

WHAT DOES THE NUMBER "666" MEAN?

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The number 666 is found in Revelation 13:18 and is the center of much speculation and false doctrine.

Numbers and names had great significance among the Israelites. Therefore, the book of Revelation abounds in the symbolic use of numbers. They are often used, not to represent some particular individual, but to express ideas. For example, the number 7 was a divine, sacred number. It represented everything that is good. It expressed completeness, maturity, wholeness, fullness, perfection. Whereas the number 6, on the other hand, represented everything opposite to the number 7. It fell short of the number 7. It was forever below what is perfect. The number 6 had a sinister meaning. It was to the Jew what the number 13 is for many in our society today — though much worse. It was a symbol of dread and doom.

To string together the numbers 666 multiplied the evil and wickedness of what it represented. It portrayed worldliness, ungodliness, evil, wickedness. It symbolized the imperfect — that which was destined to fail, never reaching perfection. It seems only reasonable that it does not represent any one person or individual. It represents a "kind, type

or class."

Revelation 14:1 speaks of God's name being written on the foreheads of his faithful children. This is not a literal name written on the literal forehead of God's children. Neither is the number 666 a literal number stamped on the forehead and right hand of those who are not faithful children of God. We should not look for it (as some do) to be a computerized number coming in the near future that people will receive. 666 is meant to be a spiritual likeness to the beast and his followers. In that sense, every child of the devil has the number 666 on them. Attention is focused on the significance of the number and not on some particular individual. Every child of God has God's name stamped on them; that is, God knows those who are his (cf. 2 Peter 2:9) and those who are not his (cf. 1 Cor. 5:13).

It could be that the number 666 represented the Roman Empire and its corruption or all pagan religions or the apostasy of the Roman church which has always hindered the spread of the Gospel. Whatever it was, it opposed God's Way.

The important thing is that when one serves God and does his righteousness he will not have to be concerned about the number 666.