

MONDEX AND THE MARK OF THE BEAST

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Published On : February 3, 1998

Last Updated : July 23, 2006

The 666, Introduction Of Money, Abram And Pharaoh, Abram And Abimelech, Biblical Monetary System, Tax System, Paper Money And Banking System, Elitists And Politics, Inflation And Poverty, Babylon The Great Whore, Syria And The Black Horse, Moshiach ben David, Mondex Smart Card, Soft Westerners, World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Social Security Numbers

While many people in the world today are basically ignorant when it comes to their knowledge of the Bible, if there is one topic with which most are at least slightly familiar, it is with the credit system which will be implemented by the soon-coming world leader known in the Book of Revelation as the Beast. Many have heard of the infamous "666" either through Sunday school Bible studies, through the cinematographic industry, or else through reading books. Tragically, because of their lack of expertise in the area of eschatological study, many of these people are erroneously expecting to see a literal "666" tattooed in some way on everyone's right hand or forehead, similar to the tattoo system implemented by Adolf Hitler during the War.

In my view, using such an overt personal identification and credit system would seem too obvious, and would undoubtedly be met with a lot of resistance by those who are aware of the warnings found in the Bible. One thing we all need to realize is that Satan is in no hurry. As I have shown in articles such as "Satan: King of Tyrus, King Of Empires", world domination is something he has been working on for literally thousands of years. I don't think Lucifer is going to forfeit his chance of achieving his ultimate goal by moving too fast, thus spooking people before he is ready to spring his trap. At the time appointed, he wants as many people as possible to willingly accept his rule over their

lives. Because of this, I believe that he has been slowly implementing the "Mark of the Beast" without too many people even becoming aware of it. If you doubt my words, consider the following:

Historically speaking, all of man's economic systems since the foundation of the world have been based upon a certain degree of trust and equity; that is, establishing an agreed-upon value for all goods and services. Before the widespread use of hard currency, this usually meant trading, or bartering, one item or service for another item or service deemed to be of equal value. This might mean trading so many sheepskins for a camel, or perhaps working so many hours to secure a meal, or perhaps trading a woolen cloak for a pair of leather sandals. In one example found in the Bible, we read of the story of Jacob who worked for his uncle Laban for fourteen years in order to obtain his two wives Leah and Rachel:

"And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also."

Genesis 29:16-28, KJV

This type of economic system was the most pure, because it was based upon trading real goods and services, for other real goods and services. Men had to have trust in each other's words, that they would give or perform that which they had promised. By the time of the above story, silver and gold had already been introduced as mediums of exchange to complement the direct barter or exchanging of goods and services. The first Biblical example we find of this is when Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite in order to use it as a burial place for his family. Notice that the value of Hebrew money was determined by precisely weighing it. This is because, unlike today's hard currency which is in coin form, early money took the form of bars, or possibly even various-sized nuggets:

"And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight . . . And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you . . . And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."

Genesis 23:3-4, 8-9, 14-16, KJV

The story of how Abram acquired some of his wealth is rather interesting. In Genesis chapter twelve we find Abram and his family traveling down into Egypt due to a famine in Canaan. Because Sarai his wife was so beautiful, Abram feared that he might be killed so that she could be taken from him. Thus, he and Sarai made the following agreement:

"And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall

come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee."

Genesis 12:11-13, KJV

Exactly as he had expected, the Egyptians did indeed find Sarai attractive. Thus they determined to give her to Pharaoh, not knowing that she was actually Abram's wife. In exchange, they rewarded Abram with livestock and slaves:

"And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels."

Genesis 12:14-16, KJV

Well, the Lord wasn't too pleased with that arrangement and smote Pharaoh's household with plagues. Once the truth of the matter came out, Abram and his family were kicked out of Egypt, but not before Pharaoh had paid him restitution for having taken his wife. Thus, Abram acquired his great wealth:

"And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold."

Genesis 12:17-13:2, KJV

Abram must have been one shrewd character, just like today's Jews, because only seven chapters later, we find a very similar event occurring with Abimelech the king of Gerar. As with the case of Pharaoh, after Abimelech had taken Sarai,

the Lord revealed to him that she was really Abram's wife:

"But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife."

Genesis 20:3, KJV

Greatly fearing the Lord, Abimelech pleaded for his life, arguing that he was innocent of any crime because Abram and Sarai had deceived him:

"But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine."

Genesis 20:4-7, KJV

Thus, Abimelech obeyed the Lord and promptly returned Sarai to Abram, but not before rebuking them both for their dishonesty:

"Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother."

Genesis 20:9-13, KJV

Like Pharaoh, Abimelech also paid Abram restitution in the

form of livestock, slaves and silver; thus increasing his wealth even further:

"And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved."

Genesis 20:14-16, KJV

At this point, in order to put things in proper perspective, and to help us to better relate to these stories, it might be helpful to provide an explanation of the ancient Hebrew monetary system. Thus, following is some information I have gathered from the King James Bible, my Hebrew lexicon, Easton's Bible Dictionary, and a few other sources. It is by no means complete, but it will provide a basic framework:

1. Gerah - means a grain or kernel. The twentieth part of a shekel, equal to the weight of 16 barley grains or 4 or 5 carob beans In English troy-weight, this was 12 grains.

"And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel."

Leviticus 27:25, KJV

2. Zuza - the quarter part of a shekel.

"And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way."

1 Samuel 9:8, KJV

3. Bekah - derived from the Hebrew "baqa" which means to split, cleave, break open or divide. A half of a shekel, or 5 pennyweight in English Troy-weight.

"A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men."

Exodus 38:26, KJV

4. Shekel - derived from the Hebrew "sheqel" meaning "weight", which itself is derived from "shaqal" meaning "to weigh". The common standard of weight and value upon which all others were based. There were at least five types of shekels:

- a. gold shekel - equal to 220 grains
- b. silver shekel - equal to 132 grains
- c. copper shekel - equal to 525 grains
- d. brass shekel - equal to ??? grains
- e. iron shekel - equal to ??? grains

A shekel was equal to 10 pennyweight in English troy-weight, or about 220 English grains, which is slightly more than half an ounce avoirdupois.

NOTE: "Avoirdupois" refers to the system of weight and measures used in most English-speaking countries. This system is based on one pound being equal to 16 ounces, 7000 grains, or 453.59 grams. The term is derived from the Middle English "avoir de pois", meaning "commodities sold by weight", which itself is derived from the Old French "aver de peis" which means "goods of weight". In short, it is based on the very same monetary system first used by the Jews thousands of years ago. Is this a coincidence?

The difference between "avoirdupois" and "troy-weight" is that in the "troy-weight" system, while the grain is the same, the pound only contains 12 ounces, 240 pennyweights, or 5,760 grains.

Following are some verses in which several types of these shekels are mentioned:

"So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight."

1 Chronicles 21:25, KJV

"And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary."

Leviticus 27:3, KJV

"And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass."

1 Samuel 17:5, KJV

"And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him."

1 Samuel 17:7, KJV

5. Ma'neh - derived from the Hebrew "manah" meaning to count, reckon or number. Equal to sixty shekels, or 2 pounds 6 ounces in English troy-weight.

"And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh."

Ezekiel 45:12, KJV

"And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver."

Nehemiah 7:71, KJV

IMPORTANT NOTE: Notice that this word is very similar to our English word "money" in that it is pronounced "maw neh". While today we are told that our word "money" is derived from the Latin "moneta", I think this Hebrew word "ma'neh" helps to emphasize who is really in charge of the worldwide commercial system. This word is also translated as "pound" four times in the Old Testament. I find it very interesting that the pound is the monetary unit used in Great Britain. Some claim that in the distant past, the daughter of King Zedekiah, the last king of Israel before the Babylonian invasion, was secretly spirited off to Britain by the Prophet Jeremiah and Baruch. It is said that once there, she married into the royal family, and that the royal throne of England is actually the true throne of King David preserved until this day waiting for the return of Jesus Christ. The fact that some also claim that London is actually the financial capital of the world, and NOT New York City, also adds intrigue to this Jewish mystery.

6. Talent - derived from the Hebrew "kikkar" which itself is derived from "karar" meaning "to whirl or dance".

The talent was thus a round monetary weight, of

which there were at least three types:

- a. Copper talent = 1,500 shekels.
- b. Silver talent = 3,000 shekels, or 125 pounds.
- c. Gold talent = 6,000 shekels, or 250 pounds.

"And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments."

2 Kings 5:22, KJV

"And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance."

2 Samuel 12:30, KJV

As Israel began to be invaded and occupied by foreign powers, other monetary systems were introduced into the country. It is possible that the first of these may have been the Persian "darik" which was introduced by Darius the Great, also known as Dariush or Dayara-Vahusha. This is the Darius who ascended to the Medo-Persian throne a number of years after Cyrus the Great, who was instrumental in ending the Seventy Years of Captivity by allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. The gold "darik" may have been the first real minted coin known to the Hebrews. It was equal to about 128 grains, or 8.32 grams of gold. The ancient Jews referred to it as the "darkemown". In English it is variably known as the daric, drachma, or dram. In the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, right at the time of their liberation, the term "dram" is used:

"They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments."

Ezra 2:69, KJV

"And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments."

Nehemiah 7:70, KJV

It may have been soon after the introduction of the "darik" into Israel that the Jews likewise began to shape their shekels into round coins instead of plain bars. By the close of the Old Testament era, and the beginning of New Testament times, other coins had also found their way into Israel. These included Greek silver coins known as the "drachma", "didrachmon", or "double drachma", and the "tetradrachma". The "drachma" is only mentioned one time in the Scriptures. Tragically, rather than leave it in its original Greek "drachme", the translators chose to translate it as "piece":

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?"

Luke 15:8, KJV

The Greek "double drachma" can be found in Matthew chapter twenty-four where Jesus instructed Peter to catch a fish in order to pay the Roman tribute, or tax money, for them both:

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

Matthew 17:24-27, KJV

In the previous verses, the term "tribute money" is actually translated from the Greek "didrachmon" which was the "double drachma". As can be deduced, it received its name because it was equal to two "drachmas", one Alexandrian "drachma", or half of a Hebrew "shekel".

Also hidden in the above parable in the words "a piece of money" is another silver coin known as the "stater". This was the Jewish "shekel" which was equal to four Greek "drachmas", or two Alexandrian "drachmas".

In like manner, while the Roman "denarius" is mentioned in the Scriptures, you will never find it unless you do a bit of digging because, as with the Greek silver "drachma", the British translators dropped the original Greek word "denarion", and replaced it with "penny" and "pennyworth" to make it more easily understood by the members of the Church of England. The "denarius" was about equal in weight to the Greek "drachma", also known as the "Attic drachma" since it originated in Athens:

"He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?"

Mark 6:37, KJV

"And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard."

Matthew 20:2, KJV

"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Revelation 6:6, KJV

The word "denarius" actually means "containing ten"; thus, this Roman silver coin received its name due to the fact that, at the time, it was equal in value to ten "asses" from the singular "as". The "denarius" was the principal coin of the Roman Empire and equal to a day's labor as can be seen by the parable in Matthew chapter twenty. While the "denarius" was equal to ten "asses", the widow's "mite" mentioned in Mark chapter twelve was a small Roman coin of brass equal to an eighth part of an "as". In the original Greek, the word used is "lepton" meaning "small" or "thin":

"And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing."

Mark 12:42, KJV

As can also be seen by the above verse, a "farthing" was equal to two "mites"; thus its value was one fourth of an "as". Being transliterated from the Greek "kodrantes", it can easily be seen why it was also known as the "quadrans". While I have not verified this, it may also be that the

"farthing" was the same as the Roman copper or bronze coin known as the "sestertius", or "sesterce", which was also equivalent to the fourth of a "denarius". The "farthing" was likewise equal to half of a "chalcus" which was another Greek copper coin from Athens.

The final sum of money found in the New Testament is the "pound", derived from the Greek word "mna". While the lexicon states this word is of Latin origin, I suspect that it may be a Greek transliteration of the Old Testament Hebrew "maneh", which, as I already explained, was also translated as "pound". In New Testament times, a "pound" was equal to one hundred "drachmae", and one hundred pounds were equal to one talent. We find this word "pound" used in the following verse:

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come."
Luke 19:13, KJV

One final Roman coin which is believed to have been used during the First Century was the gold "aureus". However, I have not been able to locate it in the New Testament. It may be that it was only in circulation during the time of Augustus Caesar.

From all of the information I have now provided, what can be seen is that by the First Century, due to years of foreign domination and visitors to the land, hard currency in the form of precious metals minted into round coins, had become an important part of Jewish life. As shown by the following example, these coins usually bore an image of the leader of the government where the coin had originated:

"And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."
Luke 20:21-25, KJV

Between their religious obligations, and the burdens placed upon them by their Roman conquerors, the Jews soon found themselves under tremendous financial pressure. This is one reason why radical groups like the Zealots rose up in rebellion against Rome. During that time, there was a minimum of four different types of taxes which the Jews were required to pay. The first of these was what was known as the "telos":

"He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?"

Matthew 17:25, KJV

In the above verse, the word "custom" is translated from the Greek "telos" which was a tax on merchandise or goods, as well as on travelers. This is the kind of tax which was collected by Matthew, also known as Levi, before the Lord called him to forsake all. Matthew sat at a toll booth, which in Greek was referred to as a "telonion":

"And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

Mark 2:14, KJV

The second type of tax was known as "kensos" in Greek. In the previous verse from Matthew, it is translated into English as "tribute". Aside from meaning the actual money used to pay a tax, "kensos" also referred to a census taken by the Romans for the purpose of registering and evaluating one's property in order to determine the amount of tax one had to pay. However, in New Testament times, it referred specifically to an annual tax levied on the subjugated masses of the Roman Empire, which included the Jews. Thus, today it would be referred to as a poll-tax, which is sometimes required before a person can vote. It is also known as a capitation, or per capita, tax.

A third tax was an annual property tax known as the "phoros" in Greek. This tax was levied on houses, lands and people. This is what is meant by "tribute" in the following two verses:

"Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?"

Luke 20:22, KJV

"And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."

Luke 23:2, KJV

Unlike the previous three kinds of taxes which were civil taxes imposed by the Roman government, the final tax was a religious tax. According to the Mosaic Law, every Israelite twenty years and older was required to pay a special annual Temple tax. The amount of this offering was half a "shekel", that is a "bekah", or two "drachmas":

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls."

Exodus 30:11-15, KJV

In order to facilitate the proper payment of the Temple tax in the Jewish currency, a group of men known in the Bible as the moneychangers came into being. In Greek, these men were known as the "kollubistes" which may have been derived from a small coin known as the "kollubos". These shrewd men took advantage of the Jews arriving from other lands by setting up tables, or "trapeza", in the Temple courts where they would offer to exchange their foreign currencies for Jewish currency. They would charge them a certain premium known as an "agio". These same men also dealt in interest loans and deposits. In short, they were probably the first Jewish bankers. Tragically, as the Lord made clear through the Prophet Jeremiah, the heart of man is evil, and these men were soon up to no good:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

Just like some people today, once these bankers realized how easy it would be to get rich by taking advantage of the plight of their countrymen, they began to charge exorbitant amounts for their services. In short, they angered the Lord by converting what was meant to be a pure religion, into nothing more than a commercial enterprise, just like most of organized religion today. It was under these conditions that Jesus made a whip and kicked them all out, overturning their exchange tables in the process:

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

John 2:13-16, KJV

"And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Luke 19:45-46, KJV

In some ways, the introduction of hard currency was good, as it was a more flexible means of acquiring one's needs. Instead of exchanging your sheepskins for the other person's camel, you could give them so many coins for their camel. The number of coins would represent the same value as you placed upon the number of sheepskins you formerly traded for the camel. In addition, it was a lot easier to carry around metal coins in one's pocket or pouch than to transport a pile of sheepskins, or to haul around a camel. Furthermore, a person can only use so many sheepskins, and so many camels.

Thus, supplementing bartering with hard currency made it possible for a person to buy anything he needed, even if someone didn't want his sheepskins. A person could sell the

sheepskins to someone who did want them, and then take those coins and purchase the camel, or anything else that he may have needed. While hard currency wasn't quite as pure as the direct exchange of goods or services, it was still a relatively safe and fair means of exchange for several reasons. First of all, as long as men remained honest, the coins contained a specific amount of gold, silver or other metal; and they were precisely weighed out; thus they had a defined value. The second reason is that with hard currency, people still possessed the power to determine the value of the goods and services they possessed, purchased and sold. Finally, people were still receiving something of real tangible value in exchange for their goods or services.

For over three thousand years, since at least the time of Abraham, hard currency in the form of gold, silver, brass, copper, bronze, and iron bars and nuggets, and then actual minted coins, remained the standard of exchange in addition to the bartering of goods and services. However, after accumulating and lugging around his heavy currency for so many years, man began to realize that he needed an easier and safer way to perform his daily business dealings. Thus began the practice of depositing one's wealth with the local moneychanger, or banker, and receiving a written note reflecting the value of that deposit. With the introduction of written promissory notes, people could begin to perform their business dealings with each other much more easily since they didn't have to actually carry around large amounts of heavy coins.

While the Jewish moneychangers and other cultures used papyrus scrolls, skin parchments and clay tablets to keep a record of their transactions, to issue receipts, to make interest-bearing loans, to write bills and to make payments, there was still no means to implement a universal system. A clear example that such transactions were commonplace in Jesus' day can be found in the parable of the unrighteous steward found in Luke chapter sixteen. In part it says:

"So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy

bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Luke 16:5-8, KJV

After centuries of performing his financial dealings in basically the same manner, several hundred years ago, in the mid-fourteen hundreds, an event occurred in Europe which has since totally changed the way man's economic system operates. The catalyst for this change was the creation of moveable type by German inventor Johann Gutenberg. With the advent of the printing press, it eventually became possible for a government to print and distribute paper currency on a national scale. This first occurred in the early 1600s. While most people have viewed this development as a great achievement which has further enhanced the worldwide economic system, from a Biblical perspective, this is the furthest thing from the truth.

The reason for my above statement is quite simple: With the introduction of paper currency, society has been distanced even further from a system based on the exchange of things of real value, and become dependent upon a false system based upon standards of basically non-existent value. In addition, this new system has greatly reduced the ability of the common man to determine and set the value of the goods or services he buys, sells or performs, thus limiting his ability to control his own destiny. This power has been translated to the government, and to banking institutions which are in turn controlled by affluent families and powerful merchants.

Collectively, these powerful groups of people control, shape and influence both the politics and the economy of a country. In a political sense, by simply choosing to support or not to support a candidate financially, they control who is at the helm of the government. Those candidates who choose to do the bidding of these elite groups by promoting their political agenda, thus receive their financial support. Quite frankly, the modern political machinery has very little to do with popular issues and the needs of the poor. It simply turns on the wheels of money and the interests of the elite. The minute a political candidate accepts contributions, he becomes subservient to the

Monetary Masters; just another cog which helps to keep things rotating in the direction they wish them to go; for as the Bible clearly tells us:

"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

Proverbs 22:7, KJV

In an economic sense, through their invisible control of the government, these same people decide such things as how much money should be printed, minted and distributed; they determine the interest rate on loans granted to foreign governments, companies and private individuals; they determine the minimum wage for hired labor; they set price minimums and ceilings on goods sold and services rendered, etc. In short, this powerful elite controls the political and economic pulse of a country. Furthermore, these rich banking families form part of even more powerful international groups and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the Fortune Five Hundred, the Bilderberg Group, etc. which control the political and economic pulse of the world!

So one might ask, "Where is the common man left in all of this?" The answer is quite simple. He is left on the bottom rung of the ladder struggling to survive, and has little choice but to accept the dictates of those above him. While he is given the illusion of freedom through the popular vote, the truth of the matter is, no matter how many times he votes, or who he votes for, or how many years go by, he still has no choice but to work for whatever amount those above him are willing to pay him, and to pay whatever prices are set for those things which are necessary for his existence, including food, clothing and shelter. The maneuverability he does have to choose between jobs to try to advance in society is akin to a goldfish swimming in circles in a glass bowl. He can only go so far, and his masters know it. I am reminded of something Jesus said almost two thousand years ago:

"For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always."

Matthew 26:11, KJV

Initially, when paper currency was first introduced, it was

backed by real gold and silver reserves. It had been agreed that a government could not print or distribute more paper money than the actual amount of gold and silver that it held in its reserves. Because of this, up until a few decades ago, theoretically speaking, a person could still take their paper currency to the bank and exchange it for real gold and silver. By that time, gold coins had already disappeared from circulation as a common medium of exchange. Currently, they can only be found in the collections of investors and private collectors. Such is the case with the South African Krugerrand. While some gold is used in modern technology, as well as in jewelry, the vast majority of it remains safely stored within the bank vaults of national governments which want to keep it out of the hands of the common people. The fact that gold was so common centuries ago, but has now all but disappeared from the public eye should be enough to cause everyone to question what is really going on.

The story of silver is basically the same. As late as the early 1960s, silver coins were still in circulation. In the United States Of America, these included the Mercury dime, -- ten cent piece -- the quarter -- twenty-five cent piece -- and the half dollar -- fifty cent piece. We kids used to help collect them for our parents. Today, three decades later, it is extremely rare to find any coins made of pure silver within the public circulation. They have been completely replaced with coins made of copper mixed with alloys. In other words, the face value of a coin no longer has anything to do with the amount of pure metal contained within it. For example, a quarter used to contain twenty-five cents worth of real silver. Back then, if a person had five dollars in his pocket, that meant that somewhere in the country, there was five dollars in gold or silver reserves to back up that five dollar bill. Thanks to the American Government, the country was taken off of both the gold and the silver standards decades ago. In short, since that time, the American Government has been at liberty to print as much paper currency as it desires regardless of the actual amount of gold and silver reserves it possesses.

While hard currency and paper money have been well-received by modern society, they are not without their negative aspects. As we have already seen, hard currency is bulky and heavy. It tends to wear out one's pants pockets. Paper money also eventually becomes worn and tattered and must be

replaced. Many folks also consider money to be very dirty due to the number of hands it passes through. Some have said that just about every dollar bill which has passed through one's hands, has at one time or another been used as drug money. And finally, hard currency and paper money also make one prone to attack by robbers. From the government's point of view, other drawbacks include the fact that if one possesses the proper knowledge and the right technology, paper currency is also easy to duplicate. Additionally, besides being used to traffic drugs, it is used for other illicit purposes such as for purchasing guns and weapons of mass destruction, arming violent terrorist groups, etc.

To help combat some of these problems, as well as to further exploit humanity as the worldwide slave class of the rich and the elite, several decades ago, a new medium of exchange was introduced to the world. It took the form of plastic credit cards, electronic checking accounts, debit cards, and ATMs, or Automatic Teller Machines. Of course, as has always been the case, these new developments were presented in a positive light so that people would readily accept them. Under the illusion that this plastic marvel will give them more financial freedom, as well as add a degree of ease and comfort to their everyday financial dealings, since its introduction, millions of people the world over have applied for and begun using credit cards. The mentality seems to be, "Spend now, and feel the pain later when it comes time to pay". Had these people taken heed to the wisdom found in the Scriptures, perhaps they wouldn't be so quick to fall into this subtle trap:

"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

Proverbs 22:7, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Romans 13:8, KJV

You see, those in control of the System truly understand the greedy indulgent heart of man. In fact, I don't doubt that they base their whole financial scheme on the following advice taken straight from their own Holy Book, which clearly explains that the way to become rich is to lend, but never to borrow. Notice that they are also instructed to forgive their brethren's debt every seven years, but that this does not apply to the Gentile nations:

"At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee."
Deuteronomy 15:1-6, KJV

These financial wizards realize that if they entice people to spend more money by making it easier for them to do so, it also means that those same people must work longer and harder to pay back what they have borrowed. Because many folks have ignored these warnings found in God's Word, they have over-extended their line of credit, written checks which really aren't covered by funds in the bank, and resorted to other unscrupulous means to try to get ahead of the System. They have foolishly allowed themselves to be lured into spending more than they should by the masters of the worldwide commercial system known as Babylon the Great Whore! If you doubt my words, just look at how much sex and glamour is used to sell her wares the world over! This is what advertising and shopping malls are all about! It is truly sad how many families have been broken up, how many friendships have been destroyed, and in fact, how many people have actually taken their lives due to financial difficulties. Because of their unwise spending or foolish

investments, some of these people have fallen into a pit of their own making, just as the following verse says:

"He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."

Ecclesiastes 10:8, KJV

What we need to realize is that these principles apply not only on a personal level, or on a national level, but they also apply on an international level as well. Over the decades, some of the poor developing nations of the third world have been enticed by the International Monetary Fund into taking out loans with a certain amount of interest attached to them. As this interest has continued to mount, and these loans have reached maturity, some of these nations have not been able to pay back their debts. In some cases, this has resulted in some of them simply reneging on their loans, while other nations have been forced into making other concessions or compromises which have placed them in deeper servitude to their lenders. In short, the System keeps grinding, the rich continue to get richer, and the poor continue to get poorer. However, there is One who sees the plight of the poor, and at the Appointed Time, He will reward every man according to his works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Revelation 20:12-13, KJV

Not only that, but at the Appointed Time, God will mete out His righteous judgments against Babylon the Great Whore, and against her masters, and they will all meet the fate that they deserve:

"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more . . . The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that

was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!"

Revelation 18:11, 15-18, KJV

In the above verses we witness the grief experienced by the merchants of the world who behold the destruction of the great Babylon, the mysterious city which serves as the center for the worldwide financial empire. Exactly who is this mysterious woman? Many people have attempted to answer this question over the years. Some have suggested that it is London, or New York, or Rome, or possibly even ancient Babylon which is currently being excavated. I present my own speculations in the article "Revelation's Babylon The Great". If one realizes who these powerful families are, and where this whole system originated, it is much easier to recognize this city which reigns over the kings of the Earth. It is because she has abandoned her faith in the One True God and gone a whoring after the things of the world, that the Lord has called her a whore! However, before the terrible day of destruction arrives for Babylon, there are still some major events which must occur.

Thus far we have seen how the value of man's economic system has slowly deteriorated over the centuries. Initially, early man exchanged goods and services for other goods and services of equal value as was agreed upon by both parties. As shown by Genesis, at some point in the early history of the world, man attached great value to gold and silver, and began to use them as mediums of exchange for other goods, services, or necessary items. Eventually, these metals were minted into coins. In our more recent history, paper currency backed by real gold and silver reserves was introduced. In our current day, while paper money and hard currency still exist, they are no longer backed by any real gold and silver. In short, modern currency is absolutely worthless! It has no real value. It is a false value instilled in us by the word of our government. They say, "Behold, it is worth so much", and we blindly agree, "Yea master, it is worth so much because thou sayest so."

What may amaze some of you, is the fact that about two thousand five hundred years ago, the Lord showed the Prophet Daniel exactly how the empires of man would deteriorate over the centuries until the final one would be basically worthless. This symbolism is found in the great image of Daniel chapter two. In this image, each succeeding power is represented by a certain part of the statue's body. As time marches on, and one empire follows another, they are represented by various metals of the Earth. While Babylonia is represented by gold, the final governments of men are represented by iron mixed with clay. While we can interpret this as representing moral and spiritual corruption, or even as the various forms of government created by man, I believe we can also interpret the nature of the elements found in the image as representing the economic value of these empires, which culminates in clay, or economic bankruptcy, in the Ten Toes:

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

Daniel 2:31-33, KJV

Another possible indication that this may be so can be found in the companion book to Daniel, the Book of Revelation. In chapter six we find the description of the Four Horsemen. These horses and horsemen are of different colors and represent spiritual forces upon the Earth. The black horse and horseman are described as follows:

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Revelation 6:5-6, KJV

These verses may be indicative of the poverty, famine, high inflation rate, and the trade wars and boycotts which currently exist in these final years of the Endtime. As I described earlier, this word "penny" is actually referring

to a Roman "denarius", which was the standard wage for a full day's labor. Thus here we see a measure of wheat, or three measures of barley, being sold for a full day's labor. This word "measure" is derived from the Greek word "choenix". A "choenix" was a dry measure equal to about a liter, or just enough food for one day for a person of an average appetite. Thus we see that these verses seem to be indicating that in the Last Days, one will have to work an entire day just to buy enough food for that day, with no money left over to pay taxes, or rent, or utilities, or to cover healthcare needs, or for care repairs, etc. It is a hand-to-mouth existence just like we see in many parts of the world today, even in the United States of America!

Notice also that the rider of the black horse has a pair of balances in his hand. In the modern legal system, these scales represent justice. However, in the Old Testament, we find the following verses:

"Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt."

Leviticus 19:36, KJV

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight."

Proverbs 11:1, KJV

"Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good."

Proverbs 20:23, KJV

"Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath."

Ezekiel 45:10, KJV

As I have shown previously, in times past, hard currency was carefully weighed and measured so that each bar or coin contained the proper amount of precious metal. Thus, a just weight means a fair weight. In other words, you are getting what you expect, or what you paid for. Today, this is the furthest thing from the truth. Both paper and metal money are worthless, and prices are greatly inflated by many businessmen. On an international level, it is clearly evident that there is a false economic balance in the world

today. The rich unjustly continue to get richer while the poor increasingly grow poorer. In addition, the rich Westernized countries, like the United States of America, use economic boycotts to apply pressure to enemy states and to poorer countries which refuse to bow to their mandates. Through these low-handed practices, they cause many millions to die of starvation or to die of diseases which could easily have been cured. The Lord exposed these modern evils thousands of years ago through the mouths of His Prophets:

"He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress."

Hosea 12:7, KJV

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works."

Amos 8:4-7, KJV

"Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate because of thy sins. Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine."

Micah 6:10-15, KJV

The fact that the oil and the wine are not hurt in the previous verses from the Book of Revelation may possibly represent the Lord's provision for His children despite the fact that the world at large is suffering due to the lust

and greed of dishonest men. In the story of the Prophet Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, the cruse of oil never emptied during the time of the three and a half years of drought. Zarephath was a town located south of Sidon in ancient Phoenicia:

"For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah."

1 Kings 17:14-16, KJV

Concerning the wine, you may recall the story in the Gospels regarding the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. The wine had run out, and at His mother Mary's request, Jesus converted six waterpots full of water into wine so that the feast could continue:

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine . . . And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

John 2:1-3, 8-10, KJV

Thus, not hurting the oil and the wine, seems to represent the Lord's provision for His children in the Endtime, even though the world will be persecuting them. Exactly how the Lord will provide for His children is a mystery, but the answer may possibly be found in the following verses, also from the Book of Revelation. The challenge is to define who the "they" are:

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a

place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days . . . And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

Revelation 12:6, 14, KJV

Regardless of how He chooses to do it, we know that the Lord will indeed provide for His children in some miraculous way; for as the Apostle Paul testified in the following verse:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19, KJV

While God will be providing for His beloved children, the nations of the world will be suffering due to supernatural plagues from the Lord, due to natural calamities such as droughts, earthquakes, and floods, and also due to political, social, and economic injustices resulting in war, famine and the unnecessary spread of disease. Before moving on, there is one other interesting idea I wish to share with you which may be directly related to the arrival of the Beast. Just as Revelation chapter six discusses the four horsemen, in Zechariah chapter six we also find a parable of four chariots being drawn by horses of four different colors. The second chariot just so happens to be drawn by black horses. We have already looked at Revelation 6:5-6. Now let us take a look at Zechariah 6:5-6.

Notice that the verse references from Revelation and Zechariah are identical, as are the topics. Is this just another coincidence? Or is this yet another proof that, despite the fact that the Old and New Testaments were written hundreds of years or more apart, it was God's Spirit which inspired the writers of both? It is the direction in which these black horses, or spirits, of Zechariah are going which is of interest to us:

"And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south

country."

Zechariah 6:5-6, KJV

As I explained in my article "The Kings of the North and the South", I believe the "north country" quite possibly represents Syria, and the "south country" represents Egypt. We need to remember that all of these Endtime prophecies are written from the perspective of Prophets who were natives of Israel; thus Syria is north of Israel, while Egypt is to the south. As I explained in "The Seven Heads" series, while Syria is the primary candidate in my mind, this "north country" might also be Iraq, Iran or maybe even Turkey. However, another indication that Syria is the most plausible interpretation for the "north country" can be found in verse eight of the same chapter:

"Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country."

Zechariah 6:8, KJV

As I also explained in "The Seven Heads" series, the main thrust of Jesus' Earthly Ministry was in northern Israel; in Galilee near the Syrian border. In fact, while Galilee was a part of Palestine, it actually fell under the jurisdiction of Cyrenius, the Rome-appointed governor of Syria. This is why Joseph and Mary left Nazareth to go to Bethlehem:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city."

Luke 2:1-3, KJV

This closeness to Syria may also be the reason why Jesus spoke Aramaic. Aramaic was a Syriac language commonly spoken in Israel during the First Century. In fact, it's quite possible that it was spoken there since the times of Abraham. Syriac, or Aramaic, is the language Jesus spoke just before He died on the Cross. I have wondered if Jesus might have done this as an affront to the religious Jews present at His Crucifixion, who spoke Hebrew:

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,

saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
Mark 15:34, KJV

The reason Mark had to interpret it is because it was Aramaic and not Hebrew. Aram was the descendant of Shem who settled in Aram, or Padan-aram, that is, Syria. As I have shown in other articles, it was also to Haran, Syria that Terah, Abram and Sarai, Lot, etc., travelled after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. It is also in Syria where Jacob worked for Laban in order to obtain his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and where most of his family was born. Most importantly, the reason we are told in the previous verse that God's Spirit was quieted in the "north country" may be because Jesus' fame and Ministry were well-known throughout Syria. In other words, at one time, God's Spirit was very strong in Syria. In fact, it was in Antioch that the Disciples were first called Christians:

"And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them."
Matthew 4:24, KJV

"And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
Acts 11:26, KJV

Thus we see that Jesus had a direct ministry with the Syrians. I don't believe that anything happens by accident. I believe that everything occurs by God's Design and Purpose. It seems to me that He wanted to make sure that Syria received a strong witness of The Truth, because He knew that it would later become instrumental in the early spread of Christianity.

Exactly how does all of this relate to the Endtime, economics and the rise of the Beast? Just as I speculated in "The Kings of the North and the South", that the "north country" might pertain to Syria, I also speculated that the Endtime political/military leader, that is, the

Beast, might arise out of Syria. The possible significance of Zechariah's team of black horses, symbolic of economic hardship, going to Syria can be found in the following verse from the Book of Daniel which discusses events just prior to the arrival of the Beast:

"Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

Daniel 11:20-21, KJV

Notice that just before we are introduced to the "vile person", that is the Beast, in the "north country", we have the appearance of a ruler described as "a raiser of taxes". This leader dies a mysterious death which opens the way for the final leader, the Beast, to come to power in Syria, or wherever this "north country" is located. This ties in perfectly with our whole discussion on inflation and economic hardship, because it seems that it is under these conditions that the Beast will make his appearance. What is also interesting to note is that in Iraq, previously known as Assyria/Babylonia, and also a former "king of the north" which invaded Israel, the people are currently suffering from famine and extreme hardships due to U.N. trade sanctions leveled against that country for the past seven years. This has been led primarily by the United States of America which hates Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein with a passion. Is Zechariah's description a mere coincidence, or are we beholding things which few have understood? As I write this, the government of the United States of America is preparing for another major military assault against Saddam Hussein; an attack which it claims will be much more severe than the damage it inflicted on Iraq during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, or through the trade sanctions since then.

The fact that northern Israel and Syria played an important role during the days of Jesus' Earthly ministry might have another possible significance. While I can't prove this unequivocally, I have reason to suspect that the Usurper and Imitator, Satan, might also have plans to have his Son of Perdition arise out of that area of the world. I am of

course referring to the Jewish false messiah who is known to the orthodox Jews as "Moshiach ben David", which I discuss in full in the second part of "The Kings of the North and the South". Please note that "Moshiach ben David" is not the political/military Beast according to my understanding; neither is he the False Prophet of the Book of Revelation; but rather he is someone of Jewish origin who will be heralded by the Jews as their "Christ", their anointed one, who will sit in the newly-built Third Temple claiming to be "God". This is the man which I personally refer to as the Antichrist because he will be a false christ and a false prophet. Please refer to "Who Is Who": Defining Important Prophecy Terms", "Who Hindered the Antichrist?" and other articles for a more detailed explanation:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, KJV

So basically what I am saying is this: Not only is it possible that Syria might produce the Beast/False Prophet team, but it is also possible that either northern Israel or Syria will produce the Jewish Antichrist as well. Whether or not this will be so may very well be answered in the near future as tensions in the Middle East are currently at very dangerous levels with Iraq about to be bombed again, and with the Israelis and the Palestinians totally at odds with each other in their peace negotiations. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat has been warning Israel that unless it quickly backs down from its belligerence in the peace talks, there will definitely be an escalation in violence soon, possibly even war!

Returning to the main thrust of this article, with each of the economic phases I have described previously, we have taken another step forward to becoming a totally Cashless Society which will ultimately depend upon the Mark of the Beast. The next phase will involve the complete elimination of all paper money, checks and hard currency. As with the previous stages, this phase will probably be a gradual process spread out over a period of years. The initial steps

of this next phase have already been implemented in certain European countries with the introduction of national Smart Cards. While the arrival of national Smart Cards has been viewed by economists as the next step in a "natural" process of financial events, a more recent development has caused considerable alarm within the Christian community. This alarm is centered around a Smart Card pilot program currently being undertaken in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada by Mondex International. What makes the Mondex Smart Card unique is the simple fact that, unlike its predecessors, this Smart Card is geared towards an international clientele. Following is a description of the Smart Card taken from the Mondex International web page:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Mondex card is an integrated circuit card (ICC), a "smart" card - a normal plastic card with a small microcomputer "Chip" embedded in it. The card takes the form of ISO 7816 Integrated Circuit cards - the international standard for IC cards. This microcomputer has been programmed to function as an "electronic purse". The electronic purse can be loaded with value, where it is stored until it is used as payment for goods or services at retailers or service outlets or transferred to another Mondex card, by inserting the card into a card reader. The electronic purse can also be locked using a personal code so that only the card's owner can access the value on it."

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----- End Of Quote -----

As can be clearly seen, the Smart Card will take the place of money in most, if not all, of the everyday financial transactions performed by the owner. However, in order to use the Smart Card properly, one must also possess the Mondex Wallet. The Mondex International webpage provides the following information regarding this product:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Mondex Wallet is a pocket sized device which contains its own internal electronic purse along with a card reader, keyboard and screen. Wallet holders can transfer money from

their card(s) and store it in the electronic purse inside their wallet. By transferring money from the wallet to another individual's card, person to person payments are simple. The wallet can be used as a secure "bank" of value so that a consumer need only carry enough money for a day's purchases at any one time. Like a telephone, the wallet provides balance, statement and currency enquiry functions as well as the lock facility. These functions can be used in conjunction with either the wallet's own internal electronic purse or any Mondex Card inserted into the wallet's card reader.

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----- End Of Quote -----

As described above, possessors of the Smart Card will be able to load it up with value, and then go do their shopping, or perform transactions with their friends. From what I have read elsewhere, home computers are also currently being designed to accommodate the Smart Card so that banking and shopping transactions will be easily performed from the comfort of one's home. It seems innocuous enough. However, once the Smart Card has been accepted by a certain percentage of the populace, what is to prevent Mondex from expanding the use of their Smart Card to other areas of the financial market? The fact that it is designed for an international market clearly demonstrates its potential for becoming the worldwide standard, which is exactly what Mondex is aiming for. MasterCard has already taken a keen interest in the Mondex Smart Card and currently owns fifty-one per cent of the Mondex stock. Clearly then, the citizens of the United States of America will soon experience some major changes in their financial habits. From the information I have read, it appears that 1998 will be the year of the international debut of the Mondex Smart Card.

However, in my view, it is what the Smart Card may lead to which should have all sincere Christians concerned. Let's face it; like paper currency, checks and credit cards, the Mondex system is still vulnerable to misuse by unscrupulous persons. While the elimination of cash may reduce such things as money laundering, drug-trafficking, political bribery, activity on the Black Market, etc., it isn't a

"cure-all". The Smart Card could be effectively used for the same purposes, and perhaps in an even more clandestine manner, by a computer-literate person. Thus, the Smart Card may be the precursor to an even more sinister financial system once money has been fully eliminated.

Consider the following point: The only type of financial system which would be totally secure would be an actual bio-chip implant containing the same information currently found in the Smart Card micro-chip. Short of killing a person and extracting the bio-chip, there would be no way to extract their personal data. The fact that each person will have a unique identification number will make it even more difficult to abuse. While some may scoff at such things as being utterly ridiculous, the fact of the matter is, that the technology necessary to implement such a system of identification and credit is clearly already in existence!

Animals such as livestock and pets are already being implanted with such microscopic tracking devices. In fact, unless I am mistaken, some important political figures, as well as dangerous criminals, have also been recipients of such devices. My understanding is that these transmitters are powered by a minute lithium battery, and that they are injected with a syringe-like device. Under the right conditions, what is preventing such a system from being implemented on a worldwide scale? With the current Mondex technology, these implanted transmitters could easily be modified so that they contain all of the additional data regarding the bearer currently found in the Smart Card. Instead of carrying your identification number in your Mondex Card or in your Mondex Wallet, you would be WEARING it under your skin, exactly as we are told in the Scriptures!:

"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."

Revelation 13:16-17, KJV

Notice that in the above verses, we are told "in their right hand". While this may be mere coincidence, it might interest you to know that the name "Mondex" has some very interesting

implications. For example, if we divide it into two syllables, we discover the following:

MON = Latin "moneta" meaning money.

DEX = Latin "dexter" meaning of the right side, right-handed

Another interesting way to look at it is like this:

MONDE = Latin "mundus" meaning the world

X = a mark, as in "X marks the spot".

If Mondex is not the actual mark of the world, the Mark of the Beast, then in my view, it is at least the next step in that direction! These money-hungry and power-hungry worshippers of Satan have now become so sure of themselves, they have become so bold, that it doesn't even bother them to boast about what they are about to do! They have chosen a name which clearly defines their ultimate goal! As I pointed out in "Revelation's Babylon the Great", one of the pieces of merchandise of the worldwide commercial system is the spirits and bodies of men; absolute slavery!:

"And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

Revelation 18:13, KJV

In order to show that a slave belongs to his master, it is necessary to either place a band on him, or to mark him in some way. In the phrase "mark of the beast" the word "mark" is derived from the Greek word "charagma". The lexicon states that this refers to a stamp, or an imprinted mark, such as is branded upon horses. This again points to the fact that those who accept this system, will in essence become not only the property of the ruling class of the rich and the elite, but of Satan himself! Just like an animal, each person will receive their personal identification number, their brand, encoded in their biochip implant. In short, everyone will be forced to either receive Satan's mark, or else to be sealed by God. There are no two ways about it:

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any

tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

Revelation 9:4, KJV

What I find absolutely amazing is that in my everyday life, I have met some people who are looking forward to the day when they will exist within a Cashless Society. I have tried to explain to them the dangers of accepting such a credit system as the Mondex Smart Card. When I point out that it is only an interim step to something much more sinister, the usual reaction is, "Oh, it will never come to that. People are only willing to go so far with their government. They would revolt before they would allow things to go that far." In my view, this is naive and wishful thinking. As I told one fellow, by becoming so dependent on such a thing as the Smart Card, they are sealing their own fate. Once paper money, checks and hard currency are gone, they are gone, and there is no turning back. Those who have accepted the Mondex Smart Card will have no choice but to move forward to the next phase of the agenda of the New World Order when they feel that the time is right. I honestly don't know how fast they plan to move to the final phase, but I know it will be soon; and I definitely feel that it will be within my lifetime!

As I have explained in other Endtime articles, it is my feeling that when the final system of the "666" does come around, there will probably be no other choice left for those who live in urbanized areas other than to face starvation, unless of course one has already adjusted his lifestyle to a system of self-sufficiency based on bartering with others of like-mindedness. One would have to totally remove himself from the current system of things in order to survive. This would include moving to some remote rural area where crops could be grown, and sufficient livestock kept free of harassment from the Government. For those who are not fortunate enough, or wise enough, to find themselves in such a situation, when the Government says that they can no longer buy any food, or hold a job, or get Government benefits unless they accept their Mark and worship the Beast, they will have no choice but to accept or else be killed:

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause

that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Revelation 13:15, KJV

As I stated to one person recently, while people may now say that they will simply rebel against such a totalitarian system, they need to realize that they say this under a normal non-life-threatening situation. However, what if some major widespread disaster were to occur? Or what if a situation is purposely created, or allowed to happen, such as a sudden and complete collapse of the current worldwide economic system? With the Millennium Bug scare currently circulating in cyberspace, it is said that as soon as the year 2,000 arrives, many computers will either malfunction, or else they will cease to function altogether due to their internal clock not knowing how to cope with the double zero digits. Might not such an event "unexpectedly" require and necessitate the immediate implementation of a new economic system? Might not this new system encroach even more on our personal liberties than the previous system? The truth of the matter is that most people living within Westernized society wouldn't know how to survive without all of the comforts with which they have surrounded themselves. They are like spoiled children. This is in total contrast to the attitude held by the Apostle Paul who said:

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

Philippians 4:11-12, KJV

Westerners are so pampered, and so used to having electricity, running water, their home air conditioner running twenty-four hours a day, a corner convenience store where they can run to buy snacks or rent a video, their microwave oven, their gas-guzzling car, etc., that to have to do without such things would be more misery than most would be able to endure. Let's face it folks, most of us get upset if our power or water goes out for even twenty-four hours! The point is, when things begin to fall apart at the seams, most people are going to be willing to do whatever is necessary to regain their comforts and conveniences as quickly as possible; and that will include lining up like

cattle to get their Mark of the Beast. They may grumble and groan about it at first, but once they experience the benefits of receiving the Mark, they will soon forget the concerns they had previously. Notice again exactly what we are told in the verses from the Book of Revelation:

"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."

Revelation 13:16-17, KJV

You see, there are no exceptions because of social or economic status. EVERYONE is going to be forced to accept the new system! How could this be unless there is simply no other choice, or no other system available? While I have theorized that the actual empire of the Beast may possibly be a local situation limited to the Middle East, I do not embrace this idea entirely. He may begin there, and eventually expand his power and influence to control the entire world; and if not the entire world, then at least all of the Middle Eastern countries, North Africa, and parts of the Eurasian continent. The idea of the Mark of the Beast definitely seems to be much more universal in scope. Time will surely tell.

In conclusion, as unbelievable as it may sound, Satan and his cohorts have deceived the entire world. In the very near future, many, either by choice, or else out of necessity, will be branded as cattle and thus be reduced to mere numbers in a computer. In fact, in a sense, we all already are. For example, in the United States of America, by simply entering a person's Social Security number into a computer terminal, a wealth of personal data can be accessed by the operator. To tighten up the system, and to place the noose a little tighter around our necks, even driver's licenses now use the Social Security number instead of a separate sequence of numbers as in years past. Similar systems exist in many other countries as well; and they are all linked together in one global network. As I said at the beginning of this article, Satan is not stupid. He knows that if he did everything at once, it would frighten many people and wake them up to the truth; so he is taking his time, implementing one phase here, and one phase there. The Controllers give

people a little time to adjust and accept one phase before they introduce the next phase.

I don't doubt that things are moving along exactly as they have planned. Many countries are already bankrupt and in total bondage to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Their debts have become so deep that they will never be able to pull out of it. They now find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to do as they are told if they expect to stay afloat, and to continue to receive financial assistance. Soon there will be no more gold, or silver, or hard currency, or paper money, or charge cards, or cheques, or debit cards, or even Smart Cards. There will only be a small bio-chip implant full of long strings of numbers comprised of zeroes and ones. In the computer world it is referred to as binary. Can we stop it from happening? It is highly unlikely, because it is ordained of God as a punishment upon the unbelieving wicked world. However, God's true children don't have to go along with it.

While I personally do not support or advocate armed rebellion or resistance of any kind, I do feel that it is the responsibility of every Bible-believing Christian to take a firm stand against accepting the Mondex system, and any other system which may follow in its steps. Of course, if you do this, you must be prepared to be ridiculed and accused of being a religious fanatic, to be alienated from and rejected by friends and family, to possibly be harassed by your government and accused of being unpatriotic and a law-breaker, and ultimately, to possibly even be sacrificed for the cause of Christ:

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Revelation 12:11, KJV

Time is indeed short, and it may be much later than you think! Are you properly prepared for these things? If not, the best way to be prepared is by making sure that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Then, regardless of what may happen to your Earthly body, you will know that you belong to Him; and that one of these days when that Seventh Trumpet sounds, you will be on your way to Heaven. So don't delay; please accept Him today; but don't accept Mondex or

the Mark of the Beast!

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics website:

Obamacare and the Mark of the Beast: Fact or Fiction?

Precursors to the 666 and the Mark of the Beast

VeriChip, Somark and Microsoft Unmasked!

666: More Proof of the Coming System

666: The Patience of the Saints

Robot Wars, Skynet, the Beast and the False Prophet

Satan: King of Tyrus, King Of Empires

The Kings of the North and the South

Revelation's Babylon the Great

The Seven Heads

Who Is Who: Defining Important Prophecy Terms

Who Hindered the Antichrist?

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