

Over the past year, I have had to endure claims on social media and from other sources that the Covid-19 vaccine is the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation 13:16-18. The argument goes something like this: Revelation 13:16-17 speaks of a mark that all people will need to receive to live in the world because without it no one will be able to buy or sell anything needed for survival. John writes,

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 (Rev 13:16-17).

Conspiracists argue that the government is part of the work of the devil and will require you to get the vaccine and present your Covid vaccination card to operate in the world. And the only way to fight back is to reject this government intrusion and refuse to get the vaccine. Recently, the guy selling his pillow declared that the vaccine was the mark of the beast. Newsweek reported him declaring,

“Now it's this 'One World Order,' this stuff is in Revelations, you know that's what I was talking about, and you combine that with this vaccine, that's 'mark of the beast' stuff,” he said. “I mean, this is horrible, keeping us indoors.”<sup>1</sup>

So Christian “leaders” and “scholars,” like those selling pillows (yes, slight sarcasm), are promoting this argument. This is just one example. And another professing evangelical who has quite a following in the church flat out said, “Don’t get the vaccine. Pass it on.”<sup>2</sup> This Covid vaccine conspiracy isn’t anything new either. We have seen it before. During the time of FDR, social security came along and issued those enrolled a card that some saw as the mark of the beast. Then electronic scanning at the grocery store replaced price labels and it was the mark of the beast. Then Ronald Reagan was the beast himself because Ronald Wilson Reagan is three names each with six letters: yes, 666, so it must be him. It seems that every generation has some who must find conspiracies and attribute them to the mark of the beast.

Sadly, this nonsense tends to come from those who hold to a premillennial view of the end times. Full disclosure, my undergraduate, graduate, and PhD degrees are from schools holding such a view. I realize that this tends to be true because a premillennial framework takes a futuristic view of the book of Revelation, especially chapters 6-19. In all fairness, I personally do not see many in this camp who are well-trained in biblical languages, systematic theology, and hermeneutics, espousing such things. No, it’s popular authors and pillow salesmen and the like who do it. I

---

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved @<https://www.newsweek.com/horrible-mypillow-ceo-mike-lindell-calls-covid-19-vaccine-mark-beast-stuff-1567437>

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved @ <https://twitter.com/QuiteSuttle/status/1376630521028042756/photo/1>. This is a screen shot of Metaxas’s tweet which is now unavailable, so says his site: <https://twitter.com/ericmetaxas/status/1376376768173576197>

realize there might be exceptions. No one is immune to being sucked in by a good conspiracy from time to time. I say all this to say two things:

First, vaccines historically have ended and prevented the suffering of untold millions.<sup>3</sup> We forget how vaccines served the world in dealing with tuberculosis, measles, meningitis, tetanus, whooping cough, Hepatitis B, diphtheria, H influenzae, and yellow fever.<sup>4</sup> And an article in *Stanford Medicine* called vaccines “the single most life-saving innovation ever in the history of medicine.”<sup>5</sup> Probably the only other advancement in history in saving lives that is comparable to vaccines has been indoor plumbing!

I see nothing edifying or uplifting in criticizing vaccines by calling them the “mark of the beast,” which leads to my second thing. Before you get on Facebook as an expert in eschatology, do a little homework. Here I am addressing those of a premillennial persuasion. If you hold that Revelation 6-19 is part of the Great Tribulation known as Jacob’s trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), and if you are convinced that the church is taken out of the world before the tribulation, and if you see in just two of the 21 judgments of the Tribulation that half the world’s population will be killed (Rev 6:8; 9:1),<sup>6</sup> and if you believe that this period is marked by the work of the Antichrist being permitted by a sovereign God, then why are you so bent out of shape by what God will be doing in the world long after you are gone? And one more thing you may want to consider. If in fact the vaccine is the mark of the beast found in Revelation 13 as you claim, has it dawned on you that you are living in the Tribulation and missed out when the Lord came back for his church? Think long and hard ... and then stop this foolish talk.

---

<sup>3</sup> The World Health Organization states that just in the last 20 years, 37 million children were saved through vaccines: <https://www.sciencealert.com/vaccines-have-saved-37-million-children-s-lives-in-lower-income-countries-since-2001>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://informationisbeautiful.net/beautifulnews/515-lives-saved-vaccines/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2015/02/10/a-discussion-of-vaccines-the-single-most-life-saving-medical-innovation-ever-in-the-history-of-medicine/>

<sup>6</sup> Half of the world’s population is arrived at with the fourth seal killing ¼ of the world and the sixth trumpet killing 1/3 of the remaining population. If you take ¼ and then a third, the total is a half. Here is some help. Six billion minus ¼ leaves four and a half billion, and 1/3 of that leaves three billion. Three billion is half of six billion.