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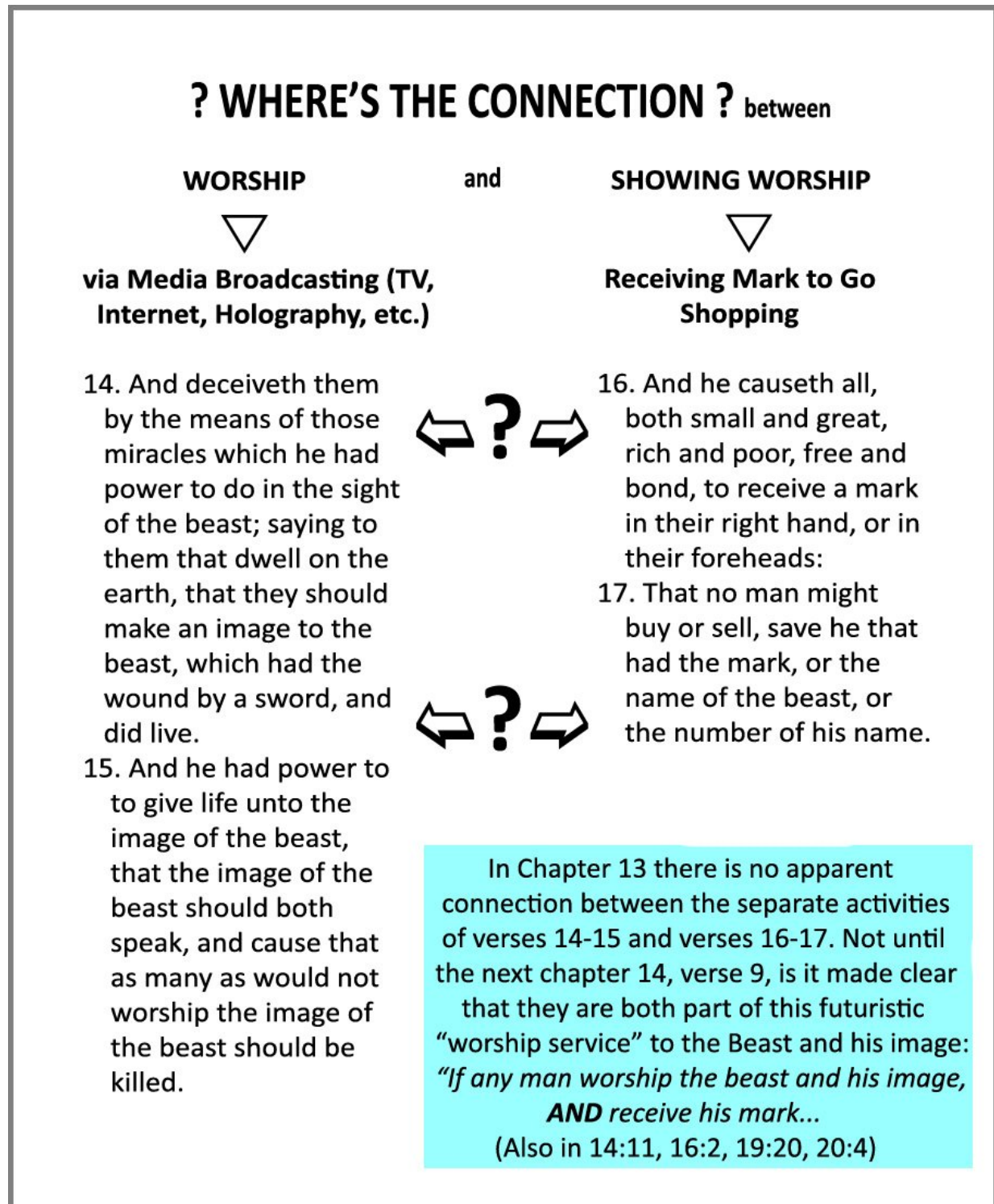
## **5 - Modern Secular Worship Service**

Prior to these Scriptures we are studying now about the “*mark*”, the Revelation 13 passage depicts this Earth-Beast in a “religious” way: “*He causeth the earth. . . to worship the first beast*”; “*he doeth great wonders*”; he deceives the world “*by means of those miracles*” done “*in the sight of the beast*” by which he is able to create a living, speaking “*image of the beast*”; and this seems to be how he “*causes the earth to worship the first beast*” (the Antichrist), through this image that the modern world will worship. And for these reasons, the Earth-Beast is later called the “*false prophet*”. (13:12-15, 19:20, 20:10 - KJV)

Then right after those Scriptures comes the passage about how the False Prophet, this supreme “religious” figure, “*causes all... to receive a mark*” to use for buying and selling. (13:16, NKJV) Now why would a religious figure be so concerned about how the world’s economic system is being organized? Has the passage of Scripture veered inexplicably out of the “religious” realm into the “economic” realm? Or is it just a case of the world’s economic system getting swallowed up into the religious realm? If so, then this “*mark*” should have a lot to do with worshipping the Beast, as a catalyst for the world’s future new “religion”.

But the “*mark*” is needed for shopping, so we might wonder, what does it have to do with worshipping the Beast (Antichrist)? Well, nothing in a way. And that is exactly how the initial description in Revelation 13 portrays it. The modern worship

system was so different to what the apostle knew that he is not able to connect the two activities of worshiping the beast and receiving the mark.



**The “mark” is part of the world’s buying and selling activities and is separate from the activity of being in the presence of the Antichrist (via his “image”). This peculiar, modern form of worship is reflected in Revelation 13:14-17. No connection is made between the appearance of the “image” and of the “mark”. Why? Because being in the hallowed presence of the Antichrist is not directly connected to the act of receiving the “mark” (whereas in olden days, being in the hallowed presence of a demagogue or idol or sacred spot and bowing to it are simultaneous activities.) In the following chapter 14, an angel clarifies what was not made plain in chapter 13 when he declares, “*If any man worship the beast and his image, AND receive his mark*”, thereby showing that receiving the mark is part of the worship service to the Beast.**

And what is so different about this new religion that John is trying to describe? In the old days idolatry was common and was based largely on superstition, the exaggerated belief in supernatural agency. Modern scientific understanding has debunked superstition and has even gone to the extreme of casting doubt on the existence of any kind of supernatural reality.

To take the place of past religious practice, new secular “religions” have come to the fore. The modern world has seen this in the demagoguery that characterized Hitler Germany and communist regimes. The secular “religion” practiced in these states was a modernized version of the ancient practice of emperor worship.

And in the near future, the world will again worship an emperor, the Antichrist and his living “image” (broadcast into every corner of the world) with as much devotion as would someone in ancient times bowing before his idol. And they will receive the computer-implant “mark” in their forehead or hand, just as any new devotee would undergo an initiation rite of some kind to become part of a certain tribe or religion.

So, although the people of modern times don’t view what they’re doing from any kind of “religious” viewpoint, from a spiritual viewpoint that was just how it looked to the Apostle John - a new religion that would feature worshiping the Beast through his image and the receiving of a strange “mark” that would enable people to carry on their buying and selling activities. Even now, the modern world is in the beginning stages of getting caught up in this secular religious system. And the False Prophet Beast will be the guiding genius behind it.

Although the Revelation 13 passage portrays the Earth-Beast as having great

spiritual influence in the earth, the final verses 16-18 reveal that this Beast also wields great power in the economic sphere. Like the other “*beasts*” in the Bible, he is the head of a major empire in the world.

From the description in Revelation 13:11-18, we can deduce that much of the world’s financial power, media power, and computer surveillance systems will have fallen into the hands of this peculiar Beast of modern times. And it is because of this temporal power that he is able to guide and control the world in a “religious” way also. (More on this subject in the posts [“Economic Superpower: The New Beast”](#) and [“Earth Beast: False Prophet and Money Master”](#) and [“Background History, Clay-Earth Bloc”](#))

Perhaps it was easier for the Apostle to understand and relate to the False Prophet Beast’s activities from a “religious” angle. John could not have understood nor explained the modern system of finances, media broadcasting, or computer surveillance in our technical terms. Since none of that existed in his day, John’s description has a bit of a spin to it, ascribing magical powers to the earth-beast for things that in reality are based more on advanced technology than anything else.

And we should remember that in this Revelation 13 passage, it is not Jesus or an angel speaking; it is only John the apostle’s observations of what he saw in vision - observations about modern technology that were filtered through the lens of his 1<sup>st</sup> century viewpoint and a culture steeped in idolatrous forms of worship.

But it is this Beast’s control over modern technology that will enable him to guide the world in a spiritual way. And because of his spiritual power, John rightfully uses the label “*false prophet*” to distinguish this Earth-Beast from the other Sea-Beast who is generally known as the “Antichrist”. From John’s point of view, the term “False Prophet” gave an accurate enough description. But this can be a bit tricky for us now - centuries later in a secular culture - to understand how it applies.

Still, it is not that difficult to detect the modern reality of what he saw in vision. For example, if the False Prophet “*forced everyone... to receive a mark... so that no one could buy or sell*”, then we can take it to mean that this “religious” figure has access to vast storehouses of wealth, which enables him to control the world’s computer surveillance systems.

Another example is the “*mark*” itself. The Apostle used a term that would define



it as the work of some kind of sharp tool such as that used for engraving idols; in other words, a sort of self-mutilation. Such practices have often formed an integral part of religious rites through the centuries, e.g. circumcision in Judaism and Islam, skin piercings and other such things that go on in tribal and other religions.

So the modern reality, if we understand it correctly, will be similar in some ways - the injection of a needle (and computer chip) into the skin. And as in tribal societies, where members can be recognized by the marks they bear or by the ornaments they wear, so in the Beast's "tribe" its members can be recognized by their "*mark of the beast*".

**Masonic Initiation  
Ritual**



**Young Hindu Devotee**

**African Tribal Initiation**



So the mark serves, not only as an efficient way to provide financial organization for the world's huge population, but receiving it will also be an act of submission or

**allegiance to the Beast, a peculiar non-religious form of initiation rite nicely suited for a secular, scientific age.**

Now it helps to understand that getting initiated into a tribe or religion entails more than just allegiance to a particular god or gods. It also identifies someone as a member of that tribe or religion, plus enables that person to enjoy the social and economic benefits that that particular society is able to provide. Similarly, taking the mark is a sign of a person's allegiance to the Antichrist (or worship of him), and it also identifies him or her as a *bona fide* member of his system, one who may enjoy the social and economic benefits that system can provide.

And as happens in a lot of religions who go to great lengths to keep their followers, this peculiar system of financial enslavement will make an easy way for the Antichrist and False Prophet to keep their followers; the desire to maintain their livelihood will push great numbers of people to show allegiance to the new regime and the Antichrist through the initiation ritual of getting "marked".

We might compare this to the old days of communism; Soviet citizens were expected to profess belief in atheism, and the incentive to do so (for anyone who didn't like the new regime and its "religion") came in the form of being maligned, deprived of economic opportunity, jailed, or even executed.

It is because of this "religious" significance of the mark that the warning is made rather strongly in the next chapter against receiving it: *"If any one worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury..."* (14:9-10) For those conscientious persons who wish to keep their hearts right with God, this passage serves to guide and warn them which is the better path to follow, difficult as it may be.

Even without this passage, by the time the "*mark of the beast*" arrives, the world will be aware of what it stands for. Through the media, the Antichrist's blasphemous speech and actions will bring him forward as a strong symbol of someone who defies the true God. (See Revelation 13:5-6, 2Thessalonians 2:4, Daniel 7:25, 8:12, 9:27, 11:31,36.) When people decide to receive the "*mark, which is the name of the beast*", they'll know they're deciding against God because of this great awareness of what the Antichrist stands for.

At present it is not altogether clear how it will transpire, but somehow the act of receiving the mark will mean a conscious turning away from God; it's not as if

people are merely tricked into it or will take it unknowingly. Otherwise, the “*mark*” would not serve any religious purpose, and receiving it would be no cause for negative consequences in the Afterlife.

Now, regarding this warning message in Revelation 14:9-11, it is interesting to note that receiving the “*mark*” is ranked along with worshiping “*the beast and his image*” as being worthy of condemnation in the Afterlife. Why? Because the “*mark*” is an integral part of the worship service of the Beast. The one cannot do without the other. Whenever one is mentioned, the other has to be mentioned as well. They’re like two sides of the same coin: Worshiping the Beast means receiving the mark; and conversely, you wouldn’t receive the mark unless you worshiped the Beast.

However, there may be an in-between category of people who in their hearts don’t worship the Beast but take the mark out of economic necessity or other reasons. This would be true of Christians who have at some point in their lives come to Christ but, because of a weakened faith, cannot overcome the pressure to compromise at this time. (Again, for more information on this issue, see [Appendix 1 in a Post](#) from a different series about what goes on in the Afterlife.)

Christ promised, “*the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*” (John 6:37, NKJV) These “in-between” folks will not be cast out of the Kingdom of God. But they will probably have to endure something called “*shame and everlasting contempt*”. This is spoken of in Daniel 12:2 about the First Resurrection.

The apostle Paul once stated, “*If any man builds on this foundation [of Christ] using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*” (1Corinthians 3:12-15) This and other statements in the New Testament make it plain that those who have come to Christ shall have a judgment, and, yes, may experience a troubling time of correction, yet will at the same time be blessed to have a place in the Kingdom of God.

And for those who are outright enemies of God - who not only receive the “*mark*” but worship in their hearts - they are thrust out into the Lake of Fire to be “*tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and. . . the*

***Lamb. . . forever and ever***". (Revelation 14:10-11, NKJV) The wording here sounds a little drastic, and indeed, it is a mistranslation.

Rather than the "*tormented... forever and ever*" version, a better translation would get across the understanding that these souls, instead of enjoying a place in the Kingdom of God in the Age to come, will land, either in *Hades* (the Realm of the Dead) or in the *Lake of Fire* - there to be purged and tried, not just for the sake of punishment, but for the purpose of bringing them to repentance and if they so choose, back into God's favor. (Refer to [Post C-4](#) and [C-5](#) in the study titled "Hell in Heaven? Heaven in Hell?" for more information.)

To conclude, this "*mark*" system seems to answer the question of how will the world "*worship*" the Antichrist in this secular age. Worship, of course, is a spiritual thing, but usually in any religion, there is some outward, physical way of showing that worship. In ancient times it would have been easy to picture this as some form of physically bowing to a demagogue or his image.

But the secular world of today does not practice that custom any more. When we understand, however, that initiation rites are also a form of worship, that makes it easier to conceive of how "*worship*" can take place in this modern age. A new ritual will take over as the outward show of worship - that of receiving the "*mark*".

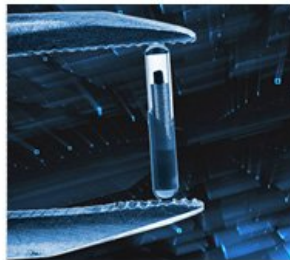




The old way



The New Way



This is easily understood if we look at how the Bible uses the word *“worship”*. Whenever this word comes up, if there’s an additional phrase, it is always *“fall down”* or *“bow down”* before the Lord or the idol, the altar, the person, sacred spot, or whatever it is. That was the customary way to show worship in ancient times.

But what do we see in the *Revelation Book*? Since it’s about modern times, the worship style is portrayed differently. Here is our clue. Whenever the phrase *“worship the beast”* or *“worship his image”* comes up, it is accompanied by the phrase *“receive the mark”* (instead of *“fall down”* or *“bow down”*).

Receiving the mark then is the outward show required in this modern day form of *“worship”*. Most of the *Revelation Book* is set in modern times, and this is one of those peculiar phrases in it that alludes to the future historical reality. And because it will be lauded as a *“scientific”* advancement, the *“religious”* act of receiving the mark will appeal more easily to the people of modern times.

### **In Ancient Times:**

**“WORSHIP”**

accompanied by

**“FALL DOWN” or “BOW DOWN”**

***“All this I will give you,” he [Satan] said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”***

**(Matthew 4:9)**

**Enter the hallowed presence of a respected person or divine being or sacred spot,**

**and you**

**IMMEDIATELY**

***“bow down”***

**to show your worship**

**In Modern Times:**

**“WORSHIP (beast/image)”**

accompanied by

**“RECEIVE THE MARK”**

***“If any one worships the beast and his image and receives his mark...” (Revelation 14:9; also 14:11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4)***

**Enter the hallowed presence of the Antichrist, whether in person or while viewing his broadcasted image (via TV, Internet, holographic image, etc.), and you**

**AFTERWARDS**

***“receive the mark”***

**to show your worship**

There is another clue to show that the “mark” is part of a religious system, and it is found in the phrase the “*mark of the [first] beast*”. How is that? Well, why call it the mark of anything? Why does it have to be linked with the Antichrist-Beast at all? By rights it should be the mark of the False Prophet since he’s the one behind it.

But it’s the Antichrist and his (broadcasted) image who are the objects of worship. And the False Prophet works hard to promote that worship. “*He causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast.*” (13:12, NKJV) Rather than set up the new economic system of the “mark” under the False Prophet’s name, it will be more advantageous to use the Antichrist’s name and to design the system in a way that will drive the world into making a religious commitment (to the Antichrist).

The Antichrist is the one whom the world naturally fears and adulates, or

worships. In the eyes of the world, he's the great and mighty king. But the False Prophet, who is also quite powerful, maneuvers and pulls the strings from behind the scenes. As far as the Devil is concerned, it is advantageous to attach the Antichrist's name to the new "*mark*" system.

For one thing, the world is going to be a lot more afraid or worshipful of him, the "*first beast*", than of the False Prophet, and this is an enticement in itself. He is the great victor in the war against the *Harlot* empire. So the world will accept the Antichrist as their new savior and protector. And as mentioned above, they will perceive him as one who defies the ways of the true God. But many will quickly forget what he stands for when it becomes a question of having no more livelihood or of suffering other forms of persecution.

So then, considering all these factors, who better to promote as the object of worship than this "*first beast*" of Revelation 13, who is known as the Antichrist? And that's why the "*mark*" is called the "*mark of the [first] beast*", rather than the mark of something or someone else. Even though it may seem out of place in this section about the False Prophet's activities, it is very much in line with the Devil's purpose of creating a big counterfeit religion for the world to follow.

And thus, the Devil inspires his False Prophet Beast to set up the world's new economic system in such a way (in the name of the Antichrist) that it will drive people to undergo this peculiar initiation rite. And that will make them, not only part of his world system, but will commit them to stand against any kind of worship of God.

Of the Antichrist, the apostle Paul stated that "*he will oppose and exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped.*" (2Thessalonians 2:4) Along with the False Prophet and the Devil, the Antichrist doesn't want any belief system around that cannot be controlled or made to cave in to their new anti-God religion. So this "*mark*" system will serve their purpose of causing much of the world to give up their own religious beliefs, whatever they may be, while ensnaring them into the worship of materialism and anti-God demagoguery.

**[Continue to Part 6 - Surveillance and Persecution](#)**