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12 – Symbolic Significance of the *"Number"*

Now, regarding these 666-encoded barcodes, there is nothing sinister about them. They have become an indispensable part of the modern buying and selling system. But it is the *"mark"* which will become its centerpiece, while the *"number"* is like some additional information tagged on to show that buying and selling operations would not be complete without it. In Revelation 14:9-11 and 20:4, we learn that receiving the *"mark"* can jeopardize a person's standing in the next life (along with worshiping the *Beast* and his *Image*).

But nothing is said about the *"number"* in this connection. Except that in Revelation 15:2, we see the scene of the victory song in Heaven of those who were *"victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his* [the Beast's] *name."*

Older translations have inserted the phrase *"and over his mark".* But in the original Greek, that phrase was not there, and newer translations do not use it. And there is no need to use it. Obviously, if one has gotten the victory over the *Beast* and the *Image*, then one has also refused to take the *Mark.* But then, where does the *Number* fit in, and why is it mentioned, instead of the *Mark*, as something one must be "*victorious*

***over*" – especially since, as far as we know, the *Number* is designed for the purpose of merchandise distribution and does not require a personal decision to follow the Antichrist or his system?**

Perhaps the wording in this Scripture was meant to show that to sing the victory song is more than just a matter of not worshiping the Antichrist (*"the beast and his image*"), but also, a matter of Materialism – the worship of things, merchandise, all of which are encoded now with the 666-barcode.

As we have learned so far, the *"mark"* and *"number"* are the tangible devices that empower the followers of the Beast to avail themselves of the Beast's authority, which grants them freedom from persecution and the privilege of buying and selling. But the *"mark"* is the more important, for it is the badge of identity and the sign of those who have decided to label themselves with the *"name"* of the beast as one of his followers. The *"mark"* is something people receive, which means an element of choice is involved, which means a commitment is made towards worship of the *Beast.*

The *"number"* is a different entity, more on the sellers' side of commercial transactions, and something we use without even being aware of it. One does not have to take it on their person. Instead, as part of the sellers' side of commercial transactions, the goods sold to us have to receive a "mark" of sorts – these 666-encoded barcodes; and this seems to be nothing more than one of the commercial system's mechanisms of convenience.

For this reason the *Revelation Book* doesn't attach a great deal of importance to the *"number"*. Whereas the *"mark"* has a high profile and comes with a stiff warning about having to *"drink of the wine of the wrath of God"* – applicable to those who receive the *"mark"* (and worship the *Beast*), not those who use the *"number"* (so they can go shopping). (Revelation 14:10)

So, by all appearances, there is nothing wrong with using the 666 *"number"*. For it is the *"mark"* that will be the sign of allegiance to the Antichrist, not the *"number"*, as is clear in the following Scriptures from the *Revelation Book*:

(14:9) If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark
(14:11, NKJV) They… who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name
(16:2) The people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image
(19:20) Those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image
(20:4) The souls of those who… had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands

None of those verses mention the *"number"* or tie it in with the worship of the Beast. But, as Revelation 13:17 makes plain, the *"number"* is tied in with the buying and selling system, meaning that it ties in with the religion of Materialism, even if it doesn't have much to do with worship of the Beast.

So then, what about Revelation 15:2, which refers to *"those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name"*? The passage is a victory song, alluding to the children of Israel and their victory over the Egyptians after crossing the Red Sea. It commends God's people, at the End of the Age, for their successful struggle to escape and resist getting entangled and drawn into the world system of the final empire. Yet strangely enough, the passage has no mention of the *"mark"*. Instead, the *"number"* is counted as something to be *"victorious over"*. (See Footnote.)

The soon-coming world religious system is like a two-sided coin: on one side emperor-worship (*"the beast and his image"* of which the *"mark"* is an integral part) and on the other side mammon-worship (the entangling commercial system with all its material goods encoded with the 666-encoded barcode). The *Beast* and the *Image* (along with the *Mark*) are needed to purchase goods, and simultaneously draw the world's people into *Beast*-worship. And the *Number* is needed to sell goods. Both *Mark* and *Number* are the mechanisms needed to facilitate the worship of Materialism – that excessive desire to acquire merchandise and necessities of life.

The Revelation 15:2 Scripture seems to indicate that, even if a person hasn't taken the *Mark*, he or she is still accountable not to get drawn into the worship of Materialism. Merchandise and their 666-barcodes exist in every part of the world, even in those nations where the *Mark* system may not be implemented. And in such regions people are still accountable.

To join in the victory *"song of the Lamb"* means that one has kept his heart right, not only by refusing to worship the Antichrist (*"the beast and his image"*), but also by refusing to engage in a selfish scramble for material possessions. If one has refused the *Mark*, then he or she has by default refused to be drawn into Materialism. But if the *Mark* is not being implemented in a nation – and that may well be the case in America, the enemy of the *Beast* – the challenge is still there to stay *"pure in heart"* and thus be *"blessed… for they will see God."* (Matthew 5:8)

The passage in Revelation 15:2 does not mention "worship" (of the *Beast*), only that those who sing the victory song were *"victorious"*, not only over the *Beast* and his *Image*, but also *"over the number of his name"*. In those nations that are enemies of the *Beast* empire, it may not be much of a challenge to refuse to worship the *Beast* or take the *Mark*. But to avoid getting drawn into the religion of Materialism is a challenge, regardless of where one is living at that time in history.

To stay free of this doubly enticing religious system (Antichrist-worship mixed with Materialism-worship) will be a great test of people's faith and battle for survival in those days. Looking ahead a bit, we can foresee that it will take no small struggle to stay free from this worldwide net that is even now being prepared to catch the allegiance of this world's citizens. As God's children who are separate from the world, we should avoid getting entangled in this net and instead, be *"victorious over the beast and his image and over the number"*. (Revelation 15:2)

At this point it should be understood that multitudes will not take the *"mark"* – not because of any religious or moral conviction, but simply because their nation is opposed to the rise of the *Beast*. Revelation 17 speaks of a terrible war between the *"great harlot"* and the *"beast"* (with his *"ten horns"*). (See *Fall of the Great Harlot* series.) Those who are citizens of the *"great harlot"* are less likely to take the *"mark"* of the enemy of their nation, the *"beast".*

This *"harlot"* symbolizes a greedy commercial power whose *"merchants were the great men of the earth"*, by whose *"sorcery all the nations were deceived."* (Revelation 18:23, NKJV) Even though many of her citizens won't take the *"mark"*, nevertheless, they could still be caught up in the pursuit and worship of Materialism, indulging in Mammon-worship. (But instead of calling it Mammon, the Scripture calls it the *666-Number* – what we might think of as a modern expression for the idolization of wealth, the religion of Materialism.)

If this interpretation is correct, then it means the passage is getting across the idea that those who are not *"victorious over the number"*, who indulge in Mammon-worship, even if they haven't taken the *Mark of the Beast*, they won't be able to sing the (victory) *"song of the Lamb".* (Revelation 15:2-3) They won't be able to enjoy the fruits of victory in other words.

The *666-Number* system is already operating worldwide, and there is nothing wrong with using the *Number*. But what counts here is the degree of one's attachment to (worship of) the 666-numbered merchandise. And even if a person hasn't taken the *"mark"*, it is this attitude towards Materialism that will have a great bearing on his or her destiny in the Afterlife.

And perhaps that is what this reference to the *"number of his name"* in Revelation 15:2 is referring to – the worldwide availability of material goods encoded with the *Number 666*, regardless of whether a person is living in a *Beast*-dominated nation, or in one that is not controlled very much by the *Beast*.

In Revelation 14 we learn that *"Babylon* [also called the '*great harlot*'] *is fallen"* at the hands of the Beast and his ten horns (as outlined in Revelation 17). God will allow her to fall and suffer terrible destruction because of her promotion and worship of Materialism (*"because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication"* – 14:8, NKJV). (See this Post to better understand the connection between "fornication" and "Materialism".)

But this is followed by the warning to those who are part of the *Beast's* empire that they too won't escape if they worship the *Beast* through the

***Mark* (which enables them to also worship Materialism). They *"shall <u>also</u> drink of the wine of the wrath of God,"* just as the *Great Harlot* had to. (14:8-10, NKJV) The inhabitants of both empires of *Harlot* and *Beast* are accountable; they just have different guidelines to follow.**

As mentioned before, those who use the *"mark"* will have many advantages: they can avail themselves of the Beast's authority to buy things and be protected from his persecution campaigns. Likewise, those who sell are greatly advantaged if they use the 666 bar-codes; they can sell in all the markets where the official computer POS (point-of-sale) terminals are used.

And this is not just in the future. The 666-encoded barcodes have arrived and become an entrenched feature of modern shopping activity. Already in developed nations, it has become difficult, if not impossible, for any merchant to operate profitably without using the barcodes on their merchandise. And in some nations, where the *"name of the beast"* exercises strong control, it may even become illegal to sell merchandise without using 666-encoded barcodes… because using them makes it easier to enforce the use of the *Mark of the Beast.*

As that system gains more and more control, any entanglement with it at all, even the purchase of a 666-encoded item by cash, check, or even credit card rather than with the *"mark"*, may lead to trouble in some countries. Although using the *"number"* is not synonymous with joining the Beast's system, it does mean participating in it, which, in the future might be risky, depending on the degree of control by the forces of the *Sea* and *Earth Beasts*. (In response to this state of affairs there may well spring up a large underground market in those days.)

When the Mark becomes mandatory, those who refuse it will need to avoid markets where electronic funds transfer is being used; they will have to find other ways of getting their needs – bartering perhaps, growing their own produce, and who knows how God will supply? Buyers who do not take the *Mark* and sellers who do not use the 666-encoded barcodes will be operating outside the official marketing system, distributing goods independently and not in the *"name of the Beast"*.

Although the 666-encoded barcodes are harmless in themselves, they

do seem to play an important role in paving the way for the *Mark of the Beast*. The use of barcodes internationally has opened the door to the "digital world" in the world's marketplaces and planted the technology that could be useful in the future when the *"mark"* comes into more common use. It could very well be that the same Electronic Eye and Point-of-Sale terminals which scan the UPC numbers (barcodes) now can be used also to scan the marks implanted on or in the hands or foreheads of great multitudes of people in the future.

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FOOTNOTE: Revelation 15:2

***"And I saw… those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name."* As mentioned before, some older translations have added the words *"over his mark"*. However, in the original Greek that phrase is not there, and modern versions do not use it in their translations. The emphasis in this Scripture focuses on the *Number* and the role it plays in drawing people away from God.**

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Continue to Part 13 – 666: A Key Sign of the Times