***The Mark of the Beast

RV177-02***

Our subject is "The False Prophet," segment number 11 in Revelation 13:11-18.

**The New World Order**

The phrase "a new world order," which has been popularized by President Bush during the Gulf War, is about the prerogatives of rulers. You might make the mistake of thinking that the new world order has to do with the rights of human beings – rights which have been, in fact, given them by God. That would be a great mistake. The new world order is not about the rights of human beings. It is not about the welfare of people, immaterial to what leaders may say. The new world order is about the prerogatives of those who run nations and the institutions of society. We have been increasingly discovering in our study of the book of the Revelation, that there are, behind the scenes of formal governments, both spiritual, satanic, and demonic forces, as well as powerful human beings and powerful institutions which actually govern nations, no matter who is elected as the leader of that particular country. It is the objective of the new world order to bring about a condition of an elite domination of all the world and of all of its resources, and to direct that for the benefit of those who are at the top.

This is a condition (which is exactly what the Bible reveals) which exist in the era of the tribulation years, when the antichrist comes on the scene. So, we can expect this global state, which is being organized by governments of the world for the explicit purpose of an elite group of leaders imposing their will and their wisdom on all mankind. We can expect that this global state will turn its attention to destroying all loyalties between itself and its subjects.

**The Antichrist and the False Prophet**

In the passage before us now, we will see how the antichrist will go about doing exactly that – destroying any loyalty between himself and the citizens of the world whom he rules. This effort will reach its maximum level at that time. The false prophet is a man who will be assisting the antichrist in his world government by establishing a universal religion. This world religion will focus upon the antichrist who will be worshiped as God.

**Miracles**

People will be convinced of the message of the false prophet by his satanically empowered miracles. I cannot stress enough to you that Satan is an all-time great miracle worker. Miracles are superhuman acts which can be performed by angelic beings because they have superhuman abilities. One must discern, on the basis of the Word of God, the miracles that are confirming the truth of God, and the miracles as they abound in some circles today (in charismatic circles) which are the work of Satan to confirm his deceit. In the tribulation, he will do exactly that. The miracles of the false prophet will convince people that the antichrist is really God.

**The Image of the Antichrist**

We have read that the false prophet will set up an image (an idol) of the antichrist in the Jews' rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. This idol will be there as the object of the world's worship. This image, by super human ability of the demonic world will be animated. It will not be given life, but it will be animated so that it can speak, and it can, in effect, deliver divine oracles. The antichrist's image directs that anyone refusing to join the universal state religion and to worship the antichrist is to be killed.

**The Lie of Potential Godhood**

Satan, during the tribulation, will in fact achieve worldwide acceptance of his great lie – that man is a potential God. This is an ancient heresy. It was proposed by Satan, as you know, to Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is encased in Hinduism today, and all the branches of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism – and all the other branches that have come from Hinduism. And it is encased nowadays, in modern terms, as what we refer to as the New Age movement. At the heart of all those groups is the concept that man is potentially a God. That is the message of Shirley MacLaine and prominent public leaders in our country today.

Satan will achieve the acceptance of this lie – that man is God. This is a foundational belief. It is taught in Mormonism today, and that is the objective of a Mormon – to find his own deity. So, this is not a crazy idea. This is not something about which you would say, "Nobody would believe that. Nobody would take that seriously. Millions upon millions of people take it seriously, and more are doing it every day. This, of course, will be the ultimate satanic blasphemy, and the world will flock to follow the leading of Satan, and to worship this coming antichrist.

People during the seven-year tribulation will be forced to make a choice then for or against the antichrist. Satan's approach will be to threaten the means of their livelihood as nonconformists. He will also use miracles to convince people that the antichrist is divine. And we'll see a little more about that in a moment.

**The Small and the Great**

So, we direct your attention to Revelation 13:16, where we read, "And he causes all." This word "causes" is referring to forcing one to do something by a decree, and it refers to the false prophet. He is going to make the people of the world do something. The word "all" stresses to us that all of mankind is meant in this decree. This decree will apply to everybody at that time. Everyone is included. This is further stressed by three contrasting sets of humanity. He says that the all will include: "The small and the great." "The small" refers to the common ordinary folks in a society. This refers to their standing. "The great" refers to the powerful opinion-makers in a society. So, it will apply to people, whatever their standing in the society may be.

**The Rich and the Poor**

The second couplet is that it refers to: "Those who are rich, and those who are poor." This refers to the economic status of people in a society. The Greek word for "the rich is "plousios," from which we get our English word "plutocrat." A plutocrat is a wealthy person. It also refers to: "The poor (the "ptochos" people) – those who lack financial resources. So, whatever you are in the financial spectrum, you will be expected to conform to this world religion.

**Rulers and Slaves**

The third grouping to indicate who is included is those relative to their position in society. It includes: "Those who are free;" that is, those who are in the position of being masters and rulers, and: "Those who are slaves" – those who are in the position of servants and workers. So, at both ends of your position in society, you will be expected to conform to the universal religion.

This is a literary device to couple together opposites like this in order to stress the totality of something. So the false prophet's decree is going to apply to everyone, no matter what your economic status is; your social status is; or, whatever status you may have in society. There are no exemptions no matter who you are.

**A Mark (A Brand)**

"And he causes," or he issues a decree concerning all: the small; the great; the rich; the poor; the free; and, the slaves. They are to be "given" something. The Greek word "given" is "didomi." This word simply means "to put something" here on people. It is at some point in time. It is active. And the mood is subjunctive, which means that this is potential, but it doesn't include everybody. It is potential, but not everybody is going to have this done to them. But most people will have something done to them by the antichrist, and that is that they're going to receive a mark. The word in the Greek is "charagma." The word "charagma" in the Greek language refers to something that is engraved or stamped on something. We would call it a "brand." When Texas cattlemen brand their cattle, they're putting a "charagma" on them.

This is a distinctive visible mark, the false prophet is going to decree that every person in the world, no matter who you are, or what you are, or where you are, must show loyalty to the antichrist by receiving a special mark, or a special seal on his body. This mark will identify those who are willing to worship the antichrist as God. Remember that that is the point of the mark – to identify those who will subject themselves in loyalty to the antichrist, and will worship him as God.

**Satan is a Counterfeiter**

Of course, this is another one of those counterfeit imitations of the devil, who is always trying to reach the goal that he originally had, as Scripture says: He wanted to be like God. He said at one point in heaven: "'I will be like God,' and he gathered a third of the angels to join him in a rebellion against God." Well, anytime God does something, the devil tries to imitate it.

**The Mark of God**

It is interesting that we've already read in Revelation 7:2-3 that God is in the habit of putting a mark upon those who belong to Him. In Revelation 7:2, John says, "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun from the east, having the seal (or the mark) of the living God. And He cried out with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth, or the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the bond servants of our God on their foreheads.'" And I want you to note that here these people who belong to God, who are in the tribulation, are going to be marked as belonging to God by a mark on their foreheads. They are going to be clearly identifiable to everyone that they are followers of the Creator God.

Here, this mark is going to be a protective seal upon them. So, the angels are told to hold back one of the judgments of God until these believers have been marked in this way. He is referring here to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, who will be born again after the rapture of the church, and after we Christians have been removed from this earth, and the tribulation period swings into motion. 144,000 Jews will turn to Jesus Christ and recognize Him, finally, as their Messiah Savior. They will become the preachers. The mark of God upon them will make them immortal, so that they cannot be killed by the antichrist.

**The Mark of the Beast**

So, Satan is again trying to be like God, and imitating God's way of identifying his leaders with a mark on their forehead. The mark of the beast is equated both with his name and the number of his name. We'll look at that a little later. But Revelation 13:17 and Revelation 14:11 indicate that.

So, what the false prophet decrees is that there is to be placed on everybody in all the world, a certain mark. This mark is to be placed on the physical body itself. It is to be placed in one or two places: on the right hand; or, on the forehead. These are the two most prominent places on the body, as you walk around and people look at you. The forehead is the most prominent, and secondly would be the right hand. We may perhaps suspect that women would prefer to have the mark on their right hand rather than on their forehead, where it might be more desirable to men that they would proudly wear the mark of the antichrist where everybody could clearly see it – on their foreheads.

John himself, in his vision, clearly sees the mark. So, this is not going to be something like you get stamped on your hand when you go to Disneyland, and then you have to put it under the light in order for it to become visible. It will be there, and everybody will look at you, and they will see to whom you belong. Isn't that going to be an interesting world? We will see who is saved and who is unsaved. There will be a clear identification. The antichrist is determined to bring every individual in the world into subjection to himself.

**The Restored Roman Empire**

At mid-tribulation, he has become the emperor of the restored Roman Empire. The Roman Empire, which still exists today, but in the fractured form of individual nations, will then once more be brought together. It will be a one-world government, and the antichrist will be the emperor. He will then be at the zenith of his power, and he will tolerate no resistance. In order to control the citizens of the world, the antichrist requires that they bear his mark of their loyalty to him. So, the agents of the antichrist will be going everywhere in the world to brand people with this mark.

Why would anybody take this kind of a seal upon himself? Why would anybody be willing to walk around with an indelible and non-removable mark on his forehead or on his body? Well, some people actually believe that the antichrist is God, and they will readily accept his seal as we readily accept the seal of the Holy Spirit upon ourselves. Some will view the mark as a sign of their commitment to world peace and unity. They will be the movers of human welfare at the time, and they will see this as a commitment to the environment, and to all the good things that need to be done on this earth. They will receive the mark as a sign of that commitment. Some will receive the mark because they are devoted to the concept of world government. They are devoted to the concept of a single leader.

Remember that this is the middle of the tribulation. Three-and-a-half years of hell on earth have already gone by. The earth begins with 6 billion people at the start of the tribulation. By mid-tribulation, 3 billion have died. Three billion will have been killed in one way or another by the plagues of God. Society is in a turmoil, and nature has been disrupted. If there's anything the unbelievers of the world want, it is somebody to sort all this out; to put it back in order; and, to bring some peace and prosperity back into their lives.

So, some will take the mark because they will see that world government is the answer. Many people believe that today. That is behind the term "the new world order." Some will take the mark to show that they are indeed citizens of the world. They are not provincial and parochial. They are not nationalists. They are internationalists. Some will take the mark, as we will see, to preserve their economic well-being. They cannot survive financially without this mark. And others will simply take it to escape persecution, because those who do not bear this mark will then be the targets of the greatest persecution that the world has ever seen.

**The Mark of the Beast**

You should understand that the mark of the beast, once it is applied, is permanent, and it seals one's eternal doom to the lake of fire. That is taught us in Revelation 14:9-11. Once you have taken the mark of the beast, you have passed the point of no return relative to personal salvation. Revelation 14:9: "And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast (that is, the antichrist) and his image (that is his idol in the temple) and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full-strength in the cup of His anger. And he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." That refers to the lake of fire – what we commonly call hell: "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.

So, it is very clear that to take this mark is to pass a point of no return. Once you have accepted this mark, you are forever committed to Satan, and you are forever destined to the doom of the lake of fire. The Word of God is not a book of symbolic language. That's how churches often distort it – especially this book. The Word of God is literal words, and it has literal meaning in words that we can understand. That is the way God speaks. God does not speak in gibberish, as the charismatic tongues movement claims. God always speaks in intelligible understanding to us.

**Hell**

These words about hell, therefore, we must take very seriously. It is a terrible condition. It is a terrible place to be, and millions of human beings will choose to follow the false Christ instead of the true Christ. And there will be no letup of the pain, the agony, and the suffering that they will bring upon themselves. Why would anybody want to do that? Many believers, of course, who refuse to take the mark of the beast will be martyred. We have already had reference to some of them in Revelation 6:9. John says, "And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God, and because of the testimony which they maintain." These are people who have been killed during the tribulation because of their stand for Jesus Christ.

We also have that in Revelation 7:9: "And these things, I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count from every nation and all tribes, and peoples, and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches in their hands." John was asked, "Who are these people?" And in verse 14, John said, "'My Lord, you know?' And he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'" So, it is very clear that millions of people will be slaughtered by the persecution of the antichrist – those who are true believers in Jesus Christ, and who are loyal to Him.

You and I, of course, bear an invisible seal (an invisible mark) upon us as Christians. In Ephesians 1:13, the apostle Paul points that out to us: "In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise. And in Ephesians 4:30, he touches upon this again when he says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Grieving the Holy Spirit of God is refusing to obey Him: "By Him you were sealed for the day of redemption." God the Holy Spirit Himself is God's seal upon the Christian. That is why the apostle Paul says in the book of Romans, "If you have not the Spirit of God, you are none of Him." If you don't have the Spirit of God, you're not part of Christ, and you're not born again. At the point that you became a Christian, God the Holy Spirit indwelt your body, and He became God stamp upon you, indicating your permanent ownership by Almighty God. Because salvation is described as a birth process, it is clear that it cannot be reversed. That's why that analogy is used. You cannot reverse a birth.

Christians today who are loyal to Jesus Christ, furthermore, bear another kind of mark – the mark that the apostle Paul knew all too well, and that many Christians today bear. They bear marks upon their bodies. In Galatians 6:17, the apostle referred to these marks as the result of his service. Paul says, "From now on, let no one cause trouble for me. For I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus." And elsewhere, in writing to the Corinthians, he describes in detail the sufferings that he has undergone as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So verse 16 gives us a very significant revelation about how things are going to function in the tribulation. This powerful man, who will be the head of the world government, the antichrist, assisted by his religious leader, the false prophet, will impose a decree upon all mankind that they must choose for or against the antichrist. Those who choose for him will receive a mark. You can either have it on your forehead, or you can have it on your right hand.

**No One Will be Able to Buy**

Verse 17 tells us about an economic boycott that will be instituted – financial controls imposed upon every individual. "And he provides." "And he" is referring to the antichrist: "That no one." Here is the purpose, indicating no exceptions. All tribulation mankind will face something for which they'll will be no exception: "And he provides that no one should be able to" do something. First, it is "to buy." This is the Greek word "agorazo." The word "agorazo" means "to purchase something in the marketplace." This denotes being denied access to goods of all kinds.

Just think of how it would be for you today if suddenly you could not buy anything. Finally, that refrigerator gets empty; the deep freezer runs dry; everything is gone; you go out to buy something; they check you at the checkout counter; and they say, "I'm sorry, you're not authorized to buy anything." You are now in a desperate condition to buy whatever you can, wherever you can. The communists had, in days past, used this identical system. They take away your identity card. When your identity card has been removed, you cannot walk into a store and buy anything. This is the very same system. The same Satan who has taught them will be teaching the antichrist.

**No One Will be Able to Sell**

So, here's the purpose. This is in the infinitive mode, which indicates to us in the Greek language that this is the purpose here of trying to gain something, and people are going to be denied that purpose. Furthermore, they cannot either sell. That's the Greek word "poleo." This means "to dispose of goods in the marketplace." This connotes being denied of making a livelihood in order to gain the means of support. One of the most valuable things every human being has is the capital of his own labor. It means you will not be able to sell your skills, and you will not be able to go out into the marketplace to do business. Again, it's the infinitive mode. It is the purpose of the antichrist to deny you the ability to sell your possessions.

This is going to be the case, John tells us, except for a certain group. And that group is going to be those who have the mark of the beast. They have the "charagma." This refers to the visible body mark referred to in verse 8 and verse 16. The antichrist thus will be able to exercise total economic control over every human being on the face of the earth. In the computer age, and in the age that is coming where cash will not be used, but simply cards and direct debit accounts (taking what you buy out of your bank account directly), it is entirely possible to control whether a person has access even to his own material resources. The antichrist will have total economic control, and unless one bears the seal of loyalty to the emperor antichrist, he will be denied access to the marketplace, and to the very necessities of life. The rule at the time will be: "no seal; no sale." This rule will apply to corporations with their big multi-million dollar deals, and it will apply to the little kid who stands in front of the candy counter with his nickels in hand. There will be no buying and no selling unless they can look and see that you have the seal of approval on you.

Not a single wheel of commerce will move without the antichrist's approval. The computer age has made all this possible. Once the antichrist has set up his enforcement machinery, it will be nearly impossible to survive without his mark. No employment will be possible. No business transactions will be possible. Everybody involved in any deal must, on both sides, bear the mark of the antichrist.

You can see how this is easily implemented. We have now the rule that you cannot hire unregistered aliens who are in the country illegally. If an employer hires illegal aliens, he is subject to enormous fines. Therefore, if you don't have your green card, you don't have your justification for being here, and for being able to be employed, you're out of luck. The system, in a small way, is in operation even today.

The purpose of this setup for the enterprise will be to kill off everyone on earth who refuses to be branded with the mark of the beast. Many, however, are going to survive under great hardships. There will be many Jews who will not be believers in Jesus Christ, and yet they will oppose the antichrist. They will refuse to worship an idol, and they will be in desperation, as we have already studied. We see in Matthew 24 and 25 that Jesus commends a certain group of people who survive, as people did during World War II under the Nazi cruelties and persecution. The Lord will say, "When you help these people (the Jews), you are helping Me." What this tells us is that some believers will have some resources, and they will share them in taking care of one another, as well as even taking care of Jews, and taking care of anybody who is an opponent of the antichrist.

Some people will be able to barter the possessions they have. I'm sure there will be greedy followers and loyalists of the antichrist who won't mind breaking the rule for some personal wealth. It's even tough not to find Christians who often are not so greedy that they will cut the corners, and break the rules in order to gain wealth. Believers with food, and with other means, will help those who are being persecuted. Some will be living in isolated places. They will have opportunity to live off the land. Some may be able to set up survival centers. But one way or another, I stress again, not all believers will be killed by the antichrist. The Jews who will survive will be the ones who will, at the end of the tribulation, look upon the returning Christ and finally recognize him as their true Messiah (... Jesus the Messiah), and they will then trust in Him. They will then believe in Him, and they will be the believers who go into the Millennial Kingdom, as these gentiles will be the believers who go into the Millennial Kingdom, and they go in their natural bodies – bodies like we have now, so that they will populate the kingdom over which Christ will rule.

So, the restored Roman Empire at that time is going to impose horrors on the believers as did the ancient Roman Empire. That's what's so fascinating about this in one respect. The Roman Empire, once it is restored, goes back to the same patterns against believers as did Satan's empire in the ancient world. One of the reports we have on the activities of one of the all-time great lowlife persecutors, the Emperor Nero, was recorded for us by a Roman historian named Tacitus. It is believed on good authority that Nero himself started the fire at Rome so that he could rebuild parts of Rome. But when he needed a scapegoat, he blamed the Christians for it. So, in Annals 15, paragraph 44, Tacitus has this interesting observation about the treatment of believers at that time, which reflects what the antichrist is going to do in the future. Tacitus says, "Therefore, to scotch the rumor of his starting the fire, Nero substitutive as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled 'Christians.' 'Christus,' from whom they got their name.'"

By the way, Madalyn Murray O'Hair says that Jesus Christ never even existed, and that there is no record of him outside of the made-up stories of the Bible. I want you to notice that there are there are four non-biblical references to Christ, and here is one of them by Tacitus. So, if somebody tells you that, know that that is not true.

Continuing: "Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time, only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the plague (that is, of Christianity), but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home. First then, those who confess themselves Christians were arrested. Next, on their disclosure, a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of arson, as for hatred of the human race." Christians were considered hate haters of the human race because they would not worship the emperor god.

"And their death was made a matter of sport. They were covered in wild beast skins, and torn to pieces by dogs, or they were nailed to crosses, and set on fire in order to serve as torches by night when daylight failed. Nero had offered his gardens for the spectacle, and gave an exhibition in his circus, mingling with the crowd in the guise of a charioteer, or mounted in his chariot. It was felt that they were being sacrificed not for the common good, but to gratify the savagery of one man."

Indeed, that is exactly what the case was. Nero was not inordinately bestial man. He killed family members left and right, and found great satisfaction in the cruelty that was imposed upon Christians. The antichrist will be an emperor in that tradition.

By the way, this account of Nero was about 64 A.D., which was the time when the apostle Paul was executed by Nero. About 60 years later, in 112 A.D., Pliny, who was the governor of Bithynia, wrote to the Emperor Trajan as to how he was handling the Christian problem. There had now been 60 years of persecution since Nero. In the Epistles of Pliny, book 10, chapters 33-34, Pliny says this as to what his final solution was for the Christians: "So, far this has been my procedure when people were charged before me with bing Christians. I've asked the accused themselves if they were Christians. If they said yes, I asked them the second and third time, warning them of the penalty. If they persisted, I ordered them to be led off to execution. An anonymous letter was laid before me containing many peoples' names. Some of these denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so. At my dictation, they invoked the gods and did reverence with incense and wine to your image, which I ordered to be brought for this purpose, along with the statues of the gods. They also cursed Christ. And as I am informed, that people who are really Christians cannot possibly be made to do any of those things, I considered that the people who did them should be discharged."

You can see here again in the report of Pliny, Christ is referred to. He is an historical character, and this is outside of the Bible as well. You can see how similar this is to what the antichrist is going to do: "Bow down to my image; burn the incense; and, do the wine oblation, or die. Take the mark or be killed. These Christians were firm.

You notice that Pliny said, "A true Christian will never deny Christ." He said that because that was his experience. He found that none ever turned their back upon the Lord, and they accepted death. How would we do today? We must wonder about that kind of raw courage and faith. What would Christians do today in that brief act of saying, "I will not go bow to your image. I will not pledge my loyalty to you. I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I'm a child of God." How many of you really are ready to do that in the face of death? We have the good life, and the television entertainment? Who among us would want to give up watching the A-Team just to be true to the Lord?

Of course, we have the inspiration of all the modern TV evangelists, don't we? What an inspiration they are to all of us: the prosperity and good health syndromes; and, those who grow wealthy off the credulity of Christians who have been untaught in the Word of God, and who are hung on false doctrines.

It is sad to realize that the very people who have refused to balance objection and faith before Jesus Christ as Savior will eagerly fall before the image of the antichrist. Remember that these people are people who were alive when you and I were here on this earth, before the rapture of the church. They went on into the tribulation. Those same people who heard about Jesus Christ go into the tribulation, and they eagerly worship the antichrist. They refused to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, and they seek instead the mark of the beast. Once the seal of the Holy Spirit is accepted, the believer is eternally and irrevocably saved and destined for heaven. The Word of God is very clear about that – that you can never lose your salvation. That's why we say that you may ask somebody, "Are you saved? Are you going to heaven?" And they respond with, "I hope so." That is an immediate sign that they probably are not, because it indicates that they are not sure that they have done enough to merit salvation with God.

Can you believe Paul could say, in Romans 8 1, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?" Once you have trusted in Christ as Savior, the Bible tells us 1 Corinthians 12:13, God the Holy Spirit baptizes you into Christ. You're joined to Him, and you are joined to Him forever. Therefore, His merit and His perfection is credited to your account. You now are absolutely perfect in the sight of God. Your sins have been covered by His death: "There is therefore now no confirmation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Can you believe that?

In the text from which the King James Bible was translated, the scribe who was copying that couldn't take it. He couldn't believe that somebody would say that once you're in Christ Jesus, you can't ever get out again, and you can never be lost again. This was so fantastic. And his eye dropped down to verse 4, and he added part of over 4 to verse 1. So, if you have a King James Bible, that's why. That is not in the best of the Greek texts. Verse 4 says, "In order that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in those of us," and then this is what was added in first 1: "Who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." That Roman Catholic scribe said, "Now that feels better to me: "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." In other words, "There's no condemnation as long as you behave yourself." Do you see the difference? Isn't it's good that we have thousands of manuscripts so that we caught this little trick, and know that that should not have been put there.

John 10 makes this even clearer. Once you're in, you're never again out. John 10:28-29 says, "And I give eternal life to them (those who trust Christ), and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's Hand." Yes, you can be a prodigal son, and God will bring the boom of discipline down on you like you wouldn't believe. Yes, you can go astray, and you will suffer inward turmoils; emotional turmoils; mental turmoils; physical turmoils; and, social turmoils. The pressure will mount until, like David, you will break, or you will die. You will break and say, "I was wrong in what I did, and I confess my sin to You, and I change the direction of my life. I repent."

Once the mark of the antichrist is accepted, that recipient is also eternally and irrevocably doomed to the lake of fire, as we saw by Revelation 14:9-11.

So, the fruit of one's unbelief in Bible doctrine will be very bitter indeed. This is the time that it might be well for us to remind ourselves of the truth of Jeremiah 17:5-10. This gave the Jewish people some great advice under the guidance of the Spirit of God, Jeremiah 17:5-10. What will people do for money? What will people do for material gain? That's why they will take the mark of the antichrist – for that very purpose: "Thus says the Lord: cursed is the man who is trusts in mankind, and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord." Where do you look to be able to meet your material needs? Where do you look to meet the financing of God's work? Where do you look in order to carry through in what you need to survive? Are you looking to some man? Are you looking to the kindness of some employer?

Verse 6: "For he will be like a bush in the desert, and will not see when prosperity comes, but we live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitants. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose trust is the Lord, for he will be like a tree planted by the water that extends its root by a stream, and will not fear when the heat comes. But its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in the year drought, nor cease to yield fruit." How strange indeed it is that people will look to men, even to themselves, in order to have the resources they need, rather than to God. In the tribulation, there will be believers who will remember this Jeremiah passage, and they will say, "No, my God will plant me like a tree by cool waters, and I'll have all the nourishment I need. I'm going to do what's right, and I'm not going to look to men. I'm going to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first. Then all these things shall be added unto me."

What are you teaching your children? How often do you teach them to stay home and do their homework instead of going out to a Berean Youth Club meeting? "Oh, you've got to do your homework. You've got to get good grades. You're going to make money someday. You have to have that." Boy, does that kid get the lesson? Things have God are not really important, but the things of this world, and things that are going to make me wealthy and prosperous – that's what's important.

How many times do you teach your children how to make the wrong choice? Do you understand what it means to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first? It means to follow the leading of doctrine and the Spirit of God. What's the result going to be? Everything you ever need is going to be added to you.

If you trust in people, you should remember that they're not immutable; they're not trustworthy; and, they're not omnipotent. God is. Sooner or later, you're going to trust in somebody to carry you through for some financial need, and you're going to fall flat on your face, and you're going to learn the lesson the hard way. Keep your eyes on the Lord, and you will be carried through.

**666**

John goes on and tells us that this mark that is provided is the name of the beast or the number of the names. And now we come to a fascinating part of the identification of the connection between the name of the beast, or the number of the beast, and the number 666. If you return for the next session, we will tell you who that is.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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