
***THE MARK OF
THE BEAST***

Pastor Bankie

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

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THE AIM

I want to start by letting you know that I am not trying to tell you what the mark of the beast would look like or when it will come. My aim in this teaching is to help you see what it is not, what it is not likely to be, and why you should not at all worry about it as if you can take it by accident without knowing you did.

I want you to understand that following the Lord is not about a single mark. If you have been living for Him as a lifestyle, and your heart is His totally, then in whichever form the mark might come when the time comes, you will not take it. If however you have not been living for the Lord, if you do not love Him with all your heart but have only been a Christian of convenience, going to church but living in sin, then if the beast comes to you, introduces himself and shows you his mark, you will still take it when the pressure comes. God does not leave salvation to a game of chance.

The young Hebrew men did not decide to worship the Lord their God just on the day Nebuchadnezzar came up with his image. They did not suddenly develop that

boldness when it was time to die for their faith. Remember that these were the boys who arrived and made up their minds from the beginning that they would not defile themselves by anything going on in the land of Babylon. The time they faced the fiery furnace was not the day it started.

GRACE

Let me say something about grace again. They didn't stand up to Nebuchadnezzar by their own strength. It was not their personal ability that kept them standing. Ezekiel showed us clearly that there is this power that God pours into a child of God who is determined to obey Him even when such a one has no strength of his/her own. In the New Testament we call that power grace.

(Then I heard a voice) saying, "Mortal man, stand up. I want to talk to you." While the voice was speaking, God's spirit entered me and raised me to my feet, and I heard the voice continue. Ezek 2:1-2 GNT

But by God's grace I am what I am, and the grace that he gave me was not without effect. On the contrary, I have worked harder than any of the other apostles,

although it was not really my own doing, but God's grace working with me. 1 Cor 15:10 GNT

So we see Paul face adversity, face challenges, travel here and there, adapt to situations, know how to abound and how to abase, start revivals, disciple many, and so on. It was not just Paul but the grace of God working in him. He said, "None of these things move me, neither do I count my life as dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Such dedication in the face of troubles is remarkable, but it was not Paul in himself, but the grace of God working in Him.

Once we have a heart that wants to obey God, there will be no problem on the day of adversity. He will give us a quickening word and His Spirit will enter into us and set us on our feet. God's grace is available for every true and committed believer in Christ.

I went to teach on a campus some years ago. I spoke of how Samson lost his place because of Delilah. That day I taught the young folks on how they must value

the strength and calling of God upon their lives and not lose it to Delilah. (The substance of that teaching is what is in my book, *Beyond Gifts and Talents*). After I finished teaching I took questions. A young man asked me how he might identify his own Delilah when she would come. Of course I had already explained that the Delilah spirit is not always a woman, and indeed both men and women will get their Delilah moments in life. So when this young man was asking about Delilah, he was not asking about a literal seductive woman.

Now, the answer I gave him is the reason I am recounting that moment. I told him I had no answer for him on how to identify his Delilah and that it was not important to know how to identify her. The important thing is to maintain the strength of the spirit and to not lose it in the house of one harlot and another woman after the manner of Samson. Delilah was not the problem of Samson; she was only a manifestation of the fact that the man had depleted his resilience of spirit over time. She was only the final straw that broke the weakened camel's back.

So it is with the Christian and the mark of the beast.

Note the following words, especially the word of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation. 2 Peter 2:9 NASB

*The Lord is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
He knows those who take refuge in him. Nahum 1:7*

While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, John 17:12 NASB

If you are not a son of perdition, if you have not been playing with your faith, if you have not been eating of the delicacies of Babylon, then do not worry about the time of the mark of the beast; you will be kept.

The problem with many people is that they want to eat all the delicacies of Babylon. They want the meat, the wine, the parties, the girls and the glamour of Babylon, but then when the day of temptation would come, when they will be asked to bow to the image or to take the mark of the beast, they want to have the

strength to not deny the Lord. But it does not work like that. The weight of their full stomachs, full of Babylonian delicacies, will pull them down, and the Lord would do nothing about it.

Christians are often enamoured with the need to know what the mark of the beast is or will be, but they miss one important point, which is that it is not those who know the mark of the beast that will not take it, just as it was not those who could identify the image of Nebuchadnezzar that did not bow to it. It was those who loved the Lord their God with all their heart, all their soul and all their might; they were the ones who the Lord kept in the day of trial.

Because you have kept my word in quiet strength, I will keep you from the hour of testing which is coming on all the world, to put to the test those who are on earth
Rev 3:10 BBE

Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were not saved by the strength of their determination. They were saved by the restraining power of Christ in the day of trouble. The fourth man that was seen in the fire did not come just because of the fire; he was there all the while

pumping into them the strength of God; the fire only made him visible. The Spirit of God set them firmly on their feet and they could not bow to that image. That is why all the glory must be to the Lord.

So it is with the mark of the beast. It is therefore not necessary to spend so much time trying to identify the mark as it changes nothing for anyone.

WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?

One thing I feel certain of is this: those who will take the mark will not know that is what they took or when they took it, and those who will refuse to take the mark will also not know they have fulfilled that prophecy. That is the way spiritual things are.

Let us look at the principle here (please read carefully):

"But when the Son of Man comes in his glory... all the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom

prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink...

Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink...

And the King will say, '...when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give me a drink...

Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty... and not help you?'

"And he will answer, '...when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.' Matt 25:31-46 NLT

Notice that these people didn't actually know when they were doing things that would count for eternity. They were just being themselves but were speaking loud in heaven by their actions. I believe that is how it

will be with the mark of the beast. Remember that the Pharisees and many other Jews thought they were looking out for the messiah and were willing to receive him, but when the Lord Jesus the Messiah came, they rejected Him and had Him crucified. They were not aware that was what they were doing. They kept on looking for the messiah and are still waiting for him till today.

Many people will take the mark of the beast and yet be going around warning people not to take it when it would come. They would not even know they have it already.

Will be mark of the beast be a literal mark? Will it be something that everyone can see on you? Spiritual prophecies can be difficult to interpret so we have to be extremely careful.

I very much doubt that the mark of the beast will be a physical thing. It doesn't have to be a physical mark any more than the world would be ruled by a literal animal with two horns. If the beast can be allegorical, why can the mark not be a spiritual type also? I don't think we have a proper reason from the scriptures to

take the beast as only a type but insist the mark must be a real physical mark. If the beast is a type, so is his mark likely to just be a type too.

CHANGING MARKS

I have been hearing about this mark of the beast since I was a boy in secondary school. The earliest marks I saw illustrated were brand marks; you know, brand as in skin scar or tattoo. Then as time went on, it became barcodes. After some time it became microchips, and the latest I am hearing of is stuff so small that it can be administered along with vaccines. In our teachings it kept shrinking in size and visibility as technology advanced. It is now so small that it is actually no longer going to be a *mark* but a barely visible miniaturized electronic device. Basically I am now being told that the mark is nothing but an ID number which can be read off a person. (On a lighter note, one of my brothers, after he moved to the US called one day and said “Hey, I have now got my 666 number.” He was referring to the social security number of the USA. He is a comedian).

Let us face it, the switching here and there in

interpretation of this mark should tell us something is wrong with our approach.

Christians have a sad record of throwing tantrums about any major development in technology, ascribing almost every major leap in tech to the preparation for the rule of the anti-Christ. We have been doing this for centuries. We seem so morbidly afraid of this beast. He is the coming tormentor of our souls. We fear any sound of him. We are paranoid. We are actually in dread of him.

Our behaviour can be quite erratic by the way.

Once I saw a US comedian on TV. He played a clip of a message by preacher in which he spoke passionately about how the internet would be used by the Antichrist to get his project executed. He went on and on about it. Next, this comedian played the ending part of that Christian programme in which the viewers were told that if they wanted more information they should go to, wait for it now, *w w w dot x y z dot com*. The comedian didn't have to say anything further. The audience roared with laughter; and I laughed where I was with embarrassment. There we were, warning

about the internet and then making use of it. Indeed it is laughable.

When telephones were invented we preached about it as the tool of the anti-Christ

When televisions were invented we raved about it. It was the devil's box.

I was amazed to find out that even trains, cars, and air travel were accused of being tools for the anti-Christ.

When internet began to grow, we did the same.

There are so many examples.

One of the things that have been consistent with our evolution alongside that of technology is that we have *always* gotten over the shock of the new technology, learnt to use it, and eventually taken advantage of it in many areas including in advancing the gospel.

It used to be months to sail from Europe or the US to West Africa. It wasn't easy to be a missionary then, but now we travel all over the world rapidly on airplanes, preaching the gospel. The other day brethren in the US asked me to come and preach at their convention;

they were footing the bill I was so reluctant to go because flights to the US are over 10 hours one way. Many people don't realize I actually don't like to travel; I only travel because I have to. Till the day of the journey I kept thinking of 11 hours on an aircraft seat. I wasn't looking forward to it at all. I was wishing I could close my eyes, open them, and be with my brethren whom I actually loved to see again. At a point my wife and I started laughing at my behaviour because we realized how spoilt we modern Christians have become. A journey that used to be months is now less than 24 hours roundtrip, and there I was still reluctant. We are simply now used to fast travelling. I suspect if the Concorde was still flying and I could afford the tickets, I would have been a regular customer if they plied my route. The faster the better.

Also, far removed from calling it the devil's box we now have hundreds of Christian TV channels, covering every square inch of the globe with the gospel.

THE ROMAN ROAD

Apart from the use of the internet in all other areas of life such as information, education, communication,

banking, etc., it is now for us a major tool of ministry. Many young ministers now start their ministries on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. The internet is now the modern day Roman road for the advancement of the gospel. *(The road system that the Roman Empire built over two millennia ago was created for the purpose of the Romans holding onto power. It allowed them to move military units in a quick manner, but even though the builders didn't intend it so, the roads also served to spread the gospel in the first century AD. It was as if the Lord made the Roman Empire create a road system for the rapid dissemination of the gospel of Jesus. This is why I call the internet and World Wide Web the modern day Roman road.)*

As a personal testimony, most of the reach of Kingdom-Word Ministries is through the World Wide Web. Millions of hours of my messages have been streamed or downloaded from our website. Over three thousand copies of my books are downloaded *monthly* from there (they are free). That is a feat I can't imagine how else we could have accomplished. For people to share my teachings to anyone anywhere in the world, all they have to do is send a link which is

received in the twinkling of an eye.

For many Christians and churches, live streaming of messages, especially in this season of lockdown for COVID-19, is the order of the day now. Old messages of many preachers we only used to read about are on YouTube. Many ministries that their ministry website won't give us their message for free, the Lord caused people to share these messages on YouTube. To get classic messages and books now is just a click away. Same for inspired music.

As at today (April 2020) the Youversion Bible app supported by David Green has been installed on over 420 million unique devices all over the world. The Bible App offers a free Bible experience for smartphones, tablets, and online. The app interface is available in more than 60 languages and it offers 2,058 Bible versions in 1,372 languages for free, and without advertising. This is mind-boggling.

These are the things we now use the internet for. Apparently there is enough space on the internet now for Christ and the anti-Christ. That is just the way it is. Thank God yuppie Christians were not scared of the

internet but took hold of a God provided avenue, and we are all the better for it. They have grown up to be the main population of Christianity and with them have grown the knowledge of how to take advantage of technology.

O yes, the anti-Christ is on the internet too. Pornography is abundant there. Identity theft is there. Mail hacking and phishing are there. Boys steal billions of naira and millions of dollars annually from banks and companies through the internet. Software piracy and ransom-ware attacks are all over the web. There is even the so-called dark web where weapons, prostitution, drugs and all such things are traded and human beings trafficked. Yes, there is space for both Christ and many antichrists. They are already there, it is not a matter of prediction.

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 1 John 2:18 NASB

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming

in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 2 John 7 NASB

So what are we supposed to do because of the presence of the spirit of the anti-Christ on the internet? Run away from there or condemn and campaign for the banning of the internet?

But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn. Matt 13:29-30 NASB

People of God, don't worry about it; the Lord will sort Himself out.

WHAT HOLDS HIM BACK?

As a matter of fact, you cannot fight technological advancement because you are trying to stop the antichrist. It is futile. If history is anything to go by, it is neither necessary nor would you succeed in the attempt.

An important point we must bear in mind is that technology is neutral—absolutely neutral. It is what each makes of it that is the issue. Just think about the internet; if we had stopped the development of the internet because of fear of the antichrist (and it was preached by many), where would we be today with conquering the earth with the knowledge of the truth of Christ? No wonder the Lord Jesus said, “Leave them alone; allow both to grow together until the harvest. I will take care of things when the time comes.”

Another thing is this: when the time for the anti-Christ to be manifested would come, he will use whatever tech is on ground. He will use whatever is there in the everyday life of the people. Whether there is GSM or not, or whatever G we are dealing with then—4G, 5G or 10G; whether there are no computers at all or quantum computers are mainstream, his coming is not dependent on which tech you have on ground. All the former examples of the anti-Christ who have lived, or persons we suspected were him, used the tech of their times. What is stopping the man of sin from manifesting has nothing to do with lack of appropriate tech on ground.

Let us consider from Paul's letter here the reason why the anti-Christ may not yet manifest.

Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you? And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the

breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming. 2 Thess 2:1-3 NLT

Tech or lack of it is not holding back the anti-Christ. Men have been enumerating populations before the time of David; Jesus was born when Joseph and Mary went home for a special census. However if they have to do it now, they would have to go digital, so digital ID is nothing strange. The fact that everybody can be tracked does not make it specially easy for the anti-Christ more than for the Christ (and this is already possible because we all carry our little computers and trackers we call mobile phones everywhere). What is holding the anti-Christ back is something else. He cannot manifest before his time, we read from Paul.

Let me simply say that as long as we are aggressive in preaching Christ, we live in unity as a body (not walled-off denominations) and we live righteously as the light of the world, he cannot manifest. It is apostasy, not advanced technology, that promotes the manifestation of the man of sin. It is apostasy—not technology. Instead of fighting technology we should be fighting false doctrines which lead to apostasy. Instead of praying that networks will not be built we

should be praying that Christians will walk in the light, love the word of God, come together in unity, be heaven-minded, forsake the love of the world and follow the Lord Jesus with their whole hearts.

THE MARK

What about the mark of the beast?

Like I mentioned earlier, the mark of the beast is figurative, just as the beast is. The beast is not a literal animal so I would think it unlikely for the mark to be a literal mark. If it was literal then it has to be a mark, not an ID number, and not an invisible chip. If we say it can be any of these, then we accept it is figurative. Remember that God's servants also had a mark or seal on their foreheads (Rev 7:3).

Whether it is figurative or not, it has to be beyond a simple externality, and it definitely cannot be something that will be sneaked on you. It is something one will accept for the benefit it confers even though he knows he will be breaking the law of Christ.

And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and

his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. Rev 14:9-10 NASB

It is crucial that we note that in every place the mark of the beast is mentioned in Revelation it is tied to the worship of the beast and his image. Why are people concerned about taking the mark and not saying anything about the worship of the beast and the image? The beast can only give his mark to the people who accept to worship him and his image. His mark cannot be put on anyone just so they can have it; they must before taking it, or by it, be worshippers of the beast.

So I do not wish to spend much energy trying to decipher what that mark will be like; it is an unnecessary exercise especially since, if it is a physical thing by any chance, it is nearly impossible to know what form it will take ahead of time, and this is why we have changed from brand-marks to tattoos to microchips.

As part of the identity of the mark is its location; the people who take the mark have to take it on the right hand or the forehead. These two positions are also figurative, I believe. There is therefore no need to panic just because you heard that one tech company developed a RFID device that will be planted on someone's right hand and their forehead. Your high powered mobile phone is already planted in your right hand most of the time anyway. Scientists are already developing things that can be planted in every part of the body depending on what it is to be used for. The bionic man is already conceived by science and technology, and it will happen to one extent or the other, anti-Christ or no anti-Christ.

But the main problem is with *what* or *who* we worship. Are we Christians truly worshipping our God?

My thought about the importance of the right hand and the forehead as the place where the mark of the beast will be planted is borne out of the use of those parts of the body in Bible typology. Search the words in your Bible and you will see. The right hand stands for strength, work, power and livelihood. It also stands to indicate who you are following in life. God takes a

person by the right hand to lead him.

The forehead is used to denote the name one carries, as in ownership. It indicates the principles and wisdom we operate by. It also stands for the teachable spirit. A strong forehead denotes stubbornness or steadfastness to a cause.

My point here is that these things stand for the purpose we live for, the cause we pursue with our lives and whose principles we walk by. Paul showed us that those positions in his life have been marked with the mark of Christ when he said the following: *God to whom I belong (forehead), and whom I serve (right hand) (Acts 27:23)*, and *I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus (Gal 6:17)*.

There will be two categories of worshippers of the beast: One, those who openly identify with the beast, these are the ones with the marks on their foreheads; and two, those who work for the agenda of the beast howbeit secretly—these are the ones with the marks on their right hands. These latter do not openly profess the name of the beast but their works are for the purposes of the beast.

Please read the following scriptures and try to superimpose them on these points.

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night. Ps 1:1-2
NASB*

*"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!
"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
Deut 6:4-5 NASB*

"Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" And they said, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Luke 20:24-25

This interpretation is important because many people have taken the mark of the beast but they are running away from a microchip that a tech company or government want to put in their hands or forehead.

They worship money (where is a place the Lord indicated the image of the beast may be found) and run their lives with satanic principles but they might be campaigning against tech that appears like their idea of the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast is tied to the worship of the beast and his image.

WHO THE PEOPLE WORSHIP

See Peter's take about such people:

Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse. They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. 2 Peter 2:13-16 NLT

Please you can read the rest of that description in 2 Peter 2.

Why would people worship the beast or his image? The answer is simple: It is the love of this physical life.

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; 2 Tim 3:1-5 NASB

Paul was talking about supposed Christians in this warning to Timothy. These are people who go to church, and may even be ministers, but their god is their belly. They take the mark of the beast because of the love of money and the desire to preserve one's life. You cannot overcome the beast except you die to self. It is not about technology.

They won the victory over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the truth which they proclaimed; and they were willing to give up their lives and die. Rev 12:11 GNT

Christianity requires that we love Jesus so much that we are ready to die for him. Many are not even ready to be poor for the sake of righteousness and they are worrying about technology. They walk in sin and live a life that doesn't glorify Jesus and they claim they don't want to take the mark of the beast. I dare to say that anyone who is not willing to endure hardship for the sake of Christ is putting the mark of the beast on already.

There are pastors who have taken the mark of the beast on their right hands, but not on their foreheads. They use ungodly methods, including using occultic powers, to draw crowds to the ministry. They fake miracles for money, use python spirits (or familiar spirits) for divination to mimic the word of knowledge, and then start preaching to themselves and their deceived followers that no matter what you do your salvation is not at risk. "Jesus died for you and no matter what your life is like, He will accept you on the last day." They say no matter how you live and what you do you cannot lose your salvation because the work of Jesus is eternal. I actually read of a preacher who wrote that even if you deny Jesus and for all

intents and purposes live like an unbeliever your salvation is intact because the grace of God is just too much. This is definitely a false teaching but it soothes the sinful flesh. To me, anyone who believes that wants to be deceived because it is clearly illogical apart from being contrary to everything the Lord Jesus and his apostles taught us. Many have followed this.

God may not be willing to give someone up, but He allows anyone to walk away if they so choose. He is not happy or willing about it, but salvation is not by force. Remaining in Christ is a choice, and many have chosen to leave Him. It is not a new thing.

We are not people who turn back and are lost. Instead, we have faith and are saved. Heb 10:39 GNT

Those who decide to turn back from following Christ have existed, and the consequence is clear (See also Heb 6: 4 – 8; 2 Pet 2: 20 – 21).

Please this is the point I am making about the mark of the beast: it is not a technology but a worship lifestyle. Watch yourself in that regard. You can't afford to live carelessly; it is risky.

Whether the mark is a brand-mark, a barcode, a microchip or a spiritual mark in the soul, the fact remains that it must be taken consciously, possibly under duress, but it must be accepted as part of a lifestyle of worship of the beast. It is the worship of the beast as one turns his or her back on the Lord in everyday decisions we make, usually for the sake of gain and to preserve one's life; that is the issue.

Fight never to worship the devil or live a lifestyle that glorifies him. Fight against worldliness and apostasy in your life, and will never receive the mark of the beast.

BUY OR SELL RESTRICTED

Someone may be wondering how this relates to buying and selling, things that will be restricted for those who do not take the mark of the beast. Well, that is not hard to understand. There are many ways it can happen.

To buy and sell simply indicate to be able to do business, to work and to perform one's trade. Ancient and modern history have shown us that Christians have suffered simply for being Christians and especially for holding on to the principles of the

kingdom.

*Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering... and when **all you owned was taken from you**, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever. Heb 10:32-34 NLT*

In recent years we see how holding onto Christian principles could cost one his or her job or business. In the USA, under attack by the LGBT (what some called the *gaystapo* for this reason), especially in the second half of Barak Obama's presidency, Christians were to lose their businesses for not agreeing to support same sex marriages. Bakers and florists were fined crippling sums by courts for not providing services to same-sex weddings. People were being hounded out of their positions simply for supporting definition of marriage as that of the union of a man and a woman. A newly appointed CEO of Mozilla corporation had to quit after just a few days in the office for donating about 1000 dollars to support the biblical definition of marriage about six years prior in 2008. In the same year David Green, who I mentioned early in relation to The Bible

App, fought a spiritual and legal battle for refusing to provide abortion coverage as dictated by Obamacare. He stood to lose his family business, Hobby Lobby, which was worth billions of dollars. The fines they were to pay came to about 425 million dollars a year for not doing what he said was against his faith in the Lord. He was willing to lose the company rather than compromise. It was a tough battle and they won only narrowly at the Supreme Court (5-4). Imagine if the court had had even the slightest majority of liberal judges.

In March this year (2020), the European Court for Human Right rejected the appeal of Swedish Christian midwives who had been fired from their jobs for refusing to perform abortions. They had lost in every court in Sweden and appealed to the ECHR as a last resort. Think of what that will mean to all doctors and midwives all over Europe. It is simple: perform abortions when asked or lose your livelihood.

Under communism, knowing you were a Christian was the end to your career in any field, and you were very likely to land in prison. Even if you were not imprisoned, poverty and hunger were your portion.

There was no job, no money and no help from anywhere.

Sometimes it is not even an organized fight against your faith; it is just that there is so much corruption everywhere that you can hardly do honest business. Everyone wants you to lie to get by. You have to falsify everything just to do 'honest' business. It appears as if the rules and regulations have been designed to make the most honest person tell a lie. Christians will become part of the corruption while claiming they are only acting in wisdom. It is part of the antichrist structure.

Justice is driven away, and right cannot come near. Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place there. There is so little honesty that those who stop doing evil find themselves the victims... Isa 59:14-15 GNT

This is the reason many would take the mark of the beast. To take it on the forehead is to outright deny the Lord, and to take it on the hand is to appear like a Christian but to do everything the structure of the anti-Christ would dictate. And it is going now currently

in many parts of the world, and may be coming to your country.

WHAT THE CHURCH MUST DO

If the church of Christ as a body wants to keep back the man of sin, these are the things it needs to do (we have seen that there is no need to attack technology):

1. Watch the doctrines.

We must teach truth. Christ alone must be the centre of our messages. We must stop tolerating the Jezebel spirit just because it brings money. We must preach against sexual immorality. We must teach again about dying to self, about perseverance, about enduring hardship and about the earth not being our home. We must celebrate again losing the world so as to gain Christ and know the power of His resurrection. We must stop lying about the grace and mercy of God, that He never disciplines His children. We must remind the people that it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We must teach the children of God to judge themselves so that they will not be judged by the Lord.

2. *The church must strive to maintain the bond of unity.*

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body... Eph 4:3-4 NLT

As a matter of fact, a house divided against itself cannot stand. No head of a ministry or a denomination is Lord over the people he or she shepherds. If you promote division in the body of Christ, then you are an attractant force for the anti-Christ.

Denominations must be deemphasized by true believers. There is *only* one body.

3. *A righteous walk must be our focus.*

This will come as we emphasize the right doctrines. Like David said, the godly ones must be made our heroes, not the rich and materially successful ones.

There is no righteousness apart from the one that Christ's spirit put in us. So we must stop being afraid of confessing the name of Jesus. Let us put His name on our foreheads, and the anti-Christ will find the space taken.

4. *We must again take on apostolic work with diligence.*

Many times the church has prospered so much that it forgot the main aim of the prosperity. We spend more money taking care of ourselves and planning for the future than we spend promoting the kingdom of God. We must repent. Most of our money must go to advancing the spread of the gospel, not building bigger citadels that help us gather as if we are the new tower of Babel. The church must spread out with the truth, otherwise the Lord will once again visit the Babels with His judgement.

If we do these things we will not have to worry about the mark of the beast.

God bless you.

Author

Dr. Bankole Olusina, fondly called **Pastor Bankie**, is a teacher of the Word of God. He teaches from the platform of Kingdom-Word Ministries. The emphasis of his teachings is the separation of the church from the world by the obedience to the truths of God. He is happily married to the wife of his youth and partner in ministry, Ufuoma.

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Kingdom-Word Ministries is a non-denominational teaching ministry based in Enugu, Nigeria. Activities of the ministry include weekly Bible classes at the ministry office, publication of free teaching tracts and books, radio/TV broadcasts and organizing teaching seminars in various towns and cities.

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