1 – Introduction
2 – How in the World will the World Ever Accept Being "Marked"?
3 – From the Ancient Point of View
4 – *"Mark"* Counterfeits *"Seal"*
5 – Modern Secular Worship Service
6 – Surveillance and Persecution
7 – What's in a Name?
8 – Ancient Business Model and Today's
9 – Birth of the Barcode
10 – Re-calibrating Revelation 13:17-18
11 – The Riddle of 666
12 – Symbolic Significance of the *"Number"*
13 – 666: A Key Sign of the Times
14 – Conclusion

*

10 – Re-calibrating Revelation 13:17-18

Before going any further, it will help to do a little fine-tuning of the last two verses in Revelation 13. First, let us look at

Revelation 13:17
(NIV) *So that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.*
(The Message Bible) *Without the mark of the name of the Beast or the number of its name, it was impossible to buy or sell anything.*

In Post 3, we learned that in verse 17, there is a certain amount of misunderstanding due to a mis-translation in older Bible versions: *"the mark OR the name of the beast, OR the number of his name."* (NKJV) Too many *"or"* words. The literal and correct translation: *"the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name."* No word "or" between the words *"mark"* and *"name".*

So, a useful translation might be,

The mark, which is the name of the beast (NIV, 1984 edition)
The mark, that is, the name of the beast (RSV, ESV)

The mark, (even) the name of the beast (ASV)
The mark, the name of the beast (WEB, Darby)
The mark, which is the beast's name (ISV)
The mark of the name of The Beast (Aramaic Bible in Plain English)
The brand, which is the beast's name (GW)

It is a minor mistranslation in some Bible versions to add some undue emphasis to the *"name"* by inserting the word "or" between "mark" and "name":

***"the mark, OR the name of the beast, OR the number of his name"* (KJV).**

That makes it sound as if there are three aspects to a commercial exchange when there should be only two (buyer and seller). The result? Too much emphasis is attached to the *"name of the beast"*.

Elsewhere in the King James Version are similar phrases, translated without inserting the word "or". For example, *"the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem".* (Revelation 3:12) In addition, in Revelation 14:11 there is the phrase *"mark <u>of his name</u>"*, showing that the *"name"* belongs to the *"mark"* and should not be treated as something separate from the *"mark".* (There is a reason why translators in the past tended to favor the "mark-or-name" translation rather than the "mark-which-is-the-name" translation, and that will be discussed further on.)

To give a down-to-earth illustration about this, imagine the following conversation about the workers coming soon to paint the inside of the house:

"Who's at the door?"
"It's either the plasterer, whose name is Jo Blo, or the painter."

Expressed this way, it is obvious there are only two possibilities: either the plasterer or the painter is standing at the door; the plasterer just happens to have the name Joe Blo.

But if you say,

"The plasterer or Jo Blo or the painter,"

then it sounds as if there are three possibilities. And that is confusing, and inaccurate, for there are only two people at the door. Undue emphasis is attached to "Jo Blo", as if he is an extra person, when really "Jo Blo" is just the name of the plasterer.

But this is what's happened in the older translations of Revelation 13:17 – *"no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark OR the name of the beast, OR the number of his name."* (NKJV) It puts undue emphasis on the *"name of the beast".*

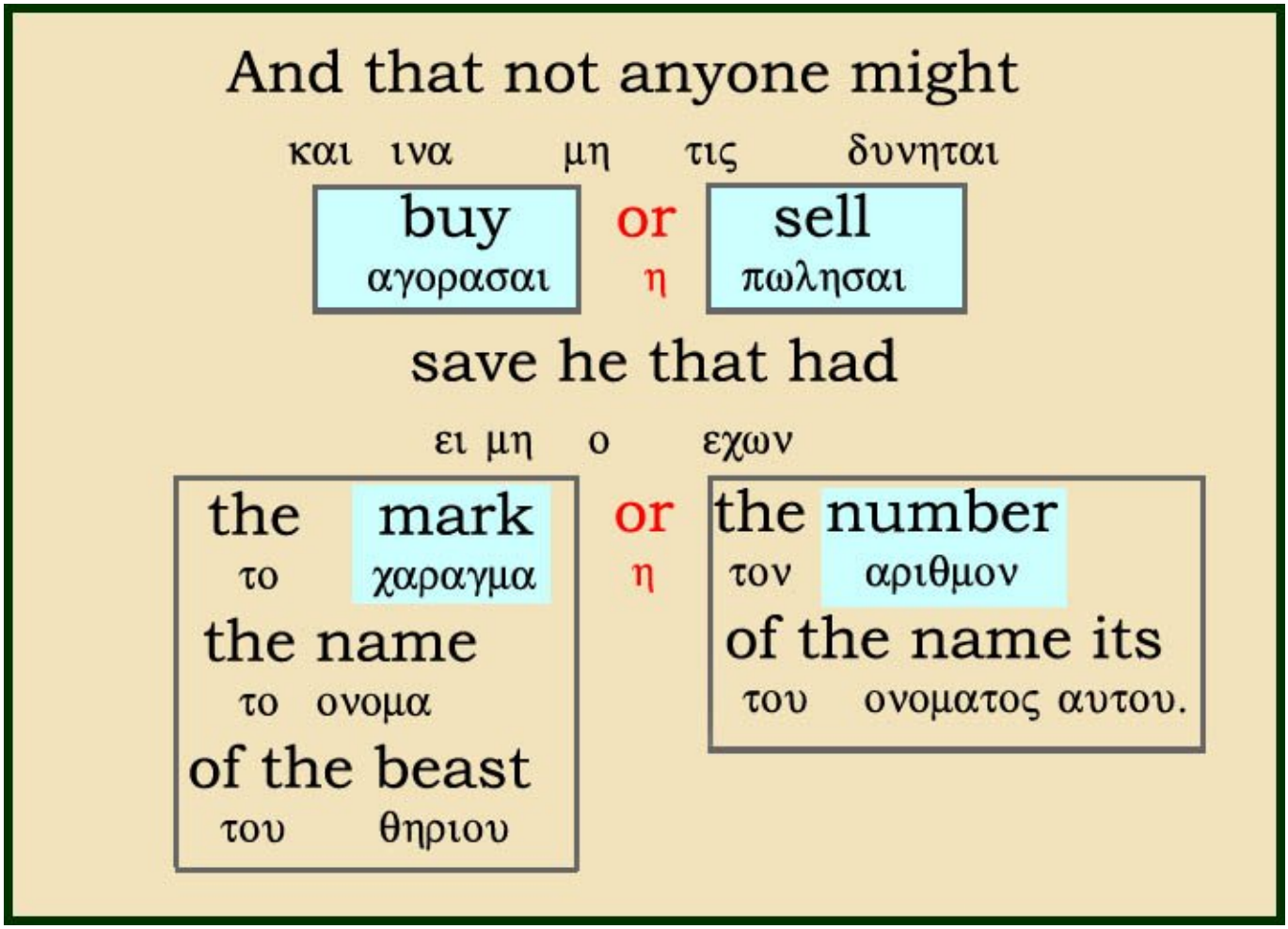
Both plasterer and painter are needed to do a proper job of finishing the walls of a house. Likewise, commercial exchanges require the presence of only two people: buyer and seller.

In verse 17 the *Mark* is identified as the *"name of the beast".* The *Number*, however, is not really identified – except that it is said to be *"the number of his name* [the Antichrist's power, authority, and influence]"*.* In the next verse 18, the identification becomes more explicit: the number is *666.* In days of old, no one could see any connection between a *666 Number* and commercial exchanges, so translators were tempted to emphasize something that seemed to make more sense – such as finding a *666* numerological equivalent for the Beast's *"name"*. (And that could be why translators put too much emphasis on the *"name of the beast"*.) But today, we can find a connection to *666* in the world of commercial exchange. (That is a big subject covered already in the previous Post 9: "Birth of the Barcode".)

Furthermore, the *Number* is identified as *"man's number".* It is a variation of the number 6. (Man was created on the 6th day of the Creation week.) So, the *Number* belongs in the domain of human beings, in the earthly domain. *"The mark, which is the name of the beast"* also belongs in the earthly domain. The *Beast's* power and authority does not exist in the Heavenly Domain. And this is made clear, by way of contrast, in the next chapter: God's "camera" zooms in on those in the Heavenly Domain who have God's "mark" – His *"name written on their foreheads"* (14:1). Like the *Mark,* the *Number* truly is *"man's number"* and belongs in the earthly domain.

So now, with a more accurate translation, a certain parallel structure

becomes evident, and this will make it easier to understand how the words *Mark* and *Number* apply to the future (and present day) commercial system. The first part of the verse has the phrase *"buy or sell"*, and this parallels the phrase *"mark… or… number"* in the second part of the verse.



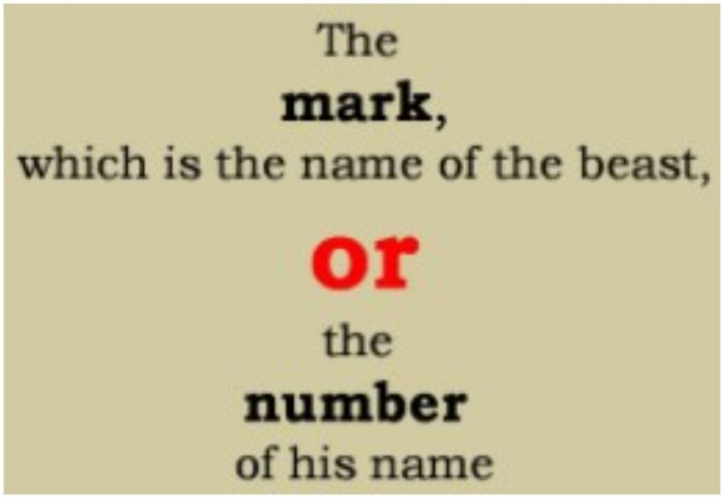
A literal translation from the Greek of Revelation 13:17 reveals the parallel structure between BUY-or-SELL and MARK-or-NUMBER

In commercial exchanges, a person is either buying or selling, meaning he/she is using either the *"mark"* or the *"number"*. Depending on what their part in the exchange is, they're using one or the other, not both at the same time.

Of course, if you're buying with the *Mark*, it is likely that the seller will be using the *Number*, and vice-versa. But strictly speaking, the buyer only needs to have the *Mark*, and the seller only needs to use the *Number*. So

the passage is saying that *"mark or number"* corresponds with *"buy or sell"*.

So, if you want to
BUY or SELL
Then use the
MARK or NUMBER
Or to put it another way:
"No man might BUY, save he that had the mark, which is the name of the beast,
OR
no man might SELL, save he that had the number of its name."



Two Basic Components in the Commercial System

In previous sections, we considered how the *"mark"*, because it is the *"name of the beast"*, will allow the masses to avail themselves of many benefits and privileges. But what about the number 666? It is called the *"number of its name"* in 13:17 and so must have something to do with the *"name"* (the power and authority) of the Beast… but to a lesser extent it would seem. So what does it do for a person, and how does it tie in with the *"name of the beast"*?

Regarding the *"mark"*, we generally understand that it works like a credit card; it can be used in the buying side of commercial transactions. What is not so clear, though, is how the *"mark"* could be used for selling. If you had to, let's say, have the *"mark"* for both sides of the exchange, then it would have been worded "buy and sell".

Of course, in the new system a seller may not be able to sell to anyone who does not have the *"mark"*. But otherwise, it doesn't appear to be directly connected to the selling side of commercial transactions. No need

then to conflate the functions of *Mark* and *Number*; each is a different and separate operation in any monetary exchange.

Regarding the 666-number, unlike the *"mark"*, it is not found on people's hands or foreheads. Instead, it is stamped on all the material goods that those who have the *"mark"* are entitled to buy.

As mentioned before, the bar codes used by marketers on all their goods and products have been encoded with the 666-number. And that *Number* is needed in the selling side of commercial transactions, while the *Mark* is needed for buying. Both buyer and seller make use of the *Number*, of course. But the onus is on the seller to have the *"number"* available. Likewise for the *Mark*, the onus will be on the buyer to have the *"mark"*.

***

Secondly, we shall look at

Revelation 13:18
(NIV) 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.*
(The Message Bible) Solve *a riddle: Put your heads together and figure out the meaning of the number of the Beast. It's a human number: 666.*

Now regarding verse 18, many translations use the phrase *"number of a man"* instead of *"man's number".* The phrase *"number of a man"* suggests that it is the number of a particular man (like the Antichrist), but more likely it should refer to humankind in general. In the New Testament the Greek word used here – *anthropos* – usually refers to *"man"* in a general sense: humankind, men and women, etc.

This is especially true in the Book of Revelation. Of the 22 other times that *anthropos* appears, it is always used in the general sense. Even in phrases like *"a man"*, the idea is that no particular man is intended, e.g. Revelation 4:7 – *"face like a man"*, or 21:17 (KJV) – *"measure of a man"*. In these examples, the term *"a man"* is talking about the appearance or size of men and women in general.

Anyway, this translation (*"number of a man"*) found in many Bibles has

given rise to much speculation about the numeralogy of the Antichrist's name. But probably, we should avoid the temptation to get too specific in this way about the name of the Antichrist.

Of course, the phrase used in verse 17 – *"the number of his name"* – suggests that the Antichrist, or his system at least, has some kind of numeralogical connection with the number 666. This is possible, but it should be kept in mind that the word *"name"* refers in this case, not to a specific name, but to something more nebulous or vague, namely, the *Beast's* domain of influence, power, and authority – the earthly realm in other words.

In the ancient Greek and Hebrew alphabets, there were no special symbols for numbers; instead, the letters of the alphabet were used for that purpose. And it was common, especially among the Jewish people, to represent a person's name with a number, according to how the sum of the letters of his name would add up. So it is not surprising to see this custom coming to the surface here in this verse 18.

As a result of this practice, early Bible scholars were convinced that the *"beast"* was Rome because the words "Latin kingdom" and the name of the emperor Nero in Greek added up to 666. Later on at the time of the Reformation, the designation of Latin kingdom was transferred on to the Catholic Church and the Pope.

Translators were likely influenced by the prevailing historical milieu, and it wouldn't be surprising if they tended to favor certain wordings, such as *"number of a man"* instead of *"man's number"*. Especially among Protestants, such a translation would more easily implicate the Pope in the role of the Antichrist.

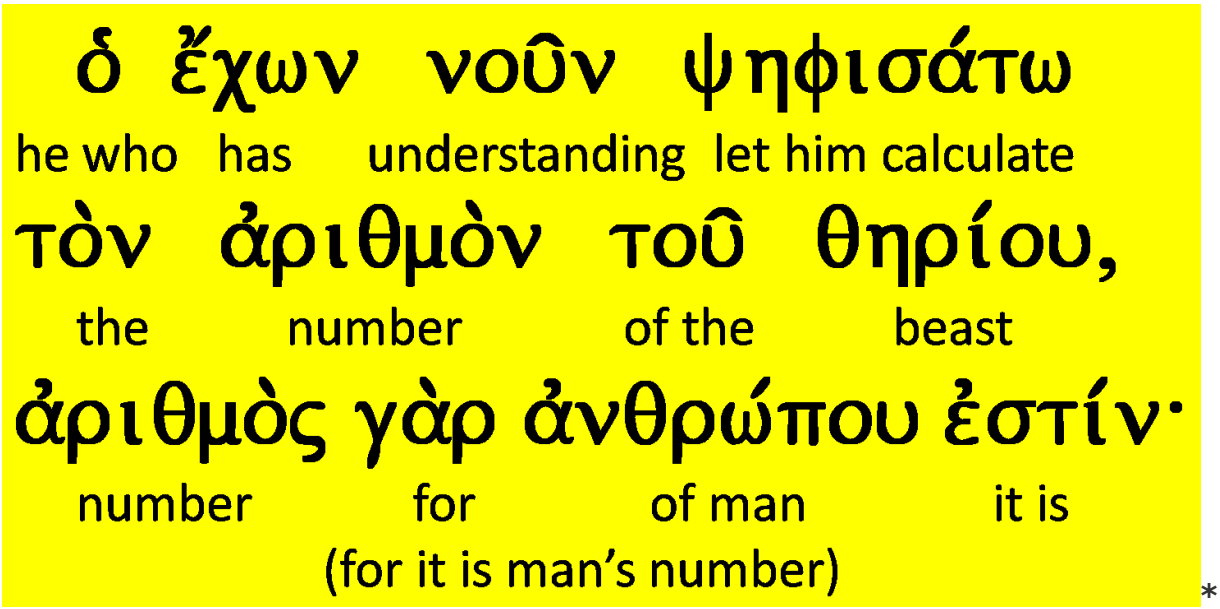
Well, that's an old doctrine that might have held some relevance in bygone days, especially during the days of the Catholic Inquisition. But in today's world, it would not be possible for the Vatican to conquer the world by force of arms or by financial means. It should be easy enough to see that the ultimate fulfillment of the Antichrist won't have anything to do with today's peace-loving Popes who, even if they wanted to, would not have the kind of temporal power needed for such worldly conquests.

So, all that to say, we don't want to continue laboring under this old conception, or misconception, and the resulting translation, allowing it to influence our understanding of what this verse means.

Certain translations do give what is probably, in this case at least, a more accurate version of Revelation 13:18 than the KJV translators were able to:

> ***"it is a human number."* (RSV, GW, MSG, NOG, LEB)**
> ***"it is man's number"* (NIV-1984, NET, French Louis II)**
> ***"it is the number of man"* (WYC)**

In ancient Greek grammar construction, definite articles (the word for "the" in English) were used a great deal. For example, in a sentence like, "Mark was the apostle of God", the literal translation into Greek would be, "The Mark was the apostle of the God." So if a word (a noun) in Greek did not have a definite article before it, then it was definitely indefinite. And in verse 18 there is no definite article before the words *"number"* and *"man"*, and so the better translation would be *"man's number"* or *"number of man"* or *"human number"*..



*

CONCLUSION:

Revelation 13:16-18 (from The Message: the Bible in Contemporary Language)

> **16.** ***It forced all people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark on the right hand or forehead.***
> **17.** ***Without the mark of the name of the Beast or the number of its name, it was impossible to buy or sell anything.***
> **18.** ***Solve a riddle: Put your heads together and figure out the meaning of the number of the Beast. It's a human number: 666.***

The newer Bible (above) offers a more accurate translation of those key verses in Revelation 13. The trouble with some of the older translations: too much emphasis placed on the name of the Beast. Rather than "the mark or the name of the beast", it should be "mark which is the name of the beast". Then you have a parallel construction: "mark or number" which corresponds to "buy or sell" in the previous verse. And it limits the meaning of the number to commercial transactions (the seller's side).

Then in verse 18 the translation should be "it's a human number" or "it is man's number". That means it's not a specific person and avoids a good deal of numeralogical speculation about the Antichrist's name.

*

Continue to Part 11 – The Riddle of 666