



Someone told me there's a place in the book of Revelation that says people will be forced to get a special identifying mark and without it they won't be able to buy or sell. They told me this is one of the signs that the end of the world is coming. Is that true? (And is it true that there are plans in our country to do that)?

The simple answer - at least to the first question - is, "Yes. That is true. There is a passage in Revelation about an identifying mark needed to conduct transactions" The passage being referred to is in Revelation 13:16-17

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, [17] so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

"He" refers to the second "beast" referred to in Revelation. This "beast" represents false religious teachings and teachers. It may refer to a specific person who promotes a specific religion. Just prior to the passage above we read: (Rev. 13:15)

He was given power ... and cause all who refused to worship the image (of the first beast - a political "beast") to be killed.

The book of Revelation was written to Christians some 50-60 years after Christ had ascended to heaven. The Christians at that time were undergoing great persecution by the Roman government under emperor Domitian. The Roman government at that time did indeed force people to worship an image of Caesar Domitian (who claimed to be the incarnation of God). There is also evidence that people at that time were forced to have some kind of identifying mark in order to carry on business.

As to the question of our own government planning to force everyone to have some kind of identifying mark in order to conduct transactions, well.... there's been lots of speculation, rumors and conspiracy theories.

The remainder of this article contains the "scoop" from the website <http://www.truthorfiction.com> about a recent email rumor that's been going around since April about our government planning to force us to have an identifying mark.

The email is long narrative by a woman who went through a hassle trying to get a California driver's license after moving there from Alaska. She says she was told by the Department of Motor Vehicles in California that everyone is going to have to have a Federal ID Number which will be implanted under the skin of the left hand and that nothing can be transacted with the government without it.

As to the "Federal ID #":

Legislation was passed in the U.S. Congress under what was called the REAL ID act and sought to establish minimum standards for driver's licenses and identification cards that would be acceptable by Federal Agencies. The legislation prohibits Federal Agencies from accepting IDs for any official purposes that have not been issued based on the requirements of the act... The Department of Homeland Security

says this is not a "National ID Card." It is simply an attempt to establish common standards for states to issue licenses and identification cards. The licenses will be issued from each state, not the Federal government.

About the implant:

The part of the email rumor that says a number will be required under the skin of your left hand may have been prompted by questions about whether some of the states may want to embed what are called RFID devices in the drivers licenses. RFID stands for "radio frequency identification" and refers to small, inexpensive chips that are increasingly used for a variety of things including identifying products in stores. It's a high-tech electronic substitute for bar codes. An RFID chip doesn't require a battery and merely needs to be passed near a special device to be read. RFID devices have also been implanted into animals for identification purposes and there is some use of RFID devices being implanted in humans for the same reason.

This has led to another email rumor...

...which claims that the chip can be implanted into people's bodies and that the two best places for it are the right hand or the head. The story hearkens to a Biblical passage in the book of Revelation that describes "The Mark of the Beast," a system in which buying and selling can take place only with the approval of a world ruler who requires his mark to be on the right hand or forehead of every living person.

While the thought of having implanted chips seems to provide a lot of good things such as information for medical emergencies, tracking missing persons, and making purchases simpler, there are a lot of concerns to be overcome. One is security. How secure would your chip be from people you don't want reading it?

The conspiracy theorists do have a point: Systems that have been enacted by governments for one purpose could be used for other, less honorable purposes.

Does all of this have Biblical significance. It could if governments decided to adopt the technology and make it mandatory. At present, it's commercial and voluntary. But it's always good to be reminded that a "Mark of the Beast" type system isn't dependent on technology and could be implemented using something as simple as tattoos.

That's quite a lengthy answer to the question(s). But hopefully it helped to clear up at least a couple of things. If you are interested in more of what the Bible says in the book of Revelation - AND how it impacts your life today - please join us on Wednesdays @ 11:30 for our Revelation study. (If you can't attend at that time, but would like to study Revelation, I'm open to starting a second class in the evenings if there's interest in that.)

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to <mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net>