

The Mark: the Name and the Number

Lesson 20: **March 24, 2016**—*spiritual warfare*

Dear Journal: Today is the first day that I'm all alone since my husband and children disappeared two years ago. People everywhere have been looking for their loved ones, and some have gone to heroic lengths to try and find out where their families went. Some of their stories were even reenacted on the TV show, *Disappeared—Without A Trace*. Those who seemed to be the most fortunate, though, were those whose family members died in the thousands of accidents because they were able to have some kind of closure, and bury their dead.

My grief has been my own, and it has been intense. I'm still very sad, of course, and I've daily tried to understand why my family would leave me in this way. The only thought that helps me at all is if they didn't have a choice—if they were taken away by persons from another planet or world—kidnappers or pirates—though I've not received any word, and certainly not a ransom request. I can't imagine them willingly leaving me—without a word—to live life without them. I only hope they are safe, and that they love me and think of me.

My little dogs both died in the past year with some unknown disease, because I had no money to take them to the vet. And I seem to be suffering with something strange, myself, with no money for checking that out either. Up until yesterday, the people that I've been staying with since I ran out of money to keep my own place have been gracious and helped me out tremendously. I'm thankful for that. But all that ended when they left with some others up the way to go join the masses who are receiving a 'mark' to buy or sell food. Afterward, they plan to stay in the city with their remaining extended family.

There is a little bit of food left in the pantry here—enough for maybe three days—and after that I will need to eat what I can find outside. I can't really pinpoint the reason why I didn't go with the others and just follow instructions, but I felt like I should hold out for change, any change for the better, which will surely come soon—it just has to! The whole world, as we knew it before the *exodus*, has become so cruel, and is not the same in any way, shape, or form.

The really scary thing is that word is being passed around that if a person doesn't receive this 'mark' and join the *order* or whatever it's called, that they will actually be hunted down and killed. I can't quite believe all that: How would they even know that I didn't get "it"? Anyway I've decided to hold out, though I don't know for how long or what will end up happening to me. The prospect of having every bit of my person entered into a worldwide database that could track my every move and purchase has put a terrible fear into me...

Thankfully, we're not there yet! 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 "*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ►³Don't let anyone deceive you in any way ◀, for that day will not come, until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ◀⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*"

On the day that believers are "caught up" to the Lord Jesus in the air, the Antichrist will be on the world scene. And it cannot be assumed that the people left will recognize what has happened. If they had truly understood that, they would have desired salvation through God's Son to avoid being left. Satan will deceive the world about our *exodus* with explanations such as: we were taken by aliens from another planet or world; kidnapped for enslavement; pirated for human trafficking, or, that we fell into holes in the earth that closed up, etc.

The abrupt departure of Christians will cause thousands of accidents and many deaths. The Antichrist will ratchet up his rule full throttle, and sin will reign—unrestrained. One famous preacher described the Antichrist as "a Nebuchadnezzar-Cyrus-Caesar-Alexander with some Hitler-Mao-Stalin thrown in and bound together." Let's read about the coming-to-rule unholy trinity:

Revelation 13:1-10 "*And the **dragon (Satan)** stood on the shore of the sea. "And I saw a **beast** (The **Antichrist**) coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ²The **beast** I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The **dragon** gave the **beast** his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of the heads of the **beast** seemed to have a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the **beast**. ⁴Men worshiped the **dragon** because he had given authority to the **beast**, and they also worshiped the **beast** and asked, 'Who is like the **beast**? Who can make war against him?'*

*⁵"The **beast** was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months (**3½ years**). ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. ⁸All inhabitants of the earth will worship the **beast**—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.*

⁹"He who has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints."

The beast coming out of the sea (of people) is the Antichrist (from the Roman Empire). But John says that the *beast* resembled a leopard (Greek Empire), but had feet like a bear (Medo-Persian Empire), mouth like a lion (Babylonian Empire) and Revelation 13:5 says that the beast was given a mouth—Babylon. Satan will give the Antichrist his own power, his throne and great authority—for a time. This beast **will be a political leader and deceive the world**, and then he'll suffer a fatal wound, and come to life—mimicking the Lord Jesus Christ dying and rising from the dead. The whole world will follow the beast—even worship him—and all this will be Satan's deception!

There have been and will continue to be many antichrists—those who oppose Christ. But there will be one political figure that will rise up in the 'end times' deceiving the world into thinking that he is everything they have longed for in a world leader. He will lure them into thinking that he has their best interests in mind. Remember that for every plan that God put in place for our good, Satan schemes the counterfeit of that plan for our destruction. So we see Satan himself counterfeiting God Almighty; and the Antichrist counterfeits Christ, and then a second beast (false prophet) will arrive to counterfeit the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 13:11-18 “Then I saw **another beast** (the **False Prophet**) coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ¹²He exercised all the authority of the **first beast** on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the **first beast**, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. ¹⁴Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the **first beast**, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast (the Antichrist) who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵He was given power to give breath to the image of the **first beast**, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the **beast** or the number of his name.

¹⁸“This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the **beast**, for it is man's number. His number is 666.”

Identification is what survival—during the days of the Antichrist—will require! Without the 'mark' nothing can be bought or sold. It is a passport to live another hour. For the ones who reject “it”...death will follow. While we do not know the mark, we do know the name of the Beast—*Antichrist*—and the number: it is 666! Revelation 13:17 “...so that no one could buy or sell unless he had **the mark**, which is **the name** of the beast or **the number** of his name.” The rule of man without God's guidance has always been beast-like (examples: Nero, Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini).

After the world has been deceived, then the Antichrist will have control of the deceived and will force them to worship him and to take his mark on their right hand or forehead. They will not be able to buy or sell without it. And those who receive this mark are doomed. Revelation 13:18 again: *“This calls for wisdom.”* We studied God’s wisdom last week and how it will guide us and warn us. The time to embrace wisdom is today. We must not delay, because we will absolutely need God’s wisdom to avoid being deceived.

Dr. E. F. Webber: “John sees the martyred dead; these had been given up in sacrifice to God. They were slain because they were loyal to God and the Word of God, as well as their testimony of faith. They would not yield to the Antichrist and take his mark, so he slew them.” Most of the world will be deceived, and then controlled by Antichrist. That’s a very sobering truth! Webber again: “It seems as if man really wants to be deceived: he grasps at deceptions rather than take hold of God’s holy *Truth*. When men turn away from God, they become easy prey for the devil.” The beast is a man: In dealing with mankind, Satan always has sought human instrumentality. And with Social Security and driver’s license numbers, zip codes, credit cards, cell phone tracking, DNA, etc; and the Universal Product Code on all groceries...*well*.

What are the conditions when believers are gathered to Jesus? Luke 17:26-27 *“**Just as it was in the days of Noah**, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage **up to the day Noah entered the ark**. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.”* It will be like this—people will be eating, drinking, marrying and given in marriage *up to the day* when the Lord gathers believers to himself in the clouds: His Church; His Bride. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 *“Now, brothers (sisters), about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that **the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night**. ³While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and **they will not escape.**”*

Webster defines tribulation: 1 : to press, oppress 2 : distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution; also a trying experience syn trial, affliction, cross, ordeal. Tribulation is an English word used to describe the two 3½ year terms: the first called the tribulation and the latter as the ‘great’ tribulation. Though the word tribulation does not appear in Scripture, just as rapture and trinity do not, the meaning of the word is fully described.

We may or may not have already entered the first 3½ years, but the great tribulation period will culminate in the Lord’s second coming to earth. His first was to Mary’s womb in preparation to be the *Lamb of God* who takes away the

sins of the world. The second time, the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah* will touch down on the Mount of Olives during the great battle of Armageddon to defend and deliver Israel, and destroy her enemies forever!

♥Signs of Jesus' return for believers...Matthew 24:3-5, 11 *"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'*

4"Jesus answered: 'Watch out that no one deceives you. 5For many will come in my name, claiming, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many. 6You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8All these are the beginning of birth pains."

SKIP to verse 11: *"...and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.'*

SKIP to verse 24: *"For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. 25See, I have told you ahead of time."*

From this point to the end of chapter 24 it describes the Lord's coming, and verse 31 says *"And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other."*

2 Thessalonians 2:9 is an excellent passage: *"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."*

♥♥Jesus' Second Coming...Luke 21:20-24 tells of the peril for Jerusalem as their enemies terrorize them. Then in 21:25-28 *"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

And on through verse 36 warns Christians to be careful and watchful.

Let us make sure that our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and that we will meet Him in the air and go to be with Him forever...before Antichrist; before the 'mark' is forced. Rev. Charles Spurgeon: "If we remember that we are going to heaven, we will not sleep on the road. If we think that hell is behind us, and the devil pursuing us, we will not loiter. Would the manslayer sleep with the avenger of blood behind him, and the city of refuge before him?"