

The Mark of the Beast

The reason and the purpose of our having these Bible studies is we are searching for answers to questions that involve the things that we have been taught and the things that are being taught in churches today. No matter what people believe, it does not change the facts. The facts are statements of Truth recorded in the book we call the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God which is forever settled in heaven. **(Psalms 119:89)**

Deception, when heard over and over for many years, does NOT transform itself into Truth. It seems easier to believe a falsehood you have heard all your life than to believe a Truth that no one else has heard before.

Truth hurts when one is running from it. No one Scripture can be rightfully interpreted by itself but must be interpreted in the light of all Scriptures. Although a Scripture may have many applications, it has only one interpretation.

It is not upon the silent sections of the Bible that doctrines are founded. The silent sections do not void nor change clear sections of Scripture, nor do they imply an alternative choice.

When it comes to interpretation of Scripture, we must always understand that only after all the Scriptures have been examined on a particular subject can true Bible Doctrine be established. If allowed, Scripture will interpret Scripture.

The basic analogy of hermeneutics, which is the science of interpretation, is that no Scripture can negate any other Scripture. ***“All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”.*** (2 Timothy 3:16)

When we study the whole Bible, we see that God’s will and purpose is complete and fulfilled.

When studying the Bible, you must always **“read in context”**. This means to interpret the word, the phrase, the clause, the verse, paragraph, or maybe the entire chapter in light of the words that surround the subject you are studying. If you don’t follow this simple rule, you will find yourself reading “out of context” which many church people do.

When you are conducting a search for a word, phrase, or a clause, always remember that **“audience relevance”** is an extremely important factor in determining a Scriptural interpretation.

We must consider what these subjects meant to the writer or speaker and to the original readers and hearers back in their time and culture.

For example, different countries have different cultures with their own idioms. An **“idiom”** is an expression whose meaning cannot be derived from the individual words in the expression. An idiom is a phrase or expression whose symbolic meaning differs entirely from the literal definition of its individual words.

Some examples of idioms in the English language are the following:

- “To catch one’s eye”,
- “Break a leg”,
- “Bite the bullet”,
- “Hit the ceiling”,
- “Hard of hearing”, and
- “Call it a day”.

It is easy to see that these idioms function as a unit and cannot be analyzed word-by-word. Their meaning must be learned as a whole. If you take an idiom literally, it makes no sense.

Idioms are often unique to specific cultures or regions and rarely translate word -for-word into other languages. Any research on ancient Hebrew language or by just reading the Old Testament or the Book of Revelation, it’s easy to see that the Bible is full of metaphors, idioms, and imagery.

I experienced this personally when I was teaching in a church service in Ghana, West Africa. As I was teaching, I would say to the congregation, **“Do you see what I’m saying?”**.

After several blank expressions on their faces, the pastor who was interpreting for me whispered in my ear, **“Brother, they can’t “see” what you’re saying**. So, I had to change that idiom to **“Do you understand what I’m saying?”**. Then they acknowledged that they understood.

We must always pay attention to the Old Testament sayings that are in New Testament passages. The old saying is true: **“The Old Testament is the New Testament contained; the New Testament is the Old Testament explained.”** This saying has a lot of Truth in it. Keeping these concepts in mind, we are now going to examine a subject found in the Book of Revelation.

When we read the Book of Revelation, the readers are reminded to read, to hear, and to keep the things written in the Book of Revelation. This is because all the events written in Revelation were shortly to come to pass.

All the events in the Book of Revelation would occur **“shortly”**, that is, to the audience to whom the Book was written. **(Revelation 1:1,3)** The promise of Jesus to return to destroy Jerusalem corresponds with the warnings and promises to the churches in Asia.

It was to these seven churches that the Book of Revelation was addressed. (**Revelation 1:4**) Jesus warned these churches that actually existed at that time that he was coming quickly and would catch them unprepared if they did not repent. (**Revelation 2:5, 16,25, Revelation 3:3,11, Revelation 16:15, Revelation 22:6, 10, 12, 20**)

All the things spoken in the Book of Revelation were all fulfilled in the last generation of the Old Covenant that ended in AD 70 of the first century. Today, almost 2,000 years later and even years yet to come, these same, time elements and events are being misapplied in a false futuristic setting as though they have not yet occurred.

We must first acknowledge that the Book of Revelation is mostly composed of symbols. These symbols were immediately recognizable to the first century audience to whom this book was written. These same symbols were used before in such books as Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah.

When the word “**mark**” is spoken of, it brings to mind a previous reference to the word “**mark**” found in **Ezekiel 9:3-6**. In this context, Jerusalem was about to be besieged and destroyed by the Babylonians. It is clear from the context that this was not to be taken literally. This was a symbolic way of showing a specific class of people within the doomed city that were being set apart for preservation. (**Ezekiel 9:6**)

In Revelation, a similar “**mark**” is placed on those whom God wants to preserve. (**Revelation 14:1**) A “**mark**” was placed on those loyal to the beast. This “**mark**” set them apart for destruction. (**Revelation 14:9-11**)

We must allow Scripture to interpret itself when possible.

Whether or not it conforms to our ideas of what it should be like is irrelevant. Most church people today read the Book of Revelation and simply assume that it speaks of our times or of a future time.

In the Book of **Exodus Chapter 13**, we read a list of rituals that were to be performed. These rituals or acts of worship and service to the Lord were a sign on their hands and foreheads. (**Exodus 13:6,9,16**)

We can read similar instructions in **Deuteronomy 6:8** and **11:18**. Here they were to bind the commandments of the Lord as a sign on their hand and on their forehead. The forehead is where the brain is located. In other words, they were instructed to keep the commandments of the Lord foremost in their minds and as a part of their daily lives. It was never a literal mark.

To bind the words of the Lord to one’s forehead or to one’s hand was like a Hebrew badge of honor that symbolized reverence to the Lord and adherence to His commandments.

The Lord never wanted His people to forget His Mercy and Truth. (**Proverbs 3:3**) It appears that servitude, worship, and loyalty were considered a symbol or mark on the hand and forehead.

When you consider the “**mark**” mentioned in **Revelation 13:16** and **18**, this was a “**mark**” that meant a person was to be faithful to the beast. It was a symbol of loyalty to the beast.

It was a “**mark**” that symbolized paying homage to a man whose number is 666. The beast was Imperial Rome. In **Revelation 13:1** and in **Daniel 2:40,44**, we read of the fourth kingdom which was Rome. It was during the reign of this fourth kingdom that the Kingdom of God was set up. (**Daniel 2:44**)

Revelation 17:10 identifies the period in which John wrote the Book of Revelation.

The Caesars, which were the rulers of the Roman Empire, are as follows:

1. **Julius**
2. **Augustus**
3. **Tiberius**
4. **Caligula**
5. **Claudias**
6. **Nero**

The first five were already dead when John wrote the Book of Revelation. The “**one who is**” was Nero. Nero was still on the throne at this time. The reign of Nero extended from AD 54 to AD 68.

It was during this time period that the Book of Revelation was written. The official title of Nero Caesar, when given its numerical equivalence in Hebrew letters equals 666.

History has recorded the beastly acts and atrocities of Nero Caesar. The Apostle John’s contemporaries knew exactly who he was talking about.

The Mark of the Beast and the event where no one could buy or sell without taking this “**mark**” was strictly limited to Judea. It was not a worldwide event. It has already happened in the first century.

It is NOT in our future.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Apostolic Church in Rome admonishing them to “**mark**” those who taught contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostles. (**Romans 16:17**)

The Greek word used here for “**mark**” is “skopeco”. Strong’s Greek #4648

Rom 16:17 Now ^{G1161} I beseech ^{G3870} you, ^{G5209} brethren, ^{G80} **mark** ^{G4648} them which cause ^{G4160} divisions ^{G1370} and ^{G2532} offences ^{G4625} contrary ^{G3844} to the ^{G3588} doctrine ^{G1322} which ^{G3739} ye ^{G5210} have learned; ^{G3129} and ^{G2532} avoid ^{G1578} ^{G575} them. ^{G846}

G4648

σκοπέω

skopeō

skop-eh'-o

From [G4649](#); to take **aim** at (*spy*), that is, (figuratively) **regard**: - consider, take heed, look at (on), mark. Compare [G3700](#).

Total KJV occurrences: 6

“Skopeo” means **“to pay close attention to”** or **“to take heed”**. Paul was telling them to guard against those who would cause division. We derive our English word **“telescope”** and **“microscope”** from this same Greek word.

“Skopeo” is used again in **Philippians 3:17**. Again, it was never a literal mark. Today we have preachers correcting the Bible when it should be the Bible correcting the preachers.

Conclusion

We have read what the Bible says about a **“mark”** in the hand and in the forehead. Many times, in the Scriptures, this **“mark”** represented loyalty and obedience to God. It was in the first century that this loyalty and obedience to the Roman Emperor and his Empire was symbolized by the **Mark** of the Beast. The **Mark** of the Beast has absolutely nothing to do with our world today.

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