

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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Covid and the Mark of the Beast



In the last couple of weeks, a number of people have called me asking about Covid and the mark of the beast. There are a number of videos and articles online that are claiming that the vaccine for Covid is the mark of the beast. I have looked at some of these and would like to set the record straight on this.

Whether you ought to get the vaccine or not is not the point of this article. I am not a doctor. I don't even play a doctor on TV. I am not qualified to give medical advice, and neither are most of your friends and acquaintances.

Each of us should make our own decision about whether to be vaccinated based on the best information that is available. It is true that there is a lot of medical misinformation out there. It is also true that it is difficult to know what information is valid and what is misleading or even completely wrong.

This article is not about the medical information or misinformation. It is about the spiritual misinformation that is being spread.

Here are some reasons that I do not believe the Covid vaccine is the mark of the Beast.

First, this is just another in a long line of things that have been called "the mark of the beast".

Time has proven most of these to be wrong. I remember a conversation I had with a young man in 1996. He was absolutely convinced that the beast was a supercomputer in Jamaica that was going to control the world in a short time from then. Nothing I said could dissuade him from this notion. Now, 25 years later, it should be obvious that this was not correct.

Back when I was an undergraduate college student in the mid-1980s, I remember reading a magazine article about how anybody's name could be made into the number 666. For some names the method was more complicated than for others. Nevertheless, it could be done with any name you chose. The article used names that were current in the news then as examples. Ronald Reagan was among the more notable names. I think time has demonstrated that Reagan was not the beast, either.

At one time people thought the Social Security system was the beast and Social Security cards were the mark of the beast. I can remember people saying the same thing about credit cards when I was a young boy. Some men probably agreed after getting their wife's credit card bill. Still, that notion has also gone by the wayside with the passage of time.

The Seventh Day Adventists believe that Sunday worship is the mark of the beast. This is absurd and completely fails to square with the practice of the Church in the New Testament or the teaching of the New Testament. Further, it denies the universal record of Church history which shows that the Church has always met for worship on the first day of the week, which is also called "the Lord's Day" or "Sunday".

As John J. Davis put it in his book *Biblical Numerology*, "Any sort of identification for the Anti-Christ is possible if one tries hard enough. I recalled noticing the fact that I was born in 1936. When the factors of 36 are totaled, we have 666! This discovery was made in room 36 of a hotel in Chicago on July 6 (exactly 36 days from June 1)! The implications of these numbers are staggering."

Second, depending on what video you watch, or who you talk to, the so-called proof that the vaccine is the mark of the beast differs.

One man told me, even before there was any vaccine for it, that Covid was the mark of the beast. He explained that this was true because in social distancing they recommended that you stay 6 feet away from other people, not 7 and not 5, but 6. I'm not sure what happened to the other 660 feet he needs to get to 666. Further, it made me glad that I am not 6 feet tall. If I were, he might think I was the beast.

I saw one video that claimed the word "covid" would prove it if you removed

the vowels. Removing the vowels was justified because Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament do not contain the vowels in the name of God.

There are a number of problems with this approach. For one thing, the number of the beast is given in Revelation, which was written in Greek, not Hebrew. Further, removing the vowels from "Covid" leaves us with "Cvd". What number might that represent? The video suggests that we take it as a number in Roman numerals.

In Roman numerals, "C" represents 100, "V" represents 5, and "D" represents 500. Never mind that these are all capital letters in Roman numerals, but only the "C" is capitalized in "Covid".

Only once Roman numerals began to be used in English were they ever written in lowercase. How shall we read this number in Roman numerals? If we simply add up the values, we get 605. That obviously is not 666. But that is not how you would write 605 in Roman numerals anyway. You would write 605 as "DCV". Remember that position is important in Roman numerals. The same letters in a different order can be different numbers. For example, "IV" is the number 4, but "VI" is the number 6. We can play with the order of the letters to make different numbers, but none of them add up to 666 which would be written as "DCLXVI".

Another video suggested that we keep the "i" since that is used in Roman numerals but leave out the "o" since it is not a Roman numeral. Roman numerals had no symbol for zero. Once again, this doesn't lead to any representation of the number 666. No matter how you arrange the letters, you don't get 666 and you certainly don't get "DCLXVI".

Not to be deterred by these failures, another video had the supposed solution to these problems. They suggested that we use the fuller name of the virus and start with "Covid-19". The letters "Cvid" taken are Roman

numerals adding up to 606. Since this is not 666, they have to do some more work. Since "o" is not used as a Roman numeral, they take the ASCII code of it that a computer would use to represent "o" which they say is 79. That brings their total to 685. This still is not 666 but they are not done calculating yet. From there they take the dash as a minus sign and subtract the final 19 to get...you guessed it, 666. This whole procedure only goes to prove the old adage, "figures don't lie, but liars figure".

The first problem is that the ASCII value for "o" is not 79, it is 111. The ASCII code 79 represents "O", that is a capital, not a lowercase. You might think that the capitalization doesn't matter. Well, if we are going to use ASCII codes it matters a great deal. Capital and lowercase letters are represented by very different codes in ASCII.

But there are more problems here. How did they know to use ASCII for the "o" anyway? Why not count it as a zero? After all, "o" is often mistaken for a zero. How did they know to take the dash as a minus sign? Granted they look alike, but they are actually very different things. If we are going to use computer codes, why not use IBM's EBCDIC? Without going into details, that would yield a hexadecimal number that could then be converted to decimal. That gives us completely new numbers to play around with.

Hopefully this all sounds ridiculous to you. This means you are starting to see my point. How is this any more ridiculous than what the video described? Why would EBCDIC be wrong, and ASCII be right? Who is making the rules and how do we know what they are? It is pretty clear that whoever made this video started with the result they wanted and worked backwards to discover a method that would get them to their desired answer. Again, "figures don't lie, but liars figure".

Third, by now you can surely see that the people who make these videos leap to a lot of unwarranted conclusions.

If I learned anything on my way to a master's degree in math, it is that leaping to conclusions leads to all kinds of errors. Each step of a proof needs to be justified carefully or the conclusion is not valid and cannot be used. The people who make these videos are not justifying any of their steps. Or should I say, leaps?

I am reminded of a cartoon that showed a chalkboard filled with the steps of a mathematical proof. The caption read, "Step 4 needs more explanation". In the picture, step 4 had a note that said, "Then a small miracle occurs". At least that was some justification for that step.

The makers of these videos don't even offer any reason for their steps. Take these letters as Roman numerals. Take the ASCII code for this letter. Take this dash as a minus sign. Take the number 19 just as it is. There seems to be lots of little miracles here.

Fourth, the verses that give us the mark of the beast ought to be looked at a bit more closely.

"17 And that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for **it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred and sixty-six.**" **Revelation 13:17-18 (NKJV)**

The passage plainly says that it is the number of a man. In fact, it is the number of his name. It is not the number of a virus, nor is it the number of a vaccine. Even if it could be shown that the number of the virus is somehow equal to 666, it doesn't satisfy the description of that number in the actual Bible text. Furthermore, how would that make the vaccine, that is designed to prevent the virus, the mark of the beast? Wouldn't that make the virus itself the mark of the beast, not the vaccine? Wouldn't it then be logical that anything that stops the virus is stopping the mark of the beast? Doesn't that make the vaccine something good?

The text is also clear that calculating the number of the beast takes wisdom and understanding. I don't think this is referring to mathematical or computer understanding or wisdom. I think it is referring to spiritual wisdom. Put the verse in context. Understand the symbols being used in the passage.

I am sure that someone will object to what I have said so far by pointing to the push for things like a vaccine passport. In some places you cannot go to restaurants and other public places unless you are fully vaccinated. Others face termination from their jobs unless they comply with the demands of their employers to get fully vaccinated. They will point out that in those without the mark of the beast could not buy or sell in the prophecy of Revelation.

“And that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:17 (NKJV)

I want to begin by saying plainly that I too am disturbed by the push for everyone to be vaccinated or face losing their job or not being able to participate in public life. The government knows that it cannot simply mandate the vaccine at the present time, so they have encouraged corporations to mandate it for their employees and customers.

As I write this article, the government is trying to force companies with more than 100 employees to require their workers to be vaccinated or face heavy fines. That will certainly be challenged in the courts by some companies, but many will likely comply.

This is part of a very disturbing trend that has been going on for quite a while now. When the government cannot accomplish what it wants through the political process, they team up with the corporate world and do it that way, effectively making the corporate world an arm of the government. This has placed way too much power in the hands of corporations and eliminated the voice

of the people. There is simply no direct accountability to the people for such actions.

The list of cultural changes that have been affected this way is too long to list. This unholy marriage between politicians and companies may be the worst form of corporate and government corruption we have seen.

However, there are some things that need to be kept in mind about this.

First, just because one aspect of the prophecy partially fits our situation today does not mean that we are seeing the fulfillment of that prophecy. I remember being accused of hunting in a man's woods without permission when I was a teenager. I had never hunted in that woods, nor have I since. However, he was sure that it was me because I had blonde hair just like whoever had hunted in those woods. The point is that more than one point of identification needs to fit to declare it a match.

Second, just like there were other people with blonde hair who may have hunted in that man's woods, there are other times in history when only certain people could buy and sell. Quite a number of both Popes and civil rulers have forbidden anyone to do any business with non-Catholics. This has happened many times and places before. Why should our experience be what was foretold and not one or more of these events?

Third, if the person who had hunted in that man's woods had a tattoo, brown eyes, was over 6-feet tall, or had any other features that differed from me, clearly it wasn't me in those woods. Similarly, any part of the prophecy that doesn't fit our current situation would demonstrate that the prophecy is not being fulfilled by Covid.

I think the first part of this article indicates that the number simply doesn't fit but there are more details that need to be explained before we could accept Covid as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

1. The passage also says that the mark of the beast would be

received on the right hand or forehead.

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,” Revelation 13:16 (NKJV)

I don't know of any vaccine that is given in the hand or forehead. Some may try to equate the hand with the arm where the vaccine is given. What about those who are vaccinated in their left arms? Do they have the mark of the beast or not?

2. The passage actually talks about two beasts, not just one. Is Covid the first one or the second?
“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.” Revelation 13:11 (NKJV)
3. The first beast was mortally wounded but healed. How does this fit into our current situation?
“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.” Revelation 13:3 (NKJV)
4. The beast performs great signs by which he deceives the people of earth. How does this fit with Covid?
“13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.” Revelation 13:13-14 (NKJV)
5. The second beast causes an image to be made of the first beast and gave breath to it so it could speak. How does that fit with Covid?

“14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, **telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.** 15 **He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak** and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” **Revelation 13:14-15 (NKJV)**

Someone will probably come up with a way to reconcile these details of the prophecy with Covid. The blind can be very clever despite their lack of sight. However, this list could be expanded upon. The point is that all the prophecy, not just one aspect of it, must fit before we can say that it is being fulfilled in Covid.

In referring to questions about the end times, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, **II Thess. 2:2**. He went on to say, “Let no one deceive you”, **II Thess. 2:3**. I would echo the words of Paul to you today. Don’t let anyone deceive you, shake you up, or trouble you with their sophistry and specious arguments. Consider carefully what God has revealed to us in His Word. There will always be those who would twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, **II Pet. 3:16**. Don’t let them destroy you, too.

I am not trying to convince you to be vaccinated. There are a number of reasons why some will not be vaccinated. Some of those reasons are surely legitimate. On the other hand, there are valid reasons for some to be vaccinated. Whether to be vaccinated or not is a decision that ought to be made by individuals, not governments or corporations. It is a decision that ought to be made primarily on medical concerns. It is not a decision that should be made based on deeply flawed theology or fearmongering.

No matter what you decide about the vaccine, rest assured that it has nothing to do with the mark of the beast.