



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

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13:16-18

Go to the VeriChip website and you see that their slogan is, “RFID for people.”

Listen to this regarding their history:

The roots of VeriChip trace back to the events of September 11, 2001 when New York firemen were writing their badge ID numbers on their chests in case they were found injured or unconscious. It was evident there was a desperate need for personal information in emergency situations and that an injectable RFID microchip could help patients.

Working closely with Applied Digital, VeriChip was created.. in December 2001 to produce and market the implantable device (also known as "VeriChip™"). The company received FDA approval for the device in medical applications in December 2004 and today, many people around the world have been implanted. In addition, several leading medical centres including Beth Israel Deaconess and Hackensack University, have agreed to use the technology in their emergency departments with other facilities currently in talks with VeriChip...

The success to date of the FDA-cleared, human-implantable RFID microchip, VeriChip has solidified its position as the world's premier RFID company for people offering the widest range of RFID solutions (i.e. implantable, wearable, and attachable)...

RFID stands for radio frequency identification. An RFID tag is an object that can be applied to or incorporated into a product, animal, or person for the purpose of identification and tracking using radio waves. Some tags can be read from several meters away and beyond the line of sight of the reader.

Are we being overly sensational when we discuss implantable, wearable, or attachable tags? Boston University professor Richard Landes thinks so. He specializes in the history of apocalyptic thought. He likes to point out that new technologies often trigger alarm among those who interpret the Bible literally.

Critics like Landes essentially are saying that Christians are sensationalists who see the mark of the beast in every new technological advance.

Y2K, bar codes and Social Security numbers all triggered end-times warnings, said Landes, who was co-founder and director of the Center for Millennial Studies at BU, which studied contemporary cult activities and end-times literature prior to 2000.

"Even the introduction of the Gutenberg press caused waves of apocalyptic thinking," said Landes.

OK, I sometimes think Christians are way too sensational. Y2K remains a good example. As do all the attempts to make the names of world leaders add up to a numerical value of '666.'

But here is something the critics don't take into consideration. It's not just advances in technology that interest Christians. It is the particular advance in technologies that make possible a cashless

global economy involving some sort of wearable or implantable personal identifier.

**VeriChip is not the Gutenberg printing press!** It is the very type of technology that you'd expect. And it's happening right now.

I've tried to be clear about two things when talking about this technology:

1. First, RFID and such may or may not be the technology that is used during the Great Tribulation. It is a precursor to it. If you receive an implantable, wearable, or attachable RFID tag it isn't the mark of the beast!
2. Second, the "mark" is something beyond the technology. As we'll see, it involves having to swear allegiance to and worship the antichrist. The technology is utilized by him. But a person must make a conscious decision to stay in the system by worshipping the antichrist.

Revelation 13:16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

"He" is the false prophet introduced in the previous verses. How could he "cause" someone to "receive a mark?"

It doesn't mean he forces them. They'll have the choice. But without it they will not be able to conduct any personal business.

"All" in this case means all types and classes of people. They are described in contrasting pairs.

- "Small and great." It won't matter if you are educated or uneducated, white collar or blue collar. Those distinctions will still exist but being "great" will not exempt you, nor will being "small" exclude you.
- "Rich and poor." Apparently 'spreading the wealth' will never really work! There will always be disparity of wealth. The concept here is

that wealth will be useless unless you are participating in the system.

- “Free and slave.” That sounds ominous! A little later we’ll read in 18:13 that men trafficked in “the souls of men.” Human trafficking is already a huge problem in the world. It will worsen. But even if you’re “free” you can’t avoid the decision to take the “mark.”

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, harbouring, or receipt of people for the purposes of slavery, forced labor (including bonded labor or debt bondage) and servitude. The total annual revenue for trafficking in persons is estimated to be between \$5 billion and \$9 billion. The Council of Europe states that “[p]eople trafficking has reached epidemic proportions over the past decade, with a global annual market of about \$42.5 billion.” Trafficking victims typically are recruited using coercion, deception, fraud the abuse of power, or outright abduction. Threats, violence, and economic leverage such as debt bondage can often make a victim consent to exploitation.

Exploitation includes forcing people into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. For children, exploitation may also include forced prostitution, illicit international adoption, trafficking for early marriage, or recruitment as child soldiers, beggars, or for religious cults.<sup>1</sup>

What can we say about the “mark” itself? Let’s read the first verse of chapter fourteen first:

Revelation 14:1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

Whatever the “mark of the beast” turns out to be, it is a counterfeit of the fact that somehow believers are “marked” by God the Father. It’s a reminder that as much as I want to understand prophecy in minute detail, there are things left unsaid. The big issue is not the exact nature of the “mark” but rather the intent of your heart.

John specifically mentions the “right hand” and the “forehead” and I see no reason this should not be taken literally.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_trafficking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking)

Revelation 13:17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

“Buy or sell” is a catch-all for anything and everything. A person will not be able to conduct any business whatsoever without swearing allegiance to the antichrist. There will be no access to public services or health care or any such things.

It will be worse than being homeless because you won't be able to beg! No one can give you money because it will be a cashless system. Sure, you can give goods or provide services free. But you'll be risking punishment to do so. And if someone has taken the mark, why would they want to aid someone who has not?

The plot thickens. You're told there is the “mark,” and the “name of the beast,” and the “number of his name.” It could be a three-tiered id system, like civilian, military, and government. We just don't know!

What this does is remind us that the “mark” is not just economic. It's not just RFID or VeriChip. It most definitely involves worshipping the antichrist.

And we won't know because all of this, remember, happens mid-Trib and we will have been raptured at least three and one-half years prior.

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

No one knows for sure exactly what is intended by this number. But we have to try to figure it out!

One theory points out that the letters of “Jesus” in Greek add up to 888. 666 may be a Satanic counterpart to the name of Jesus, or 666 may be God's evaluation of such a Satanic counterpart - it falls short.

As compared to the number 888, the number 666 may signify an unholy trinity. It may be a human and demonic imitation of God, inherently falling short of the perfect and true. Seven is the number of completion and totality and 6 doesn't quite make it.

Some commentators observe that there are six Roman numerals (I, V, X, L, C, and D). If you add them all up, you get 666. They say, therefore, that this simply reminds us the antichrist will be from the Roman Empire.

I see "666" as six repeating itself three times. That is helpful because, if you stick to the context, the Revelation discusses six previous world-ruling kingdoms up to the time the apostle John was writing:

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece, and
6. Rome.

Historians like to point out that the Roman Empire has never really been totally eradicated.

The next world-ruling empire will be the future revived Roman Empire of the Great Tribulation. It is, in a sense, a repeat of the sixth kingdom.

The revived Roman Empire of the Great Tribulation will then be taken over by Satan's beastly prince. It is, in a sense, another repeat of the sixth kingdom.

Rome of the past, the revived Rome of the future, and the revived Rome ruled by the beastly prince is the sixth world-ruling kingdom repeating itself three times - thus 6-6-6.

Six, by the way, is in the Bible the number of man because man was created on the sixth day. Mankind will never progress beyond this sixth kingdom.

Seven is the number of completion and perfection. Jesus will establish His kingdom of heaven on earth - the seventh, the final, the complete, the perfect kingdom.