

Is the SSN the Mark of the Beast in Revelation 13?

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Many Christians believe that the mark and/or number of the beast in Revelation 13 is the Social Security Number. The premise seems obvious; “no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:17. We all know how difficult it is to work and bank without a social security number - I invite you to try it if you don't believe me - so it must be the number of the beast! (As an aside, it's not impossible to live and work without a SSN, but deliberate steps must be taken to get around it.)

But let's take a closer look. Verse 18 goes on to state that the number of the beast is the number of a man, which is 666. The social security number (SSN) is made up of nine digits, and there is little likelihood that very many of the numbers issued to people have the sequence 666 in them. Of course, the number 666 is symbolic, as are many of the images in Revelation. A beast, for instance, signifies an entity or a power, not an individual. In the Bible, seven is the number of perfection, six would fall short of God's perfection, and it's repeated three times for emphasis.

Taking an even closer look, we can see that the emphasis in Revelation 13 is not on the number and mark of the beast, but on worship. The word is used four times in connection with the beast:

Revelation 13:4,8,12,15 -

4 ...worship the dragon

8 ...worship him (the beast)

12 ...worship the first beast

15 ...worship the image

We won't discuss who the first and second beast are in this study; the internet is a great resource for discovering their identity. Let's see where else in Revelation the word worship is used in connection with the beast:

Revelation 14:9,11 -

9 ...worship the beast and his image

11 ...worship the beast and his image

Revelation 16:2 -

...them which worshiped his image

I think we can safely conclude that the mark and number of the beast is associated with worship of the beast. The SSN is not connected with worship at all, except by contortions in logic. The restriction on buying and selling is the result of the refusal to worship the beast (Revelation 3:17).

The social security entitlement program was created to provide funds for retirement. As with most government programs, it doesn't work very well, and most Americans pay into the system either through ignorance, or simply because it's easier (very few employers will follow the law on this issue, and will deduct FICA from your paycheck despite showing them the evidence of the law). While social security, like all such entitlement programs, is foolish, there is nothing coming out of the Social Security Administration that suggests, much less forces, anyone having and using their number, to worship anything, certainly not the beasts of Revelation. I always recommend to people that have been foolish enough to pay into the system to get out of it if they can (1Corinthians 7:21-23), but if they are close to retirement age or already retired, to simply draw all they can from the system, as the more quickly this foolish scheme collapses, the better off all of us will be. In truth, the social

security scheme has already collapsed, although many are under the illusion that it is still viable. Incidentally, most people are ignorant of the fact that a SSN is not required to live and work in the United States. Ask the Social Security Administration (SSA) yourself if you don't believe me. People that have done this have found that the SSA will word their response “diplomatically,” stating that a number *is required to receive benefits*.

While the SSN is not the mark or number of the beast, let's take a look at why it may not be wise for a Christian to have and use the number.

I always ask people a basic question: Who takes care of you in your old age? In the recent past, this used to be the offspring of a married couple, which is why there was an emphasis on having large families (that, and lack of birth control). But we live in a different world today, and not everyone has children. For the Christian, the answer should be that God provides for us in our old age, and the time previous to old age as well. Thus, God Himself can direct us to order our lives in such a way that we will have the funds necessary to provide for our needs in old age, and for any emergencies that may come up. The God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob is so powerful, He can also provide enough for us to help others as well. The Creator can also keep us healthy and working long after others are accumulating aches and pains, and eventually end up in nursing homes, as long as we cooperate with Him in this endeavor. My God can do a much better job than the government. For that matter, even an atheist can do a much better job than the government, in this regard. If you, like many others have, think it through, you may decide that economically, as well as spiritually, the supposed benefits are not worth it.

We have looked at verses that use the word worship in a negative connotation, worshipping the beast or his image. Now, let's take a brief look at how else the word worship is used, in

the context of worshipping God. That way, perhaps we can figure out what the mark of the beast actually is. In contrast to Rev. 13, the word worship is used in the following passages, in connection with worshipping God:

Rev. 15:4 -

...: for all nations shall come and worship before You

Rev. 14:7 -

...worship Him who made the heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water

(As an aside, the phrase “springs of water” actually comes from the flood story in Genesis 7 and 8...which is significant, because the flood story teaches us about the God of salvation/destruction - salvation to those who appreciate and listen to Him, and destruction for those who persist in unbelief, and eventually destroy themselves.)

Most of Revelation comes from the “Old Testament.” That is, the verses are a carbon copy of a verse in the Old Testament, and Revelation 14 is no exception. We can find the source for Rev. 14:7 in the middle of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:11 -

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The seventh day Sabbath, the Lord’s Day (Rev. 1:10; Matt. 12:8), is the seal of God’s authority as Creator. Therefore, it would not be a contortion of logic to conclude that the “mark” or “sign” of everyone who belongs to God is the observance of

the seventh day Sabbath, which signifies entering into His rest (Hebrews 4:1-11).

That is why “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. 13:17. The "image of the beast" passes a decree that the only ones that may engage in life sustaining commerce - buying and selling, the antithesis of rest - are those that have the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:15-18). The goal is to exclude those that keep His commandments (Revelation 14:12), including the Sabbath, which is in the heart of the Decalogue.

When bank tellers are trained to spot counterfeit currency, they are not shown the fakes, but they handle the genuine currency. Once they are familiar with the “real thing,” it’s easier to spot the counterfeits. Once we know what the “mark” or seal of God’s authority is, we can more easily see what the ‘mark of the beast’ is. Most of you have already figured it out: the mark of the beast spoken of in Revelation 13 is Sunday worship. This must be so, since nowhere in the Bible does God change the day of worship from the seventh day Sabbath to the first, or any other, day of the week. This is not to say that only those that worship on Sunday will receive the mark of the beast, thus excluding atheists and those that don't profess any religion. Sunday worship is a symbol of those that want to save themselves, rather than let God save them.

Of course, all our Sunday keeping friends have not received the ‘mark of the beast,’ as most are ignorant of these issues, and the mark of the beast is not currently being enforced. That is yet future, but those who see the signs of the times can see that it’s not too far away. When the United States government (Revelation 13:11) passes distinctly religious laws concerning the day of worship - a shocking concept today, almost impossible to believe - the mark of the beast will be enforced, and everyone must make their decision. Those will be trying times, as when the United States government succumbs to

popular opinion and finishes off the Constitution by doing away with our religious liberties, it will lead to national ruin such as we have never seen, first in the United States, and eventually, on a worldwide scale.

