



## **On the Hand and Forehead**

### **A sign on your hand and frontals on your forehead**

In Matthew 22, a lawyer asked Jesus: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus answered:

*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)*

Jesus could not have made His yoke any easier to understand. He summarized the law in only two points. This can also be seen in Deuteronomy and Exodus:

*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)*  
*You shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt. (Exodus 13:8-9)*

*You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. (Deuteronomy 10:18)*

The law Jesus referred to is as a sign on our hand. “Sign” (owth) implies a sign, a signal, a token (Strong’s H226). It also is a mark on the forehead, a headband as a sign (towphaphah, Strong’s H2903). We have to consider this to have been meant figuratively, as an image of our continual vigilance in observing God’s commandments. It symbolizes a way of looking at things, a lifestyle, actions and a matter of perspective that are aligned with God’s mindset. Thinking the way God thinks and doing what God does. That’s when we have God’s law on

our hand and on our forehead. Later, many rabbis applied this literally. This custom was introduced after the Babylonian captivity, when people started wearing head- and armbands. Jesus told the Pharisees:

*But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. (Matthew 23:5-9)*

A phylactery (phylakterion) is a small strip of parchment on which were written the following passages of the law of Moses: Exodus 13:1-10; 11-16, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These strips were enclosed in small cases and fastened by a leather strap to the forehead when engaged in prayer (Strong's G5440). The Pharisees made theirs larger in order to be more noticeable.

The same figure of speech is also used in Ezekiel 8, which describes the atrocities in the temple. Idols were worshiped and images of detestable things were carved on the walls. Elders of Israel, men with authority, were committing acts that couldn't bear the light. The land was filled with violence and the Lord was being provoked. However there were also those who mourned about and were oppressed by these abominations. They received a mark on their forehead to protect them:

*The Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." (Ezekiel 9:4-6)*

### **It starts with us**

They had to start in the sanctuary. This has a spiritual meaning and I believe it also refers to our time:

*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?  
(1 Peter 4:17)*

God starts in the sanctuary, in the church, with us. Keeping the above-mentioned passages in mind, I also contemplated what the book of Revelation might have to say about this. It also discusses how God puts a seal on people. This is a spiritual matter.

What does it mean to have that sign, that protective mark of God on one's forehead? It's about a mindset that's being developed and that has developed according to the heart of God. A spiritual, not a carnal mindset. Then God's law is "on your forehead". To have a way of doing, a way of looking at things, a lifestyle that comes out of the heart of God.

*Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads. (Revelation 7:3)*

The harm referred to here is the judgment in the house of God. God purifies His sanctuary of every carnal thought. He protects everything that has brought forth good seed and He destroys everything the enemy has sown in our hearts, in His church. He is separating the wheat from the tares in the Kingdom of God. He ultimately destroys everything that isn't good in His Kingdom (Matthew 13:41-42).

### **The number of the beast**

Let us also consider the meaning of the mark of the beast. According to Revelation 13, it has to do with a number of a man, which is 666:

*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. (Revelation 13:18)*

This should be interpreted figuratively. The number six represents the natural man, the flesh. The number three symbolizes resurrection and fullness. The number 666 therefore represents the resurrection of a fulfilled carnal mindset. The number six is also the most incomplete of all, as it always is one short of the number seven, which represents perfection. The number six also refers to sex in Latin, from which we derive the word "sexuality". In this context, it refers to spiritual poverty, impurity, uncleanness and unfaithfulness to our marriage covenant with God.

Whoever is marked with 666 represents someone who is unwilling to allow his/her mindset to be submitted to and developed according to the heart of God. It's a carnal and not a spiritual mindset. God's law is yet to be put on your hand and forehead, if at all. Your lifestyle, your way of doing things, your perspective, none of it will then be originating out of the heart of God.

Such a carnal mindset offers a different perspective. 2 Thessalonians describes those who rejected love for the truth and who take pleasure in unrighteousness:

*For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)*

We also read about people in the church who deny their carnal mindset:

*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)*

This isn't about people who don't know Jesus, but about the carnal church that only appears to have godly fruit to make it look good. Of course we must realize that we all have a measure of mixed seed in us, seed sown by the enemy in the darkness. This happened throughout history and it's still happening today, whenever we don't stay near the heart of God. However, when there is love for the truth, for the Word of God, if we strive for righteousness and are willing to change, God will lead us to places and processes that will cause us to look more like Him.

Hence, there can be a manifestation of carnal thoughts in everyone, but that doesn't have to mean that everyone will have 666 on their forehead or on their hand. We will go from glory to glory if our hearts are right. That was Paul's heart for the Galatians, when he wrote:

*My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—  
(Galatians 4:19)*

God begins in the sanctuary, in the church, with us. Judgment begins in the house of God. It's about having a right heart. We don't have to fear the mark of the beast if the focus of our heart is correct. The mark of the Beast cannot be where the mark of God is.

### **Buying and selling**

*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. (Revelation 13:16-17)*

This passage has caused much fear in the hearts of many, and even if it isn't fear, it still keeps many Christians preoccupied. Where will this happen? What will it be like? Should we do something about it politically? What repression awaits us if we refuse the mark?

A number of issues have come along in the past that used to be troubling, but that no longer are cause for concern. I recall how scared many people were when debit and credit cards were introduced. Then we had bar codes on the products we bought in stores. Nowadays, very many people have a mobile telephone which can be traced virtually anywhere in the world. Some believe that these are developments leading towards a system that the antichrist will use to control us.

Unlike many, I don't believe that the number 666 will become visible in the literal sense of the word, e.g. by means of a microchip that can be installed in the human body, nor is it something that will only become visible in the future. In fact, it's been around since the beginning of the church. It's already happening and has long been visible because it originates from the heart of man, and the church is made up of people. It originates from a deep source, a person's heart. It's a spiritual issue. However, God will bring all these issues of the heart to the light. He will remove all that isn't good and purify our hearts. The religious system is being broken down and Jesus is building the church, a church that will be spotless and without wrinkle.

A natural interpretation of the mark 666 with a natural manifestation, such as microchips, could very well be one of Satan's tactics to divert our attention and blind us from seeing what's really going on. If so, where should our focus be? Paul said:

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)*

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

What does it mean that it won't be possible to buy or sell anymore? Again, this is symbolic language that requires a spiritual interpretation. I do not believe that it means that there will be a guard at the store who will check the mark I'm wearing and determine whether or not I'm allowed to buy groceries. Why should we interpret this literally while giving a figurative interpretation to another passage that also deals with buying and selling?

*Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your*

*nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.  
(Revelation 3:17-18)*

Doesn't this passage also use the same "prophetic language"? Here we see a parallel with Revelation 13:16-17. Nobody takes this passage literally because it deals with spiritual concepts. Both passages need to be interpreted figuratively. In that sense, Jesus neither is a goldsmith or a chemist. Although it's nice having gold in the literal sense of the word, it refers to the purity of His glory, white clothes imply purity and clarity and we need eye salve to see what it's all about, to be able to discern spiritually and to have a revelation of Jesus. He recommends that the church should "buy" these things from Him. Hence, this "buying" isn't meant literally.

This can also be seen in the parable of the prudent and foolish virgins. Although their purchase is meant literally, because it's a parable, the foolish virgins' purchase of oil still clearly refers to spiritual matters (Matthew 25:9-10). The oil symbolizes Holy Spirit. More can be said about buying and selling and that it's certainly a spiritual matter:

*Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.  
(Proverbs 23:23)*

Buying and selling is terminology from the commercial world. Doing business in a pure way may indeed become more difficult as our relationship with Jesus increases. We're then talking about justice, righteousness and honesty. It's Jesus' lifestyle that should become visible in us. Hence, there will also be commercial practices in the business world that we will no longer be able to entertain.

Revelation 13:16-17 evidently requires a figurative interpretation. It's about our lifestyle. It's about a confrontation with the religious system and its corruption. Our way of living will become more and more limited in the religious system as we increasingly see more of how some abuse the body of Christ for their own benefit. Leaders who are only concerned with their own pockets and who have an improper way of shearing sheep, while forgetting that they are sheep themselves. Church organizations and people who are often more impressed by numbers and programs rather than the will of God. To them it's more about the size of the ministry than about the sheep themselves. There is an increase in deception, manipulation and impurity to accomplish goals and many believe that it's justified by their position, by who they are. It will become ever more difficult to relate to, to buy from and to sell to such people. This system will no longer be able to be a haven to those unwilling to wear the mark of the beast.

The Bible also teaches that the image of the beast will speak (Revelation 13:15). This is also meant figuratively. Words will be uttered to deceive people. False prophets will imprint all sorts of images on people's minds that are deceptive and that are egocentric in nature, a worldly prosperity and a carnal message. It's the lie that teaches that you can be in charge of

your own life, according to your own will, and still be able to please God. Those who don't worship this image or join this mindset will die. They will have to die to themselves and their ungodly mindset will perish. This group of people will not wear the sign of the beast, but they'll wear the mark of God. Unfortunately, this doesn't mean that people couldn't literally die as martyrs.

Those who wear the mark of God will go from glory to glory, from victory to victory. They aren't paralyzed by a fear of the future, but they will take refuge in Christ. They will overcome because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they won't love their life even when faced with death (Revelation 12:11). These are the people who are always willing to die to the flesh and thereby also experience Jesus' resurrection power throughout their lives.

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