Thursology 102: 666—The Meaning of The Mark of the Beast

(*Thursology Live!* 8/3/2023)

--What is "The Mark"???

--Rev. 13:3-5, 8 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and *followed after* the beast; 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?" There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him…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.

--The preparation for The Mark: The whole earth _____ the Beast

--Rev.13:11-12: Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to *worship* the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

--The next prep for The Mark: The _____ prophet appears

--Rev.13:13-15: He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an *image to the beast* who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not *worship* the *image* of the beast to be killed.

--The next prep for The Mark: Humanity _____ the *image* of The Beast

--Rev.13:16-18: And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a *mark* on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the *mark*, either the *name* of the beast or the *number* of his *name*. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the *number* of the beast, for the *number* is that of a man; and *his number is six hundred and sixty-six*.

--Two "Mark attributes":

--Attribute #1: Those who take the _____ of The Beast…are those who _____ The Beast

--Attribute #2: The _____ of the Mark represents the _____ of the Antichrist

--Comparing a series of number sequences:

--"Antichrist": _____

--The *perfect* human: _____

--Jesus: _____

--What some Greek scholars propose: The numerics of these sequences may be a statement about the _____ messiah…or _____-messiah…*falling short* of perfection…and the _____

--What is the nature of "The Mark"???

--#1: An identifiable _____ marking…the represents the _____ of The Antichrist…either on their forehead or right hand

--#2: The Mark will be used to help _____ a world _____ system to allow or prevent buying and selling

--#3: The Mark identifies the _____ of Antichrist

--#4: It is *explicitly* given to those who _____ the Beast

--#5: It is a Mark of _____ to the Antichrist

--Key Concept: *No one* will just _____ happen to "end up with" the Mark…rather…it will be an *absolutely intentional* _____*!!!*

--#6: The Mark is a matter of _____ and _____

--Rev 20:4: Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those *who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God*, and those *who had not worshiped the beast* or his image, and *had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand*; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

--Matt 24:9-10, 12-13: "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and *will kill you*, and *you will be hated by all nations on account of My name*. And at that time, many will fall away and *will deliver up one another and hate one another*…And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But *the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved*."

--#7: The Mark is _____

--Rev 13:7-8: It was also given to him to *make war with the saints* and to *overcome them*, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. 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.

--Application #1: In the end…____ of human history will boil down to ____ thing*!!*

--The visible traits that will identify *everyone* at the end of time:

--Trait #1: *Unbelievers* will be identified by the Mark of the _____

--Rev 13:16: "And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead…"

--Trait #2: *Believers* will take the Mark of _____

--Rev 22:1-4: Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from *the throne of God and of the Lamb*, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and *His bond-servants will serve Him*; they will see His face, and *His name will be on their foreheads*.

--Two biblical facts about the Last Days:

--Fact #1: There will be a _____ on _____ forehead

--Fact #2: In the end…the *essence* of the *difference* between the two kinds of people…*isn't* the _____…it's…their _____*!!!*

--Rev 22:7-9: "Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, *I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel* who showed me these things. But he said to me, "*Do not do that*. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. *Worship God*."

--"Mark" Precept #1: The *reason* people will receive the mark of the _____…is because of who they _____*!!!*

--"Mark" Precept #2: The *reason* people will receive the mark of _____…is because of Who they _____*!!!* (Rev 22:8-9)

--The final rebuke in the Bible: Don't _____ that*!!!*

--The final command in the Bible: _____ God*!!!*

--Ignacius: "In the apocalypse, I find nothing intelligible. It is *not* a biblical book."

--The unequivocal, explicit, history-defining, powerful, commanding, piercing meaning of the Book: The *whole* of Revelation can be boiled down to the exquisite clarity of this two-word command: "_____…_____*!!!!*"

--Application #2: Experiencing *true* _____ is the only way to be *truly* _____*!!!*

--Isa 9:6-7: For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. And there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, *on the throne of David and over his kingdom*, to *establish* it and to *uphold* it with justice and righteousness *from then on and forevermore*. The *zeal* of the Lord of hosts *will* accomplish this.

--Matt 1:1: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of *David*…"

--Rev 22:20: He who testifies to these things says, "*Yes, I am coming quickly*."

--Rev 22:16: "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of *David*, the bright morning star."

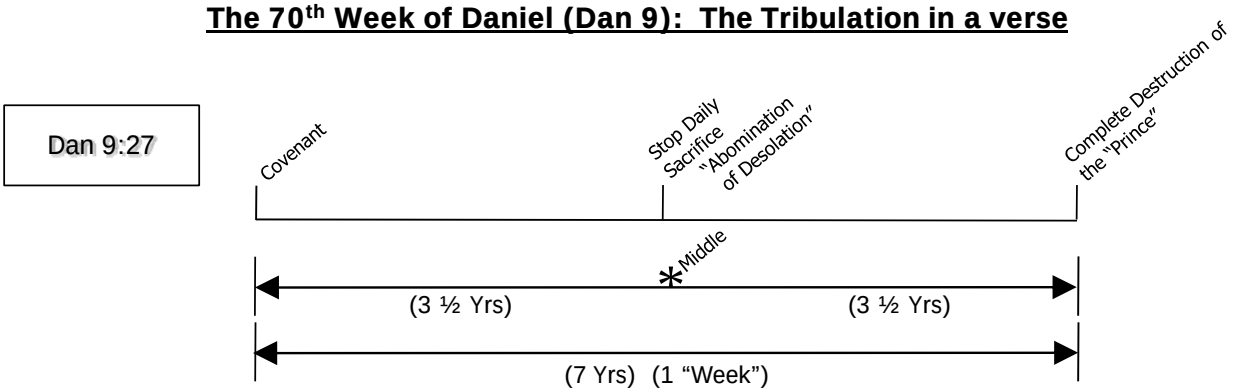
--Psalm 22:1-2: My God, my God, *why have You forsaken me*? Far from my help are the words of my groaning. My God, I cry out by day, *but You do not answer*…

--Psalm 22:22-24: *I will proclaim Your name* to my brothers; in the midst of the assembly *I will praise You*. You who fear the Lord, *praise Him*; all you descendants of Jacob, *glorify Him*, and *stand in awe of Him*, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor scorned the suffering of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but *when he cried to Him for help, He heard*.

--Some questions: How often to you worship God in your *daily* life? How often are you *consumed* by Who He is? Do you have time every day where you're basking in His presence and adoring Him? Does the music you listen to draw you closer to Him? Do you have time set aside to tell Him how much you love Him…*every day*???

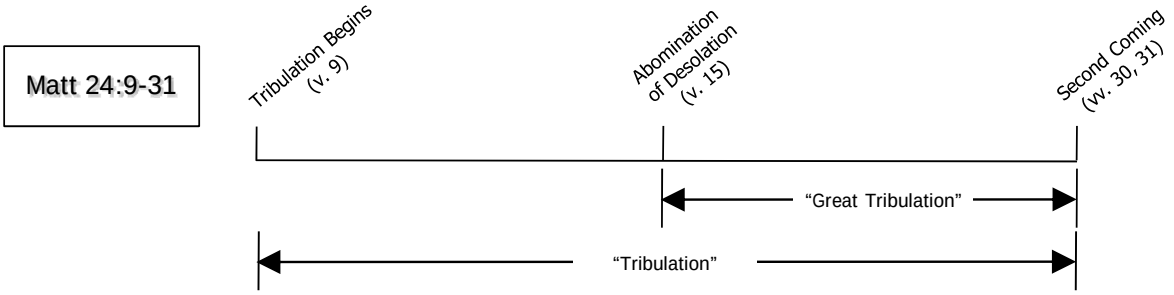
Putting It All Together: The Last Seven Years

The 70th Week of Daniel (Dan 9): The Tribulation in a verse

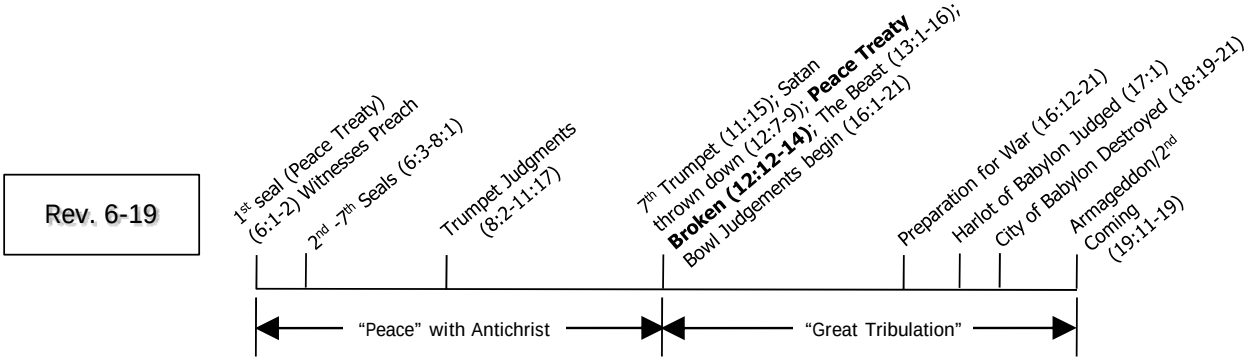


Compare: Dan 2:40-42; 7:1-8, 11, 19-26

The Olivet Discourse (Matt 24): The Tribulation in a chapter



The Revelation Account (Rev 6-19): The Tribulation in a book



Thursology 101:
Hell—Dealing With the Philosophical Problems (The Judgments-Pt 5)

(*Thursology Live!* 7/6/2023)

--The profound implications of having the freedom to make moral choices:

--Implication #1: Even with an all-*good* and all-*powerful* God…human **FREEDOM**…if it's **REAL**…creates the possibility for **EVIL**

--What the theological traditions that say God is ***NOT*** the cause of Evil believe: God **ALLOWED** for the *possibility* of evil…by granting humans the power to make genuine moral **CHOICES**…and giving them the **ABILITY** to rebel against His will.

> Christians believe that an evil power has made himself the Prince of this World. And that raises problems. Is this state of affairs in accordance with God's will or not? If it is, He is a strange God, you will say, and if it is not, how can anything happen contrary to the will of a being with absolute power?
>
> But anyone who has been in authority knows how a thing can be in accordance with your will in one way, and not in another. It may be quite sensible for a mother to say to the children, "I'm not going to make you tidy up the school room every night. You've got to learn how to keep it tidy on your own." Then she goes up and finds the teddy bear and the ink and the French Grammar all lying on the floor. On the one hand, this is *against* her will. But on the other, it is *her will* that has left the children *free* to be untidy. And it is the same way in the Universe. (*Mere Christianity*)

--Implication #2: The free **SELVES** that God created…used their *freedom* to **REJECT** Him…and tried to become their own **MASTER**

> The moment you have a self at all, there is a possibility of *putting yourself first*—wanting to be the *center*—wanting to be *God*, in fact. That was the sin of Satan; and that was the sin he taught the human race…What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could "be like God"—could *set up on their own*—as if they had created themselves—could be their own masters—invent some sort of *happiness* for themselves *outside* of God, *apart* from God. (*Mere Christianity*)

--Implication #3: The only **TRUE** joy for beings who were created in God's image…is to freely **CHOOSE** to surrender to **HIS** will*!!!*

> God created beings with free will. That means creatures that can go either wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature that was free, but had no possibility of going wrong. I cannot. If a thing is free to be good, it is also free to be bad. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes *evil* possible, is also the *only* thing that makes possible *any* love or goodness or joy worth having. A world of automata—of creatures that worked like machines—would not be worth creating. The happiness that God designs for His higher creatures is *the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him* in an ecstasy of love and delight compared with which the most rapturous love between a man and a woman on this earth is mere milk and water. And for *that*, they must be free. (*Mere Christianity*)
>
> Out of the hopeless attempt to *invent happiness apart from God* has come nearly all that we call human history—poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of humanity trying to find something *other than God* which will make them happy.
>
> The reason why it can never succeed is this. God made us—invented us—like someone invents an engine. A car is made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God *designed* the *human* machine to run on *Himself*. He *Himself* is the fuel our spirits were *designed* to burn, or the food our spirits were

designed to feed on. *There is no other*. That is why it is no good asking God to make us happy *in our own way*, without bothering about *following Him*. God *cannot* give us happiness and peace *apart from Himself*, because it is not there. *There is no such thing*.

--Key Concept #1: God designed humans to run on **HIMSELF**…in a freely-chosen **LOVE** relationship with Him

--Key Concept #2: Thus…it is **IMPOSSIBLE**…even for God…to give us happiness apart from **HIMSELF**…there is no such **THING***!!!*

--The complaints…and the resolutions:

--Major complaint #1: The doctrine is **DETESTABLE***!!!*

The doctrine of Hell is one of the chief grounds on which Christianity is attacked as barbarous and the goodness of God is impugned. We are told that it is a detestable doctrine—and indeed, I too detest it from the bottom of my heart.

There is no doctrine that I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture, and, especially, of Our Lord's own words. It has always been held by Christendom, and it has the support of reason…I am not going to try to prove the doctrine *tolerable*. Let us make no mistake, it is *not* tolerable. (*The Problem of Pain*)

--An unsettled tension: Hell is **REAL**…and…*everything* about it…even the fact that it **EXISTS**…is **HORRIBLE***!!!*

--Major complaint #2: The doctrine is **UNFAIR***!!!*

--Eternity Truth #1: God **DESIRES** for *everyone* to have eternal life

--II Pet 3:9: The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for *any* to perish but for *all* to come to repentance.

--Eternity Truth #2: God has provided the **WAY** for *everyone* to have eternal life

--John 12:32: And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, *will draw all* men to Myself."

--Key Concept: Not all people will be saved…but…more people will **SEEK** God…and **RESPOND** to Him…than **WE** know of…in our finite understanding*!!!*

Here is another thing that used to puzzle me. Is it not frightfully unfair that this new life should be confined to people who have heard of Christ and been able to believe in Him? But the truth is, God has not told us what His arrangements are for the other people. We do know that *no one* can be saved *except through Christ*; we do *not* know that *only* those who *know* Him can be saved *through* Him. But in the meantime, if you are worried about the people outside, the most *unreasonable* thing you can do is to remain outside *yourself*. (*Mere Christianity*)

--What we know for sure: Jesus is the Perfect **SAVIOR**…the Perfect **JUDGE**…and He's perfectly **IMPARTIAL***!!!*

--Major Complaint #3: Endless **TORTURE** is *out of proportion* to the "**CRIMES**" committed…even by the **REBELLIOUS**!!!

--A correction of the wrong assumptions of Complaint #3: Those who think of Hell as an endless **TORTURE** chamber with unspeakable horrors that God **INVENTED** to inflict pain and suffering on rebellious humans…have completely misunderstood eternal punishment…because the **REAL** eternal punishment will be the **SELF**-imposed

banishment from the very *Presence* of the One Who **IS**…Life…and Hope…and Joy…and Happiness!!!

--A perineal question: How can you reconcile God's LOVE…and the existence of HELL*???*

--Key Concept #1: No one in Hell will be a **VICTIM**…and *all* separation from God happens as a result of intentional **CHOICE**…made by beings who God **LOVES** so much…that He **DIED** for them*!!!*

--Key Concept #2: Hell is not **GOD'S** choice…it's a **HUMAN** choice…*despite* all that God has done to **PREVENT** it*!!!*

> Christianity asserts that every individual human is going to live forever, and this must be either true or false. Now there are a good many things which would not be worth bothering about if I were going to live only seventy years, but which I had better bother about very seriously if I am going to live *forever*. Perhaps my bad temper or my jealousy are gradually getting worse—so gradually that the increase in seventy years will not be very noticeable. But it might be absolute hell in a *million* years: In fact, if Christianity is true, *Hell* is the *precisely correct technical term* for what it *would* be. (*MC*)
>
> Even in this life we can see the kind of soul disintegration that self-centeredness creates. We know how selfishness and self-absorption lead to bitterness, envy, anxiety, and the mental denials and distortions that accompany them. Now ask the question: "What if when we die, we don't end, but spiritually our life extends on into eternity?" Hell, then, is *the trajectory of a soul*, living in a self-absorbed, self-centered life, *going on and on, forever*." (Timothy Keller: *The Reason for God*)
>
> Our Lord spoke of Hell as a sentence in the law-court sense. But He also said that the judgment consists in the very fact that *humans prefer darkness to light*. Indeed, in the long run, these two things mean the same thing. In other words, it is accurate to think of the bad man's punishment not as a sentence *imposed* on him, but as the *mere fact* of *being what he is*. The characteristic of lost souls is their rejection of everything that is not simply themselves. (CS Lewis: *The Problem of Pain*)
>
> --In short, Hell is simply one's *freely chosen identity apart from God* on a *trajectory into infinity*. (*The Reason for God*)

--Key Concept #3: **SAVING** faith isn't just about **ACCEPTING** truth…it's also about **SURRENDING** our will*!!!*

> When humans *offer back their will* in delighted obedience to their Creator, there, most undoubtedly, is *Heaven*. The problem in this fallen world is how to recover this self-surrender, because we are not merely *imperfect beings* who must be *improved*. Rather, we are *rebels* who must *lay down our arms*. And to render back to God, *the will* that we have *so long claimed for our own*, is a *grievous pain*…To surrender a self-will, inflamed with years of usurpation, is a kind of *death*. (*The Problem of Pain*)

--Key Concept #4: It's a *myth* to believe that…after death…when the prospect of being separated eternally from God becomes **CLEAR**…humans will want to **CHANGE** their mind and **SURRENDER** to the Truth!!!

> Modern people inevitably think that Hell works like this: God gives us time, but if we haven't made the right choices by the end of our lives, He casts our souls into Hell for eternity. As the poor souls fall through space, they cry out for mercy, but God says, "Too late!" You had your chance! Now you will suffer!" This caricature misunderstands the very nature of evil. The Biblical picture is that sin separates us from the presence of God, which is the source of all joy, and indeed, of all love, wisdom, or good things of any sort. Since we were originally created for God's immediate presence, only before

His face will we thrive, flourish, and achieve our highest potential. If we were to lose His presence totally, that would be Hell." (*The Reason for God*)

The people in Hell are miserable. But here's why. We see them raging, like unchecked flames, in their pride, their self-pity, their certainty that everyone else is wrong, that everyone else is an idiot! They are utterly, finally locked in a prison of their own self-centeredness, and their pride progressively expands into a bigger and bigger mushroom cloud. And this soul disintegration continues forever, as they eternally blame everyone but themselves.

This is why it is a travesty to picture God casting people into a pit who are crying, "I'm sorry! Please let me out!" People in Hell would rather have their "freedom," as they define it, than salvation. Their delusion is that, if they glorified God, they would somehow lose their power and freedom. But in a supreme and tragic irony, their choice has ruined their potential for greatness. Hell is, as Lewis says, "The greatest monument to human freedom!" (*The Reason for God*)

--Key Concept #5: God paid the **ULTIMATE** price for our restoration…but He will not **COERCE** or **FORCE** anyone into a compulsory Heaven*!!!*

If the happiness of a creature lies in self-surrender, no one can make that surrender *but them*, and they may *refuse*. I would pay any price to be able say truthfully, "All will be saved." But my reason retorts, "Without their will, or with it?" If I say, "*Without* their will," I immediately perceive a contradiction. How can the supreme *voluntary* act of self-surrender be *involuntary*? If I say, "*With* their will," my reason replies, "What if they *will not* give in?"…The problem is not that of a God Who consigns some of His creatures to final ruin. That is a problem for Islam. But Christianity, always true to the complexity of the real, presents a God *so full of mercy* that He becomes human and *dies by torture to avert that final ruin* from His creatures, and Who yet, where that heroic remedy fails, seems *unwilling*, or even *unable*, to arrest that ruin *by a mere act of power*. (*The Problem of Pain*)

I said glibly a moment ago that I would pay "any price" to remove the *doctrine* of Hell. I lied. I could not pay one-thousandth part of the price that God has *already* paid to remove the *fact* of Hell. And here is the real problem: *so much mercy*, and yet, there is *Hell*. (*The Problem of Pain*)

--Key Concept #6: In one very real sense…the those who ultimately choose rebellion…**WIN** their battle against God…and in their self-proclaimed eternal "**VICTORY**" of having their own way…they lose **ALL***!!!*

Some object that the ultimate loss of even and single soul means the defeat of God's omnipotence. And so it does. In creating beings with free will, God from the outset submitted to the possibility of such defeat. But what you call "*defeat*," I call "*miracle*." For to make things which are not Itself, and thus *to become capable of being resisted* by Its own handiwork, *is the most astonishing and unimaginable of all the feats attributed to God*. I believe that the damned are, in one sense, *successful*, rebels to the *end*. In other words, the doors of Hell are locked on the *inside*. I do not mean that they lost may not *wish* to come out of Hell, in the vague fashion that an envious man "wishes" to be happy. But they certainly do not will even the first preliminary stages of self-abandonment *through which alone the soul can reach Heaven*. Tragically, they "enjoy" forever the *horrible freedom* they have *demanded*, and are therefore *self-enslaved*.

In the long run, the *answer* to all those who object to the doctrine of Hell is itself a *question*: "What are you asking God to do?" To wipe out their past sins and, at all cost, give them a fresh start, smoothing over every difficulty and offering every miraculous

help? But He has done exactly that, on Calvary. To forgive them? They will not be forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid *that is what He does*. (*Problem of Pain*)

"In the end…there will only be two kinds of people: Those who say *to God*, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom *God* says, '*Thy* will be done.'" (*Mere Christianity*)

--A question: Which kind of person are you becoming? Are you becoming the person who says *to God*, "Thy will be done!"? Or…are you becoming the person to whom *God* will say, "*Thy* will be done!"?