find 333 or 555 if they looked for them as diligently as they do 666. There has to be a more logical explanation of Rev. 13:16 than those that are being currently set forth, and I would like, to offer one.

First, we must place this prophesied event in its proper time period. It takes place in the second half of the seven-year period which I have designated on my chart as "The Revolt Against the Kingdom." (this chart is free upon request). And it should be noted that this seven-year period is preceded by the more than six centuries of the kingdom of God. The beast set forth in Revelation 13 makes his appearance and does his work in the heptad of years of the revolt against God's government, and he works only after the divine restraints, imposed during the kingdom, have been lifted. (2 Thess. 2:7-8.)

When the government (kingdom) of God becomes a reality, we cannot say exactly what the economic system will be, but we can say that the divine laws which God will impose concerning economic and social relationships, also concerning property, will be so different from anything in our present system that it is beyond our comprehension at this point in time. One thing we can be sure of is that it will not be a system based upon the principles of buying and selling, the two factors that are the life blood of all commerce today. Neither will it be an economy based upon such things as the dollar, the franc, or the pound. Furthermore, it is apparent that when God governs the world all property will be recognized as belonging to God and held by Him for the benefit of every member of the human race. He has already declared His ownership of all this in Psalm 50: 10-12.

In the early days of the Acts period, when the kingdom was in its "blade" stage (See Issue No. **SB048**), we get a glimpse of the kingdom system when we are told, "**And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need**" (Acts 2:44,45). A short time later we read: "**And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need**" (Acts 4:32-35).

This beautiful situation came about out of a literal response to the commands of the Lord Jesus. To His disciples He had said: "**Fear not, little flock; for it is your fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom, sell what you have and give alms,**" (Luke 12:32,33), and, "**Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away**" (Matt. 5:42).

These directives set forth ideal conduct under an ideal government, one that watches over those who lend and those who borrow; those who ask as well as those who give. We have no such government today, and we will not have it until God speaks from heaven and imposes His own moral government upon the whole earth. Then judgment will run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream (Amos 5:24).

Such directives are not workable today, and God would not impose them upon us without erecting all the safeguards that His government will bring. However, we do learn from them something about the economic situation under which all will live when God governs the earth. All buying and selling will cease. The economy will be one of giving, sharing, and helping, with no thought of making a profit in so doing.

Someone, upon reading this, will feel bound to say: "Such a system will not work; it is utter foolishness to suggest that it will ever be." To this I reply: "It would not work today under the conditions that exist, and I would not even suggest that it be tried. Men are far too selfish, covetous, greedy, rapacious, for such a system to work. But they cannot say it will not work after God's enlightenings have enlightened the world (Psalm 97:4), after the glory of the LORD has been revealed (Isa. 40:5), after the earth has been filled with the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

Under God's government the practices of buying and selling are banished. They will not be the customs of men. But they will arise again in "the hour of temptation" which is to try every man that dwells upon the earth (Rev. 3: 10). This hour of testing is characterized by God's restrainer, His Holy Spirit, getting out of the way, a thing that is done in order to permit men and nations to walk after their own ways (See Issue No. **SB113**). When this occurs it is evident from God's Word that some men quickly turn back to the practices of "the good old days," when a man could buy and sell, make a profit, become rich and powerful, then use all this to "grind the faces" of men, control governments, and exalt themselves.

However, due to the chaos crated by willful men in the temporary absence of divine controls the cry of "Organize, Unite," will again be heard in the land. An unusually attractive personality has offered himself to the world as a substitute for Christ and is speedily accepted by enough to given him control. He decrees that none can buy or sell unless they have fully submitted to him. The sign of their submission will be a mark (tattoo?) in the hand or upon the forehead, which will proclaim that he belongs to the proper association and can buy or sell (do business) as he pleases.

Of course if you and I are alive (and we will be) during this strange and interesting time we will not want to buy or sell. If I have anything you need, I will give it to you; and if you have what I need I am sure you will give it to me. We will want no part in this new business of commerce that will arise in that time. However, the event described in Revelation 13 are more than six centuries in the future so **"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on! Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon -in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these"** (Matt. 6:25,28,29).

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