

The 'Mark of the Beast'

What is it? How does this affect you?

Key verses

- “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads. And that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Rev.13:16-17
- “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” Rev.20:4

A Jewish mistake

Some Christians may scoff at Jews who take God's word in a literal fashion when He told them to “bind” His commandments on their **hands** and between their **eyes** (Deut.6:8, 11:18). The Jews wrap copies of the law around their arms or place containers on their foreheads. ‘Smart’ Christians of course know that He was emphasising the point by way of a figure of speech which is simply an alternative way of advising Israel to do (hand) and to think (forehead) the right thing by way of His commandments in their day to day lives.

Same Christian mistake

Then when Christians come to a highly figurative book like Revelation they strait away make the **very same mistake** by insisting that the 'mark' of the beast is a literal mark implanted in the right hand or forehead. When you think of it, nobody would claim Scripture means a literal ‘animal beast’ when referring to the mark of the beast.

Wrong thinking and behaviour

“...that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or name of the beast” (Rev.13:17)
The mark of the beast simply refers to those who think (head) and behave (hand) in a way that is offensive to God and usually motivated by **money or greed** (see verse above). This behaviour is evident in many **religious** and **political** systems today, and rampant in the **corporate world**. In short, most of the world today could be said to already have the **mark** and **name** of the beast because they exhibit behaviour that is motivated by human greed and selfishness, and not God's way. A recent example of this was the ploy by the European union to seek protection for 600 regional food names and 4000 wines including an exclusive use of the name “champagne”.

Early church enforcement

An early example of an enforced mark of the beast was during the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne. Any who refused to accept traditional Catholicism were banned from buying or selling and hence many starved.

His Father's Name on their foreheads

These people with the “name of the beast” are to be contrasted with God's people who have “**victory over the beast**” (Rev.15:2), meaning they have overcome evil doing and thinking and are said to have “**His Father's name written on their foreheads**” (Rev.14:1). If you read the early chapters of Revelation you will note that seven times God's people are described as those who have “**overcome**”, meaning they have had victory in their lives **over evil thought and practice** which qualifies them to be acceptable to Jesus when he returns (Rev.2:26-27).