

469 All to receive a mark ...

In these early days of AD 2022 Covid-19 still dominates, with its variants, vaccines, daily statistics and interminable “what-if?” discussions in the media. We are now seeing a strong move by political authorities around the world towards making vaccines compulsory for all citizens, with penalties for those who refuse - public condemnation, restriction of movement and access, and possible loss of employment.

Compulsory vaccination for all would mean even greater state control of our lives than exists already, which brings to mind some key passages in the Book of Revelation concerning the 7-year period of Tribulation which is still to come, after the believing Church has been seized away. In Revelation Chapter 12 we learn of the “great red dragon ... that old serpent, Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ... he was cast out into the earth ... the accuser of our brethren ... And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” (from 12.3,9-11, KJV).

Then in Chapter 13 we read of “a beast out of the sea ... and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority ... and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon ... and they worshipped the beast” (from 13.1-4). This beast spoke “great things and blasphemies”, he made “war with the saints” (that is those who, after the seizing-away of the true Church, have come to faith in Christ during the Tribulation), and “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (from 13.5-8).

Thirdly we are told of “another beast” (13.11), also gifted with plentiful evil powers, who instructs that an image of the first beast should be made, to which he then gives life, and enforces worship of this image on pain of death (from 13.14-15). Lastly, “he causeth all ... to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads”, and without that “mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name”, “no man might buy or sell” (from 13.16-17). The number of this beast is 666 (13.18), which, omitting the details here for lack of space, points strongly at Rome and the Papacy system.

Scripturally the figure 6 has to do with Man in his imperfections, Man without God and Man without Christ, so a three-fold 6 has triple emphasis, with the owner of this number being the antichrist figure himself (eg., 1 John 2.18,22; 4.3 / 2 John 7 – from which passages we gather that antichrist is firstly a Christ-denying process and secondly a

Christ-denying individual). (On these and all other scriptural numbers, see for example “Number In Scripture” by E W Bullinger, a wonderful book and well worth acquiring, about the Lord God’s extraordinary use of number in His Word).

While treading cautiously in such matters, we do well to see how these Revelation prophecies about this “false trinity” of dragon, beast and false prophet, are becoming far less fanciful these days than many over the centuries have assumed them to be. The technology now certainly exists to put a “mark” of some sort, perhaps a “chip” under the skin, on to and into every person on the planet, to ensure subservience under whoever is in charge in some future, foul, Man-contrived “New World Order”. In particular we note an obvious similarity between the growing insistence that all must be vaccinated (or else ...), and the imposing of the “mark of the beast” on the forehead or hand in times to come (or else ...), under the prophesied antichrist figure.

It is significant that those who choose to worship the beast and receive his mark will face full divine punishment later on (Revelation 14.9-11), while those who come to faith in Christ in those times are to be patient, obedient and faithful (v.12), even though that may well mean martyrdom for their refusal to worship the beast (v.13). They will not lose their reward (20.4).

In the light of these solemn matters clearly laid out for us in God’s Word, we would not wish for anyone to pass through this promised tribulation period. This gives an urgency to our witnessing to others about the great Gospel truths: the reality and consequences of sin for us all (Romans 3.23; 6.23); the need for God’s forgiveness of our sins, a forgiveness which we cannot earn by our own efforts (Romans 3.20 / Galatians 2.16; 3.20 / Ephesians 2.8-9); and the forgiveness of God freely given to all who claim His forgiveness on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and in the saving power of His shed blood (John 6.35-40,44,47 / II Corinthians 5.21 / I John 1.7-2.2).

Praise God for the victory He has won for us in our Lord Jesus Christ! - and by way of our response, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (from I Corinthians 15.57-58, KJV).