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“ID Cards — is this a precursor of the Mark of the Beast??”



Based upon a sermon preached by Rev. Ivan Foster in
Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church,

Lord's Day evening, February 19th, 2006.

**“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive
a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads,”**

Revelation 13:16.

I believe that no matter how wicked the actions of men may be, they are motivated by the foolish and deceitful notion that such wickedness will lead to the betterment of themselves and of others.

Doubtless, Tony Blair and those who felt it necessary to push through parliament the necessary legislation for the introduction of ID cards, believe that whatever the fears of many, the overall impact of the gathering of very detailed information on every citizen within the United Kingdom is for the betterment of us all!

Take the issue of legal abortion, for it will demonstrate for us this notion of a course of action that is morally reprehensible and contrary to the Law of God which is imposed upon the nation for its “betterment”!

Abortion is in truth nothing less than the legalised murder of the unborn in the womb by physicians and with the compliance of the mother!

The Christian must view such actions as horrifyingly wicked and yet I have no doubt that those who support it believe it to be for the betterment of the individual who has the abortion and the society in which abortion is permitted.

They get around the murder of the child by claiming that it had never yet come to be a true human being!

This is nothing less than the same pattern of thought that prompted Hitler and his associates to engage in the slaughter of millions of people, mostly Jews, with the objective of bettering mankind!

Men may claim to see the perversity of Hitler yet fail to see that they persevere in his logic in other fields of human activity.

It is this argument of “collective improvement” that underlies abortion that will make the evil activities of the Antichrist acceptable to the vast majority of his subjects and enable them to go along with his wicked schemes.

There will be a clear line of demarcation drawn between those who will go along with his thinking and those who do not. There will be no place for those who are normally labelled “Don't knows” whenever public opinion is tested on any issue.

Not everyone who rejects the mark of the beast will necessarily be a believer, just as many who are opposed to abortion are not true believers. We may, however, say with certainty that no true believer will accept the mark of the beast. Those who accept the mark of the



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beast will be damned. This is made clear for us in Rev 14:9-11.

Consider please:

I. THE DISTINGUISHING MARK

1. Plain. The word mark suggests a brand as on a horse. It refers to the engraving on gold or silver where the mark is etched into the surface of the metal. The word appears in Acts 17:29. "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." We can see then that the mark is not a document that is carried around in your pocket! It is not in the form of an ID card!

2. Prominent. It will be impressed on the right hand or the forehead. Whatever you do or wherever you go it will be seen. Again, there will be no need to search your pockets for this "mark". Indeed, you will not even have to be asked for it for it will be on permanent and prominent display.

3. Universal. "And he causeth all to receive a mark . . ." There will be no exceptions to the marking of the citizens of Antichrist's dominions. You will have it or die. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed," Revelation 13:15.

4. Enslaving. Control of the whole person is the result of the mark. When you control the buying and selling of the populace then you control their whole physical being! Antichrist will rule over a kingdom of slaves! How different it is with Christ. He sets the sinner free. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John 8:32, 36.

What is the mark?

I believe that the mark will most likely be the number "666". The number of man is 6. Man was created on the sixth day of creation. This three-fold "6" is a proclaiming of man having reached the zenith of his powers, the goal of his "evolutionary journey." He has become as God! This is what the Devil had said would follow disobedience of God. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Genesis 3:4-5. Antichrist will declare himself "god". Antichrist will oppose and exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

II. THE DECIDING FACTORS

What is it will cause those nations, such as England, France, Belgium, Spain and Italy etc, which have rejoiced in freedom and liberal democracy, to choose to yield up their whole



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being to a man? Revelation chapter 13 indicates for us the influences at work in the Antichrist's kingdom and which doubtless tell us why the peoples of the Beast's dominion yield themselves up to his despotic demands.

1. The depravity of the human heart. Verse 4. Man is by nature an idolator. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." Romans 1:21-25.

Man the idolator has been hindered in his desires by the power and influences of the gospel across the world. But such influences will largely be withdrawn in the days of Antichrist. We see even today the decline of gospel influence within our own land. This is evidenced by the constant stream of ungodly legislation which is being passed by our parliament.

2. The popularity of the Antichrist. ". . . and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?" Revelation 13:3-4. There is a warning issued by Christ which is relevant here. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets," Luke 6:26. We are again warning on following popular opinion. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment," Exodus 23:2. The crucifixion of Christ is the prime example of the populace being carried away with an evil purpose, simply because it seemed to be what others were doing!

3. The persuasiveness of the miracles. "And he (the false prophet) exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed," Revelation 13:12-15.

Protection

Living as we have under the protective powers of the gospel we have little idea of the power of the Devil. Would Job have known that the Devil could exercise the power against him that he did, once God lifted the restraint that He placed the devil under? I am sure he did not. (Job 1:12-22; 2:6-7.)

The source of the Antichrist's power is undoubtedly the Devil. Paul tells us this. "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," 2 Thess 2:9.

The believers in the day of Antichrist will understand this fact but the unconverted will not.



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“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand,” Daniel 12:10. “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone,” Revelation 19:20.

4. The inducement of greed. Here is another element in persuading the people to fall into line under Antichrist. “And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,” Revelation 13:17. Buying and selling is what most live for. “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,” 1 Timothy 6:10. The world will pierce itself fatally in the days of Antichrist.

lawbreakers

Today, we see just how far some will go to engage in money-making. They will breach the law of the land. Gangsterism within loyalist and republican ranks is well known. Murder, blackmail, terror — all have been employed in money-making by many.

More commonly, men have shown themselves ready to break the law of God in order to buy and sell. The Lord’s Day has been violated extensively by traders, small and great. The population generally have been all too ready to avail themselves of these breaches of God’s law and few have raised their voice in protest against such trends.

The present-day readiness of men to break God’s law will reach its zenith in the days of the Antichrist.

III. THE DREADFUL COST

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name,” Revelation 14:11. This is the cost of such folly. Men will realise the lure of money was a deception; the miracles they witnessed were a sham and the Beast was not God after all! What fools men will own themselves to have been for following the popular view!

1. There is punishment for rejection of Christ. The acceptance of the mark of the Beast is synonymous with the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is punishment for that great crime. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments,” Exodus 20:4-6.

That ancient law still stands!

2. The punishment is most dreadful indeed. It is torment in fire. Remember the words of Christ when He spoke of the damnation of the rich man. “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame,” Luke 16:24. The flames are



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real and the torment will be real no matter how unbelievers presently scoff and mock at such a concept of punishment.

3. It is an eternal punishment. “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night.” “For ever and ever” — that is the unbroken, perpetuity of all eternity. No words of man can convey the dreadfulness of the endlessness of the punishment of the wicked.

In all this we have the folly of Esau magnified. He bartered his soul for a mess of pottage — a meal!

Choice today

Similarly, men today and those in the times of the Antichrist will barter their souls for a little of this world’s goods!

In every gospel meeting across the world, the same folly as Esau engaged in and that which will be engaged in by the followers of Antichrist, is being engaged in.

What of you? Recall the words of warning given us by the Saviour.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Mark 8:36-37.