

666: The Number of Antichrist

By Rich Jacobs, MD

*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. 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 13:15–18***

*So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. **Revelation 16:2***

*And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. **Revelation 19:20***

1. The “mark of the beast” is thought to be associated with Antichrist. Scripture tells us several things about this mark.
 - a. People who receive this mark are deceived into believing the Beast is God.
 - i. Paul says people are deceived because God sends a “*deluding influence*” on them because they “*did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*” (2 **Thessalonians 2:10–12**) The Greek word translated “*deluding*” is *planai* (πλάνη), which means “wandering or straying.”
 - ii. This “deluding influence” is administered by the “false prophet”, who testifies that Antichrist is God, performing miracles to validate his testimony.
 - b. The mark of the beast is required for everyone who lives in the final Beast Kingdom, regardless of social, political, or financial standing.
 - c. The mark is received on the forehead and/or on the right hand. These represent areas of the body the easily can be seen.
 - i. The mark of the beast signifies a covenant relationship between each person and Antichrist
 - ii. The word for the “mark” in Greek is *charagma* (χάραγμα), referring to an image made by man, often used to refer to idols of gold, silver, or stone (See **Acts 17:29**) The mark may be a “confirmation mark” representing those who are inducted into the new “false church” as the “lamb beast” is also a beast, possibly representing an organization of people, and not just a single person. Also see **Revelation 14:9**.
 - iii. The mark of the beast is the Satanic copy of God’s mark on the foreheads of each Jew from the remnant of Israel. God marks this

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remnant at the time of the rapture of the living Church. **Ezekiel 9:4; Revelation 7:3–8.**

- d. The mark is receive by those who worship the image of the Beast.
 - i. Everyone in Antichrist’s kingdom will be required to worship this image, by law, or face persecution and execution.
 - ii. The mark may be received at the time of worship, thus verifying that the one who bears it has worshipped Antichrist/Satan and has sworn loyalty to him. Later, everyone who receives this mark is judged by God with loathsome and malignant sores -- perhaps on the very places where the mark was placed.
 - iii. The mark will become necessary for all commercial transactions. No one will be able to buy or sell anything without this mark. It literally controls the point of sale.
2. The mark of the beast is a mystery at this time. This mystery will be understood in time by those who have “wisdom” (Greek: σοφία). This suggests that God will make this wisdom known to end-times believers who love the truth.
 - a. The mark consists of either “*the name of the beast*” or “*the number of his name*”
 - b. The number of the beast’s name is six hundred and sixty-six, written in Greek as ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, which is pronounced “Hexakosioi Hexekonta Hex”.
 - i. According to **Revelation 13:18**, the number (666) is arrived at by “calculation”. Most theologians believe this means that the Greek letters of the beast’s name add up to or spell out the number 666.
 - ii. In **Revelation**, the Greek word used for “calculate” is “psaephizo” (ψηφίζω), which Thayer says means “to count with pebbles”.
 - (a) This word traces it origin to the ancient Greek courts of justice where the accused were condemned by black pebbles and acquitted by white pebbles. In fact, this Greek verb comes from the noun “psaepfos” (ψηφος), which is a smooth stone or pebble.
 - (b) This may be a divine play on words that indicates the one who accepts this number/name has “chosen their stone”, or cast their vote for who is God.
 - iii. The 666 is the number for a man, according **Revelation**.
 3. Theories of what 666 means.
 - a. The Gematria Theory
 - i. Gematria is an ancient Assyro-Babylonian system of numerology that was adopted by the Jews between the 8th and 5th centuries BC. Words with similar numerical value were felt to have similar meanings.

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- ii. Although Gematria is a Hebrew practice and term, some scholars assert the Greeks also embraced this idea and from this came the Greek word “geometria”, from whence we get the word, “geometry”.
- iii. In both Hebrew and Greek, there are no independent symbols to represent numbers. Instead, letters of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets also represent numbers. (See **TABLES ONE** and **TWO**, below)

TABLE ONE: Hebrew Letters As Numbers

Hebrew Letter	Hebrew Name	English Letter	Numeric Value	Hebrew Letter	Hebrew Name	English Letter	Numeric Value
א	aleph	silent (x)	1 or 1000	ל	lamed	low	30
ב	bet	boy	2	מ, מ׳	mem	mike	40
ג	gimel	god	3	נ, נ׳	nun	naw	50
ד	deled	dog	4	ס	samech	sam	60
ה	heh	hi	5	ע	ayin	silent	70
ו	vov	very, up	6	פ, פ׳	pey	pef, phone	80
ז	zayin	zebra	7	צ, צ׳	tzadi	nets	90
ח	ches	bach	8	ק	kuf	q, kit	100
ט	tes	test	9	ר	reish	race	200
י	yod	you	10	ש	shin	sam, shem	300
כ, ך׳	chof	kit	20	ת	tof	teet	400

Letter final form	Hebrew Name	Numeric Value
ך	final chof	500
ם	final mem	600
ן	final nun	700
ף	final pey	800
ץ	final tzadi	900

*final form is form of letter found when it occurs at the end of a word.

TABLE TWO: Greek Letter As Numbers

Greek Letter	Greek Name	English Letter	Numeric Value	Greek Letter	Greek Name	English Letter	Numeric Value
A,a	alpha	father	1	Ν,ν	nu	new	50
B,b	beta	boy	2	Χ,χ	xi	box	60
Γ,γ	gamma	god	3	Ο,ο	omikron	off	70
Δ,δ	delta	dog	4	Ρ,ρ	pi	pet	80
Ε,ε	epsilon	end	5		rho	rat	100
			6 is sigma, v final form	Σ,σ,Ϛ	sigma	sam (s,v)	6, 200
Ζ,ζ	zeta	zebra	7	Τ,τ	tau	test	300
Η,η	eta	hey	8	Υ,υ	upsilon	up	400
Θ,θ	theta	thick (t)	9	Φ,φ	phi	phone (f)	500
Ι,ι	iota	it	10	Χ,χ	chi	bach	600
Κ,κ	kappa	kit	20	Ψ,ψ	psi	cups (y)	700
Λ,λ	lamda	low	30				800
Μ,μ	mu	mike	40	Ω,ω	omega	orange (w)	900 = sampsi

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iv. In Gematria, the number values of the letters are often added to calculate the number of the word. Using this system, many people have tried to discover the name of the Antichrist through various elaborate letter–word substitutions.

(a) Here is a calculation that asserts that Nero was Antichrist.

Nero's name in Greek (*Kaiser Neron*) represented by Hebrew letters (*qsr nrwn*), which also function as numbers

q = 60
s = 100
r = 200
n = 50
w = 6

qsr nrwn (60 + 100 + 200 + 50 + 200 + 6 + 50) = 666

(b) Here is a calculation that asserts that the Pope is Antichrist.

***Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God) represented by letters, which also function as numbers**

V = 5
I = 1
C = 100
A = 0
R = 0
I = 1
V = 5
S = 0

F = 0
I = 1
L = 50
I = 1
I = 1

D = 500
E = 0
I = 1

Vicarius Filii Dei (112 + 53 + 501) = 666

(c) Calculations for about every prominent world leader's name, from Adolf Hitler to Ringo Star, have been contrived to equal 666 at one time or another. This seems to be one of the principal problems with this theory.

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- b. The Symbolism Theory
 - i. This theory begins by acknowledging that **Revelation** is a very symbolic book.
 - ii. Since man was created on the 6th day by God, the theory begins by embracing the idea that “6” is the number of a man.
 - iii. Since the trinity of God can be represent by the number “3”, the theory asserts that **Revelation** is merely trying to say the beast is a man (represented by 6) who is pretending to be God (represented by a “trinity” of 6’s).
 - iv. Problems with this theory may include the fact that **Revelation** seem to be using this number more literally, by stating this mark will be required to buy or sell – it is not just symbolic. Also, this theory seems to ignore the fact that the mark is also the number of a man’s name.
- c. The Universal Product Bar Code Theory
 - i. This theory focuses on how the “number’ of his name could be used in controlling buying and selling at the point of sale.
 - ii. It first arose in the mid-1970’s, when eschatology books became popular Christian reading.
 - iii. This theory asserts that the present universal product code, or some derivative that may even involve implanted computer chips, is the mark of the beast. An image of a typical UPC bar code is shown below (**FIGURE 1**).

FIGURE 1: Typical Universal Product Bar Code



- (a) The UPC bar code assigns numbers to good and services. Each number is represented by a bar symbol. Items of property, documents, and other items can be tagged using this UPC bar code. Theoretically, people could also be marked with the UPC bar code. A computer is used to scan the bar code to identify the item, catalogue it, assess it, or manipulate it in some way.
- (b) Notice that the number “6” is represented by two single lines, side by side. All UPC bar codes seem to begin with a 6 and end in a 6. The third 6 seems to divide the bar code in half. The

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front part of the code identifies the manufacturer. The last half of the code identifies the item. UPC bar codes have “people friendly” symbols and “computer friendly” symbols, allowing them to be read by man and machine.

(c) From this, some assert that 666 is present in all UPC bar codes. Since any object or transaction can be tracked and controlled using the UPC bar code, many conclude this is the mark of the beast.

(d) Problems with this theory may include, but are not limited to the follow:

- The double lines that begin, end, and divide the bar code in half are really brackets and not numbers
- This theory doesn't seem to “calculate” anything, but merely relies on the presence what appears to be three 6's..
- Its hard to see how the UPC bar code can be the number of a man's name.

d. The Symbols–Letters–Numbers Theory

i. This theory assumes that John wrote what he actually saw and described it in a way that all ancient Greek–speaking people would understand. According to this theory, John saw symbols that could mean something else, but were also Greek letters representing 666. An example of these symbols/letters/numbers is seen in this image of 666 (ϠΞϚ) from **Revelation** from a 3rd Century AD manuscript (**FIGURE 2**).

FIGURE 2: 3rd Century AD Bible Manuscript Showing 666 in Revelation



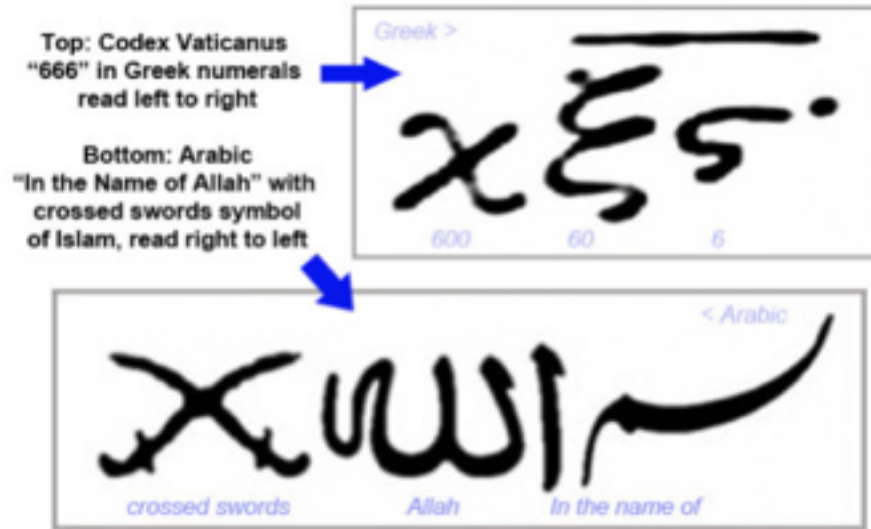
ii. This theory targets Islam as the final Beast Empire that will dominate end–times history. With this in mind, proponents of this

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theory see 666 in words and symbols that, in Arabic, mean “in the name of Allah” (See **Figure 3**).

FIGURE 3: Similarities Between the Greek Symbols for 666 and the Arabic Words and Symbols “In the Name of Allah”



- iii. To support the notion that Islam is the final beast empire, proponents of this theory assert that
 - (a) Islam is overtly anti-Christian and anti-Israel,
 - (b) Muslim nations all claim Jerusalem as a Muslim city and religious center which they must possess,
 - (c) the modern Middle Eastern Muslim nations descend from ancient peoples that God condemns in prophecy for their hatred of Israel (**Isaiah 34, 35; Ezekiel 25-28; 30-32, Obadiah, etc.**)
 - (d) many radical Muslim elements are determined to eradicate the nation of Israel,
 - (e) united as one “kingdom”, these Muslim nations make up a region that approximates the Eastern Roman Empire – something one would expect from Daniel’s prophecy (**Daniel 2:19-43**) and from the “beast composition” of **Revelation 13:2**,
 - (f) given the internecine disputes between Muslim factions, one would expect these Muslim nations to come together for a common purpose but not adhere together, like the iron and clay toes of Daniel’s prophetic statue (**Daniel 2:42**),
 - (g) radical proponents of Islam continue to force others into embracing their religion or face beheading; the tribulation martyrs of Revelation will be beheaded for their faith in Christ (**Revelation 6:9; 20:4**),

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- (h) Islamic theology asserts that Jesus was not crucified and is not God – a heresy the Bible calls “antichrist” (**1 John 2:18;22, 23**).
- (i) Islamic eschatology is consistent with the idea that an Islamic caliphate empire will be united under a Messiah-like Mahdi who will compel conversion of Christians and Jews to Islam on pain of death.
- iv. Problems with this theory include
 - a) The Arabic characters must be rotated or repositioned to more accurately resemble the Greek letter-numbers of 666
 - b) It is unclear how this symbol is a man’s name since Allah is the Muslim name for God, not a man.

Perhaps portions of all these theories is correct in some way. Until God gives us more wisdom about this mysterious number-name, we must keep an open mind to what it is. When this wisdom is ours, the final days may be upon us and our Savior may be close at hand. Maranatha, Lord Jesus!

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