

"It Causes All to Be Marked"

Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

The mark of the beast! We have heard about it all our lives. That dreaded mark. When it appears, we'll know that the choice is life or death in this life and eternal life or death in the next. If we choose to live by taking the mark, we will die forever in unending torment. If we refuse the mark, we'll be pursued by the beast system, seeking our death. A terrible choice. At least, by choosing to live for Jesus, He guarantees we'll live forever. Oh, but what an unwanted predicament! Is it any wonder that a theory emerged offering us the hope of a way out?



And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 13:15-17 ESV

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. Revelation 19:20 ESV

A Declaration of War

This hated mark is ground zero for the End Times. With it, all-out war is declared against God and those who follow Him. There is no question about that. Everyone who takes this mark is doomed to eternal death. Everyone who tries to flee from taking it will be hunted down. Why would anyone take it? Why would anyone refuse it? The first answer is easy. Those who take the mark will have been deceived "by the signs" the beast performed. It will be deception all the way.

Even now, we can readily imagine a scenario by which a mark (or a chip) will be promoted as a way to end identity theft, or insure that our vital records are always available, or enable us to sail through financial transactions with a wave of the hand. Deception. But the greatest deception of all will be the signs and wonders the beast provides to a gullible and unsuspecting world of unbelievers. Not believing the truth about God, leaves people wide open to believing any lie that wants to take His place. But just to be sure, compulsion will be waiting in the wings: the beast "causes all" to receive the mark if deception doesn't do the job. Persuasion, deception and compulsion thrown in favor of taking that awful mark, who will resist?



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The Problem of Compulsion

Many do. And that creates an insoluble problem for the pre-trib and mid-trib rapture theories. They would have it that all genuine believers get lifted to safety before this mark and martyrdom gets forced upon them. The ones who remain will be the “foolish virgins” who didn’t stay well-connected to the Lord. This hapless crew is composed of half-saved, compromised and double minded believers who got “left behind” because they were living for the world, rather than the Lord. In truth, they would be easy candidates for continued deception and compromise, not stalwart resistance.

Why would the beast and his cohorts have to use compulsion on them? Just let nature (fallen nature) take its course and they’ll fold up true to form. Are we to believe that they will suddenly discover a spine and a passion they never had before? How is it that the most heroic believers—those who resist the mark in the face of certain torture or death—will somehow emerge from the ranks of those unqualified to be raptured? How is it that this ragtag band will gain the highest accolades of heaven, rather than the “wise virgins” who were carried to safety?

This just doesn’t make sense. Only a dedicated Body of believers, who deeply love Jesus and fully understand the times will be able to withstand the deception that is coming. Only they will have the faith-courage to hang in there with Him in the face of massive opposition. And why would God allow severely flawed believers and un-shepherded new believers to be put to such an extreme test? Wouldn’t He ask that of those who had already been passing the preliminary trials? The forcing of the mark on those who refuse it, proves that this has to be the true Church which goes through the Great Tribulation.

Scriptures on the Mark

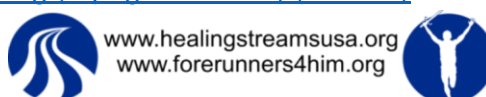
And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. Revelation 14:9-12 ESV

And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. Revelation 19:20 ESV

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