



WESTMINSTER

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BAPTIST CHURCH

*Love, Serve, Encounter*





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**TUESDAY NIGHT TEACHING**



# THE RAPTURE



# What is the rapture of the church?

The word rapture does not occur in the Bible. The term comes from a Latin word meaning “a carrying off, a transport, or a snatching away.” The concept of the “carrying off” or the rapture of the church is clearly taught in Scripture.

The rapture of the church is the event in which God “snatches away” all believers from the earth in order to make way for His righteous judgment to be poured out on the earth during the tribulation period.

The rapture is described primarily in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54. God will resurrect all believers who have died, give them glorified bodies, and take them from the earth, along with all living believers, who will also be given glorified bodies at that time.

**“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).**



The rapture will involve an instantaneous transformation of our bodies to fit us for eternity.

“We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

The rapture is to be distinguished from **the second coming**. At the rapture, the Lord comes “in the clouds” to meet us “in the air” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

At the second coming, the Lord *descends all the way to the earth to stand on the Mount of Olives*, resulting in a great earthquake followed by a defeat of God’s enemies (Zechariah 14:3-4).

*\*7 Years between rapture and second coming according to Daniel*

The doctrine of the rapture was not taught in the Old Testament, which is why Paul calls it a “mystery” now revealed:

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed”

(1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The rapture of the church is a **glorious event** we should all be longing for.

- We will finally be free from sin.
- We will be in God's presence forever.
- The rapture should be a comforting doctrine full of hope;
- God wants us to “encourage each other with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

# When does the Rapture Take Place?

There are several theories or views, but the pre-tribulation view is the most biblically supported and recognized amongst biblical scholars.

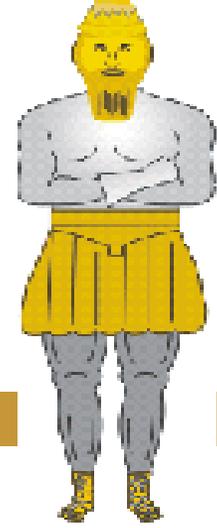
As such, we will focus on that view alone.

We should note that the Bible does not give an explicit time-line concerning future events and scripture does not expressly teach one view over another, and that is why we have diversity of opinion concerning the end times and some variety on how the related prophecies should be harmonized.

Pre-tribulationism is the only theory which clearly maintains the distinction between Israel and the church and God's separate plans for each.

The Book of Daniel however gives us perhaps the best clue regarding timeline of events as it pertains to God's plans for Israel and the Church.

# Timeline of Daniel Chapter 7



The fall of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar

**GENTILE AGE**

Messiah cut off

Pentecost

The second fall of Jerusalem by Rome

Church Age

Israel as a nation again

The Rapture

7 years of Tribulation

**THE MILLENNIUM**

**CHRIST'S REIGN**

Babylon Medo-Persia

Greece

Early Rome

Rome

Revived Rome

Gold Head

Arms of silver

Sides of brass

Legs of iron

Daniel Chapter 2

Ten toes clay and iron

The Stone

The mountain

The Lion

The Bear

The Leopard

The Beast  
Little Horn

A season and a time

**Daniel 7, A Time Line View of the four beasts**

War of Armageddon

It is important to recognize the purpose of the tribulation. According to Daniel 9:27, there is a seventieth “seven” (seven years) that is still yet to come.

Daniel’s entire prophecy of the seventy “sevens” (Daniel 9:20-27) *is speaking of the nation of Israel. It is a time period in which God focuses His attention specifically on Israel.* The seventy “sevens” are decreed upon Daniel’s people (the Jews) and Daniel’s holy city (Jerusalem).

This prophecy makes it plain that the seventieth week (the Tribulation) is a time of purging and restoration for Israel and Jerusalem, not for the church.

The seventy “sevens” of Daniel 9:24 are decreed upon Daniel’s people (the Jews) and Daniel’s holy city (Jerusalem).

This prophecy makes it plain that the seventieth week (the Tribulation) is *a time of purging and restoration for Israel and Jerusalem*, not for the church.

*\*While this does not necessarily indicate that the church could not also be present, it does bring into question why the church would need to be on the earth during that time.*

In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, Paul says, “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The book of Revelation, which deals primarily with the time period of the tribulation, is *a prophetic message of how God’s will pour out His wrath upon the earth during the tribulation.*

It seems inconsistent for God to promise believers that they will not suffer wrath and then leave them on the earth to suffer through the wrath of the tribulation.

Another crucial passage on the timing of the rapture is Revelation 3:10, in which Christ promises to deliver believers from the *“hour of trial”* that is going to come upon the earth.

This could mean two things. Either Christ will protect believers in the midst of the trials, or He will deliver believers out of the trials. Both are valid meanings of the Greek word translated “from.”

It is important to recognize however, *what believers are promised to be kept from*. It is not just the trial, but the *“hour” of trial*.

Christ is promising to keep believers from the very time period that contains the trials, namely the tribulation.

The purpose of the tribulation, the purpose of the rapture, the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:9, and the interpretation of Revelation 3:10 all give clear support to the pre-tribulational position.

If the Bible is interpreted literally and consistently, the pre-tribulational position is the most biblically-based interpretation.

All that being said, it is important to understand that there will obviously be saints in the Tribulation (Revelation 13:7, 20:9). How is this so?

There is a distinction between the saints of the Old Testament and the saints of the Tribulation from the church of the New Testament.

Although people will still come to know Christ after the rapture, all those who trust Jesus before the rapture will be taken to be with the Lord.

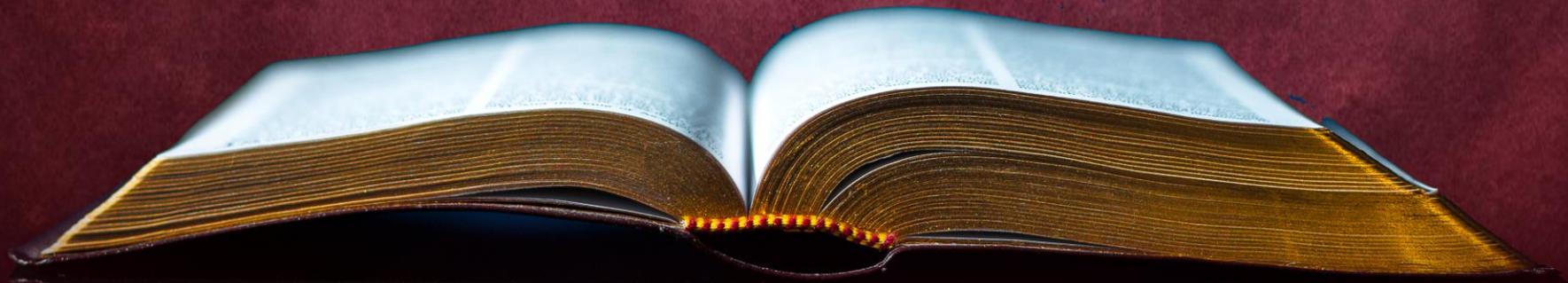


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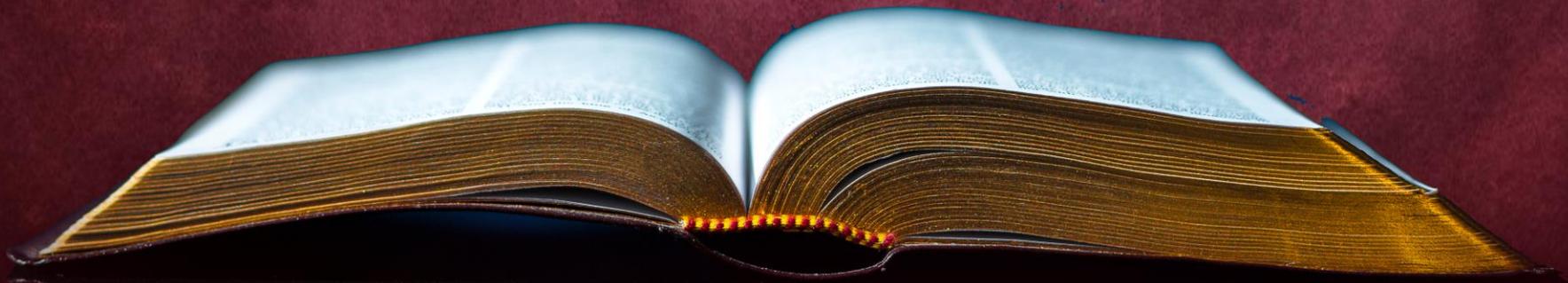
**TUESDAY NIGHT TEACHING**



WHAT IS THE  
MARK OF  
THE BEAST?

## *Revelations 13:15-18 (ESV)*

**15** And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.



**16 Also it causes all, both small  
and great, both rich and poor,  
both free and slave, to be marked  
on the right hand or the forehead,**



**17 so that no one can buy or sell  
unless he has the mark, that is,  
the name of the beast or the  
number of its name.**



**18 This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.**



- This mark acts as a seal for the followers of Antichrist and the false prophet (the spokesperson for the Antichrist).
- The false prophet (the second beast) is the one who causes people to take this mark.
- The mark is literally placed in the hand or forehead and is not simply a card someone carries.

The recent breakthroughs in medical implant chip and RFID technologies have increased interest in the mark of the beast spoken of in Revelation chapter 13. It is possible that the technology we are seeing today represents *the beginning stages* of what may eventually be used as the mark of the beast. It is important to realize *that a medical implant chip is not the mark of the beast.*

The mark of the beast will be something given *only to those who worship the Antichrist.* Having a medical or financial microchip inserted into your right hand or forehead is not the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast will be an end-times identification required by the Antichrist in order to buy or sell, and it will be given only to those who worship the Antichrist.

"WHAT  
HAPPENS IF  
YOU TAKE  
THE MARK  
OF THE  
BEAST?  
WHAT  
HAPPENS IF  
YOU DON'T?"



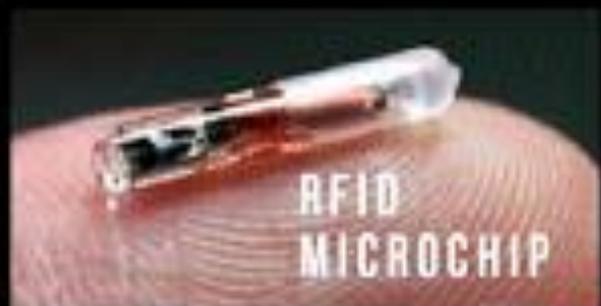
**REVELATION**

# WHAT IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

## MARK OF THE BEAST

### *RFID Implant and the Cashless Society*

Revelation 13:16-17 KJV  
- And he causeth all,  
both small and great,  
rich and poor, free and  
bond, to receive a mark  
in their right hand, or in  
their foreheads: And that  
no man might buy or  
sell, save he that had the  
mark, or the name of the  
beast, or the number of  
his name.



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pen nib. The pen nib is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is a glowing, blue-tinted image of the Earth, representing the globe. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**REALLY?**

**Is this the  
Mark of  
the Beast?**

Many good expositors of Revelation differ widely as to the exact nature of the mark of the beast. Besides the implanted chip view, other speculations include an ID card, a microchip, a barcode that is tattooed into the skin, or **simply a mark** that identifies someone as being faithful to the Antichrist's kingdom. This last view requires the least speculation, since it does not add any more information to what the Bible gives us. In other words, any of these things are possible, but at the same time they are all speculations. We should not spend a lot of time speculating on the precise details.

The meaning of 666 is a mystery as well. Some speculated that there was a connection to June 6, 2006—06/06/06. However, in Revelation chapter 13, the number 666 **identifies a person**, not a date.

Revelation 13:18 tells us, “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.” Somehow, the number 666 will identify the Antichrist. For centuries Bible interpreters have been trying to identify certain individuals with 666. Nothing is conclusive. That is why Revelation 13:18 says the number requires wisdom. When the Antichrist is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), it will be clear who he is and how the number 666 identifies him.

**3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.**



## Is it possible for a person to get the mark of the beast today?

Some people fear that they have already taken the mark of the beast. That they may have blasphemed God at some point or made some impulsive statement of allegiance to the Antichrist. They may worry about the chip in their credit card. Others have been told that their act of worshiping the Lord on Sunday instead of the Sabbath constitutes accepting the mark of the beast.

There is one significant reason why it is impossible to get the mark of the beast now: **The mark of the beast does not exist yet.**

A literal reading of Revelation and other end-times prophecy in the Bible shows that there is a schedule for the end-times events. Daniel prophesied of seventy weeks (seventy sets of seven years) that mark the time of God's interaction with **Israel**. Sixty-nine of those weeks have passed since Daniel's writing. The final week will be what we call the **tribulation**, which is when the Antichrist, or the beast, will rise to power. This ruler will join together ten nations (Daniel 7:24-25; Revelation 17:7) and make a deceptive treaty with Israel (Daniel 9). **The mark of the beast cannot exist until the beast himself is in power during the tribulation.**

Another reason believers in Jesus Christ should not fear getting the mark of the beast at the present moment is the **rapture of the church**.

In the rapture, Jesus will take all believers, living and dead, from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

Although people will still come to know Christ after the rapture, all those who trust Jesus before the rapture will be taken to be with the Lord. According to **pre-tribulationism**, believers who live in the church age will never have an opportunity to receive the mark of the beast.

So, there is nothing anyone can do today to get, take, or receive the mark of the beast. Implanted chips, bar codes, tattoos, blaspheming, saying out loud, “I follow the Antichrist and accept the mark of the beast”—none of these will give you the mark of the beast. **The mark of the beast cannot exist without the “beast,” or the Antichrist demanding it.**