

The Number of the Beast

Revelation 13

Introduction

BBC: 'Patrick Paumen causes a stir whenever he pays for something in a shop or restaurant.

This is because the 37-year-old doesn't need to use a bank card or his mobile phone to pay. Instead, he simply places his left hand near the contactless card reader, and the payment goes through.

"The reactions I get from cashiers are priceless!" says Mr Paumen, a security guard from the Netherlands.

He is able to pay using his hand because back in 2019 he had a contactless payment microchip injected under his skin.

"The implant can be used to pay for a drink on the beach in Rio, a coffee in New York, a haircut in Paris - or at your local grocery store," says founder and chief executive Wojtek Paprota. "It can be used wherever contactless payments are accepted."

Walletmor's chip, which weighs less than a gram and is little bigger than a grain of rice, is comprised of a tiny microchip and an antenna encased in a biopolymer - a naturally sourced material, similar to plastic.

Nada Kakabadse, professor of policy, governance and ethics at Reading University's Henley Business School, is cautious about the future of more advanced embedded chips.

Nada Kakabadse: "There is a dark side to the technology that has a potential for abuse," she says. "To those with no love of individual freedom, it opens up seductive new vistas for control, manipulation and oppression.

"And who owns the data? Who has access to the data? And, is it ethical to chip people like we do pets?"

The result, she cautions, could be "the disempowerment of many for the benefits of a few".

We know that in the latter days – that is exactly what will happen – the disempowerment of the many – who will be compelled to surrender personal liberties – being required to receive a mark on the hand or the forehead – that will reflect allegiance to the antichrist and his world kingdom

We come to Revelation 13 this morning – perhaps one of the more striking chapters in all of Scripture

We are reading about events that will take place in the Great Tribulation

In this period we see a beast coming out of the sea – a world ruler who will be worshiped by all. We read about a mark that people will be required to take in order to buy and sell. A mark that has something to do with the number 666

The world did not receive Christ

John 1:11 - 'He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.'

The world will receive the antichrist at this time

The antichrist will be Satan's false messiah – offering to solve the world's ills

He will reign over a one world government – with a one world economy – and a one world religion – aided by a false prophet – who will function as something of a global propagandist / truth minister

The whole world is going to be caught up in the worship of Satan – as evidenced in their allegiance to the antichrist

Revelation 13:4 - 'and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"'

Those who have hailed secularism as the only valid philosophy of democratic and pluralistic nations – will find themselves supporting a political system that incorporates the religion of the beast – the antichrist

I. The Beast - vv. 1-10

We open this chapter with a beast coming out of the sea

The sea = represents the mass of peoples / Rev. 17:15

The ten horns draw us back to a prophecy given to Daniel about 4 earthly empires that were to come and that would ultimately give way to the kingdom of Christ

Daniel lived during the days of the Babylonian exile / captivity of Israel - - - he sought God for information about the future of Israel - - - what He got was a prophecy that would encompass not only the future of Israel – but world history - - - world kingdoms up until the time of Christ [the Jewish Messiah] – and then a reference to the establishment of the final Messianic kingdom

The 4th kingdom of Daniel's vision - is understood to be identified with that of the Roman Empire – which existed in the days of Christ's first coming and was the ruling world power at the time- - - Jesus – in that context came and established the basis of a spiritual kingdom at that time – by going to the cross and conquering sin and death

Some amillennialists would simply leave the prophecy as fulfilled there

But the striking thing is that John in Revelation does not allow us to do that – He sets this kingdom up as existing in some form in the latter days

Revelation 17:12- - 'and the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.'

Revelation helps us to understand Daniel [John wrote in 95 AD]

This points to the idea that the supplanting of the final world kingdom is something that involves not only what Christ did at His first coming – but also what Christ brings to completion at His 2nd Coming

The ten horns was a prominent feature of Daniel's prophecy in referencing the end time kingdom – as well as the 3 ½ year reign

Daniel 7:23 - "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.'

That is the Roman Empire of the first century – but note how the angel turns to the ten horns

Daniel 7:24 - 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise;'

[Out of the Roman Empire - At a determined time in the future – ten kings arise]

Daniel 7:24-27 - ' . . . and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

In Daniel's vision – we get a glimpse of this future antichrist kingdom – the antichrist will make alterations in times and in law – and will have authority for 3 ½ years

This will be a reign of terror / those who seek to worship God will be persecuted / those who refuse the mark of the beast will be legally executed

Here we note – at the close / downfall of this earthly kingdom – the dominion is given not only to Christ the Messiah – but to His people - - - the saints of the Highest One

That did not take place in the first century

Stephen Miller: 'Since the Lord's return puts an end to the rule of these horns, the ten kings must reign at the end of the present age.'

David Jeremiah: 'Daniel . . . fast-forwards to the time when the Lord will come again, mentioning the ten horns of a future confederation of nations.'

If this ten-nation confederacy comes out of the Roman Empire – then it refers to some kind of European Union

Prophecy buffs have been very interested in the European Union that exists today – but at the present – it consists of 27 nations

Political alignments – can be reshaped in our world rather quickly – when world events are unsettled

We note: while John begins with a ten horned beast – he moves quickly to focus upon the one

First thing he states about the one – is that he had a fatal wound that was healed – v. 3

This may be one of the many miracles or false signs that take place in this period to deceive the masses

John and Daniel are both in sync when talking about the final world kingdom on earth just before Christ returns

- This ruler will exercise authority over the whole earth – for 42 months
- He will persecute believers / Tribulation saints on the earth [b/c they refuse to worship Him]
- He will utter great blasphemies [reflecting Satan's hatred of God] / make changes in laws / governmental norms

Perhaps the beast will make use of twitter / social media to speak out against God / to defy God

Charles Feinberg: 'the world has certainly heard more than enough blasphemy during its long history; yet the greatest blasphemy of all still remains to be committed during the Tribulation, when the church is gone to glory.'

The beast / antichrist will dominate the world's stage during the last 3 ½ years of earthly history

- He will be worshiped – **Rev. 13:8**
- He will perform great wonders to deceive - II Thess. 2:9
- He will survive some kind of fatal wound - **Rev. 13:12**

This may be in mockery or in imitation of the resurrection of Christ / some would argue that Satan does not have the power to raise the dead!

David Jeremiah said there was some speculation amongst a few - when JFK was shot - - - some were watching to see if he would somehow survive his fatal wound - and turn out to be the antichrist - that did not happen

The bible does not say the antichrist will be a Democrat!

He will be satanically inspired / perhaps possessed by a demonic spirit

Rev. 11:7 – says that he comes out of the abyss [a place where some demons are said to be in captivity]

He will be the closest thing to Satan incarnate this world has ever seen

William Hendriksen: 'Satan, while perfectly aware of the fact that he cannot himself become incarnate, nevertheless would like to imitate the second person of the Trinity, in this respect as far as possible. He yearns for a man over whom he will exercise complete control, and who will perform his will as thoroughly as Jesus performed the will of the Father . . . but as yet the devil is being frustrated in his attempt to put this plan into operation. Someone and something is always holding back the deceiver's man of lawlessness. This, of course, happens under God's direction.'

The antichrist cannot come to power until restraints are removed

II Thessalonians 1:7-8 - 'For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.'

What is the restrainer?

Is the antichrist in the world today – just waiting for his hour on the world's stage?

Since the antichrist is said to come out of the abyss – [11:7] – the restrainer is likely some kind of supernatural means of restraint that holds the demonic in check until the appointed time

The antichrist will be a human being – but Satan will – grant him great power and authority – a demonically inspired personification of evil – false messiah

Rev. 13:2 - 'And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.'

v. 3 – the whole earth is going to be taken in by the beast - / be amazed and follow

Revelation 13:8 - 'And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.'

God limits the scope of the antichrist's reign

v. 5 – He will act for 42 months

Unbelievers will perish because their names are not in the Lamb's book of life – v. 8 - - - but also because they did not love the truth – but embraced a lie instead

II Thessalonians 2:10 - 'And with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.'

John 3:19 - 'this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.'

II. The Beast and His Number - vv. 11-18

Here we are introduced to another beast – who will play a prominent role in the tribulation

The beast out of the earth = is identified for us as the false prophet [16:13 / 19:20] / who leads others to worship the image of the beast

A Satanic trinity – Rev. 16:13

F.F. Bruce: 'Thus the unholy trinity of dragon, beast and false prophet is completed. As the true Christ received His authority from the Father (Matt.

11:27; 28:18), so antichrist receives authority from the dragon (v. 4); as the Holy Spirit glorifies the true Christ (Jn. 16:14), so the false prophet glorifies antichrist (v. 12).'

This will be a time of great deception and satanic miracles [great signs] / such as causing an image of the beast to speak – v. 15 / calling down fire from heaven – v. 13

He will share the fate of the antichrist

Revelation 19:20 - 'And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone.'

The false prophet is a kind of propaganda minister for the beast

He will command that an image of the beast be made – v. 14 / and this image will even be able to speak

An image to the beast – reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue

But this image is different in that it will appear to come to life

Will the image of the beast actually speak – or will this be a kind of hoax / false miracle that fools the people?

Will this be the ultimate idol – involving advanced technology / robotics / AI

There is one company that desires to make something called the 'Giant'

*** Image of giant / Revelation 13:15

The Today show ran a news story on an Irish company - creating a Giant moving statue - a combination of art and hi-tech - in which the giant will be - - more than 10 stories high [100 feet] / wrapped in LED skin - it moves its head and arms - can take on the image of famous heroes of the past

Their advertisement begins with a computer sounding voice: 'People of the world - welcome to the giant'

The CEO of Giant Company: 'The world has to change and the giant wants to be part of this change - and inspire people to reach their full potential and help save this planet.'

Apparently - they are planning to be able to do body scans - and reproduce your image onto the giant - probably for a small fee

Image # 2 of Giant

They want to place a giant in 21 cities around the world - cost projected at \$18M per statue

People who have rejected God will be looking for answers and the false prophet will supply them with false answers

Mark 13:22 - 'For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.'

Satan is able to produce miracles – whether genuine or acts of deception

We might remember the magicians of Egypt were able to duplicate some of the signs given to Moses up to a point

The presence of miracles – is never guarantee of the presence of God or of God's blessing

Here we come to probably one of the most talked about features in the book of Revelation – that of the Mark of the beast

vv. 16-18 – the mark of the beast

The mark will identify people as loyal to the beast

This mark would seem to indicate ownership – in much the same way the servants of God were sealed [Rev. 7:3]

no one allowed to buy or sell without the mark

A man who had lived under communism in Bulgaria once noted the power of a totalitarian state

"You cannot understand and you cannot know that the most terrible instrument of persecution ever devised is an innocent ration card. You cannot buy and you cannot sell except according to that little, innocent card. If they please, you can be starved to death, and if they please, you can be dispossessed of everything you have; for you cannot trade and you cannot buy and you cannot sell, without permission.'

Those who resist the rule of the beast and his mark – will be shut out of the global economy

The government will not hesitate to lock you out of all commerce – if you do not bow and take the mark which they command you to take

People will likely starve during this time

The number 666

The number 6 is often seen as the number of man – who was created on the 6th day [7 being the number of completion]

MacArthur: 'Because this text reveals very little about the meaning of 666, it is unwise to speculate beyond what is said.'

All in all – it seems that the number of the beast is something that will remain mysterious until the fulfillment of it occurs

There may be something here that will be crystal clear for those who are alive at the time and may recall the biblical teaching

Revelation 14:9-11 – spells out the fate of those who take the mark

Conclusion

Bible prophecy reminds us to live in light of Christ's return

Christ is coming! / His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom

Charles Spurgeon: 'He will come, and in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man will come. Tonight, He may appear just when we think He will not come, the thief shall break open the house. We ought, therefore to be always watching.'

We are not waiting for the antichrist or the Tribulation – we are waiting for Christ – and the rapture of the church

We are looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior – Jesus Christ

I Corinthians 15:52 - 'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.'