

Commentary — From the Margins

“Xξξ” — *Chi Xi Stigma*

Can These Three Letters Be Read?

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all of the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of [alternate reading: on behalf of] the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath [πνεῦμα] to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is χξξ [Strong's # 5516]. (Rev 13:11-18)

Have three Greek letters, purporting to represent a number and the name of a man, ever been more poorly translated than *chi xi stigma* as the Arabic numeral 666? The textual call for wisdom apparently went unanswered; for in Indo-European languages [of which Greek is one], the Arabic numeral /6/ phonetically requires an /x/ sound. In Greek, “six” is “hex,” the verbally aspirated /x/ sound. So three “sixes” will require the repetition of the /x/ sound three times as in “six hundred sixty six.” But the /x/ sound only occurs once in *chi xi stigma*.

The logic for translating χξξ as 666 comes from /chi/ visually appearing as an /x/ and from /stigma/ representing two sharpened or pointed sticks, as if two crossed sticks, which could also be made to visually appear as an /x/. So the wisdom behind framing one phonetic /x/ with two visual /x/s—as if the two visual /x/s were the two thieves on either side of Jesus—was enough for someone in the 10th Century to produce a mistranslation that has caused a Western cultural aversion to the numeral /666/. Thus, a Senate bill with a §666 is perceived by some fundamentalist Christians as an Antichrist manifesto, especially considering that this bill might limit their ability to say silly things about God.

The above passage is nearly all that has been written about the “mark of the beast,” with the remainder of the references being to God bringing destruction upon those

individuals who have taken this mark onto themselves. So to “read” $\chi\xi\varsigma$ with the required wisdom, a person must return to the above passage, which is part of John the Revelator’s vision that doesn’t occur until the Lord’s day is at hand (Rev 1:10), when the described phenomena will soon happen (*cf.* Rev 1:1; 22:6-7, 10). And here true wisdom is required: If this vision of John’s is about events that have not yet happened—as would be the case if John were in vision on the Lord’s day, a specific period of time beginning when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15 – *cf.* Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15-19)—then the unsealing of the scroll seen in the vision (chaps 5-6) has not yet happened. And if this scroll remains sealed, then all of what occurs within the vision after the seals are removed remains to happen. The scarlet woman and the red dragon and the heavenly signs and the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ—all of these things [and events] are futuristic. Likewise, the messages to be delivered to the seven named churches also remains futuristic, meaning that the seven churches on the ancient Roman mail route through Asia Minor have a hypostatical relationship with seven endtime spiritual churches that cannot be visually seen, but exist in the heavenly realm on the Lord’s day.

The prophecy pundit who purports to understand the things of Revelation can only read the back of the scroll at best (Rev 5:1), for those things within the scroll remain sealed. So what the angel told John about not sealing up “the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Rev 22:10) speaks from a rhetorical position that remains in the future. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, the book of Revelation has been sealed to all those who thought it unsealed through the narrative device of the vision occurring on the Lord’s day, not a day of the week as too many teach, but that period in time when Satan is cast to earth and the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (*cf.* Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15-19) ... a more expansive view of the Lord’s day would have it begin when the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, but even this expansive view still places the Lord’s day in the future from the perspective of being within time.

John’s vision has had its detractors throughout the centuries. Two major Christian theologies—Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism—do not place much credibility in the book of Revelation, for both subscribe to the position that the kingdom of God is now here on earth in the form of the Church, a position that allows “the Church” to participate in the civil governance of nations. They hold to a “realized eschatology” that ascribes to Jesus saying, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, “Look, here it is!” or “There!” for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:20-21) the meaning that the kingdom of God arrived with the first Advent [first coming of Jesus] and has been here ever since, even though Jesus also said, “My kingdom is not of this world ... my kingdom is not from this world” (John 18:36).

Participation in civil governance when this world remains consigned to disobedience and ruled by the “prince of this world,” the Adversary of Christ Jesus, means participation with Satan in a joint venture analogous to the physically circumcised nation of Israel helping to rule Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon. The prophet Daniel, by being made a captive, helped make Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom function, as did Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego. So a pattern exists for spiritually-circumcised Israel to help make Satan's Babylon function more smoothly and more fairly, but this pattern has Israel being the bondservants to the king of Babylon.

The Church, because of its lawlessness, like natural Israel before it, was delivered by God into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon, with this lawlessness of the Church most easily observed by the day on which the Church attempted/attempts to enter into God's rest. Even if it repents, Israel cannot enter into God's rest on the following day (Num chap 14). And because the Church is not a physical assemblage but the fellowship of those who have been born-of-Spirit (John 3:3-8) and spiritually circumcised (Rom 2:29), the Babylon to which God delivered the Church was also not a physical nation, but the single spiritual kingdom of this world, presently ruled by the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the spiritual king of spiritual Babylon (Isa 14:4-21). So as Daniel held the reins of power in Babylon while Nebuchadnezzar was incapacitated, the Church held the reins of power in this world for a comparable length of time.

When the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah had passed, Daniel prayed to God for the release of Israel from captivity—Daniel never leaves Babylon, nor does most of Israel—and God answered Daniel's prayer through the seventy weeks prophecy (Dan chap. 9). Thus, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia [also king of Babylon – Ezra 5:13], Cyrus issued a proclamation that **God had charged Cyrus with building Him a house in Jerusalem**, and a remnant of natural Israel left Babylon for Judea (Ezra chap. 1). This was the first of three decrees, the last made in 451 BCE. And the kings of Persia built a house for God in Jerusalem, using a remnant of Israel to do the work and to staff this house. This was not a house built by free Israelites, something that should not be overlooked.

Note well: God ordered the construction of this house in Jerusalem through the auspices of the secular king of Persia. This is not a house like Solomon built, but the work of a foreign king and a still captive people. Likewise, after twelve centuries of formal captivity, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the spiritual house of God in heavenly Jerusalem. This leaving of Babylon occurred in the 16th-Century when reformers sought to rebuild the Church that produced the Borgias. But leaving spiritual Babylon requires leaving civil governance to the spiritual king of Persia. The followers of Martin Luther used civil government to wage war against the Holy Roman Emperor. The Swiss Reform Movement also used civil government to enforce its reforms, leaving only the Radical Reformers—the Anabaptists—to actually separate themselves from the spiritual prince of Persia, an agent of the king of spiritual Babylon. And the price in blood paid by these Radical Reformers was too great for them to continue their aggressive evangelism: they became “quiet” folk, as the Amish are today. They compare nicely to natural Israelites living Beyond the River, still subjects of the kings of Persia but free to worship God with a little bit of autonomy. Today's “plain folk” that come from the Radical Reformers are spiritually lifeless shadows of their Anabaptist ancestors. **They are apologizing agents for the “enthusiasm” of their ancestors, and of my ancestors—and it was the enthusiasm of the Radical Reformers that nearly turned the world upside down** before it was time for Christ Jesus to return. It is now time to return to that enthusiasm, and to quit being spiritually lifeless dolls that the Adversary plays with whenever he is bored.

No Christian leaves spiritual Babylon and the administration of Satan over this world when that Christian participates in civil governance. The preacher who uses his pulpit to preach against civil officials—even against the political corruption of these officials—makes himself an agent of the prince of this world, who reigns over a divided kingdom that is presently embroiled in internal strife.

If Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of God [or of heaven], is not of this world or from this world, then His kingdom can only be "other worldly," meaning that Jesus' kingdom is not like kingdoms of men, whether secular or theocracies. It is, again, the same kingdom that the prince of this world presently reigns over through being "the prince of the power of the air, the *spirit* that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2 – emphasis added). Halfway through the seven endtime years, this prince of the air will be cast from heaven and into time (Rev 12:9-10). Then the One who will rule the kingdom of God will be the *life-giving Spirit*, Christ Jesus, the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45). And the kingdom of heaven will be a kingdom in heaven, where human beings who have been born of Spirit have life. Thus, even when Christ Jesus returns, His kingdom will not be of this world, or even on this earth. Rather, it will be "over" this earth through reigning over the mental topography from which thoughts of humankind sprout, take root, and grow as weeds or wheat. He will rule over the "inside of the cup," which when clean makes the whole cup clean. Hence, He will reign not with physical means or through physical force, but by imparting His mind and His nature into human beings just as Satan now imparts his nature and mind into humankind.

Who will seriously argue that the Borgias were anything other than a family of corrupt men reigning over earthly kingdoms in a manner closely resembling how Hitler and Stalin reigned over Germany and Russia respectively? Who will argue for political intrigue, murder, adultery, lying, deceit, warring being of God? Who will argue for the selling of indulgences being of God? Who will argue for the suppression of knowledge and learning being of God? Who will argue for child molestation being of God? Who will argue for the Roman Church being of God? A billion Catholics, you say? One of every seven people alive.

Who will argue with Jesus who said that "the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many; for the gate is narrow and way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matt 7:13-14)? Who will argue that being one of seven does not make the person one of the *few* in this world, nor the path followed narrow and the way difficult? Who will argue against *many are now called to be disciples, but few will be chosen* (Matt 22:14)? Would not *the few* be those who keep the precepts of the law, having their uncircumcision counted as circumcision (Rom 2:26) in a world where being uncircumcised is celebrated as liberation from the Law of Moses. Would believing Moses cause a person's walk to be hard? Jesus said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:46-47). How, indeed? The *few* are those who believe the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus. The *few* are not one of seven, or even one of seven million. The *few* are truly few in number. They are as rare as ivory-billed woodpeckers, a species not long ago thought extinct.

Those Christian theologies who teach a realized eschatology are large and powerful, but they are assemblies of spiritual illiterates; for if the kingdom of God is now on earth,

it is not anything to be celebrated or commemorated. The visible Christian Church has made itself a hissing and a cursing in this world, something that humanity would really be better off without. Yes, the world would be better off without the large reservoirs of hypocrisy that exist within stone cathedrals. For Christians have as high or higher divorce rates than the world in which they live, producing broken homes and a culture of guilt-laden children wondering what they did wrong to cause mommy and daddy to break up. Christians receive as many traffic tickets as those who are of the lawless world in which they live. They are no different from their neighbors, with the exception that they are more self-righteous and less willing to admit that they are sinners. They don't see themselves as God sees them. They don't see that doing their shopping on the Sabbath, then attempting to enter God's rest on the following day causes them to mock God. They don't see that eating vermin prevents them from being holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16; cf. Lev 11:45; 19:2). They are not of "Israel," that nation whose hearts are circumcised "by the Spirit, not by the letter" (Rom 2:29) of the law. They are, indeed, of *the nations* of this world; they are spiritual Gentiles that deny Christ through their acts and attitudes while singing praises to Jesus with their mouths—they are like Israel in Babylon, the nation that with very few exceptions bowed down and worshiped the gold image Nebuchadnezzar made (Dan 3:7). "Christians" today worship the golden image constructed by the prince of this world; they "worship" wealth, cars, houses, the finer things in life. Their preachers strut around on stage in silk suits, bragging that it isn't just drug dealers who can have the best this world has to offer. And there is the problem: the best this world can offer isn't enough for those who are of God, for this world cannot offer "life." It can only offer death, crucifixion on crosses of gold and silver, VISA cards and BMWs. It sells the lives of men as it sells sex, painted and airbrushed, hard and lean, the work the prince of the power of the air, that spiritual Adversary who would devour all of humankind if permitted, the Adversary who would transform every person born-of-Spirit back into a groveling bondservant begging a boon from this king if he could.

Reading the mark that requires wisdom begins not with /χ/, but with the last letter /s/—*stigma*—an obsolete letter used to represent a number as /π/ represents 22/7s. The letter /s/ was between the fifth and sixth letters of the Greek alphabet, but the letter had not been in common usage for a century when John recorded his vision; thus, the use of /s/ should clue the auditor that there is something unusual about the three letters that would cause the third letter to function differently than the first two function.

The last letter of the mark, /s/, has a name that carries with it a relatively narrow "usual" assignment of meaning: for those disciples who have grown familiar with *Strong's*, the number is 4742, στίγμα, from the root στιζω, usually meaning "to stick" or "to prick" as in a mark incised or punched to denote ownership. Thus, *stigma* is the action of pricking or punching a mark of ownership; it is used as the Greek linguistic icon that most closely is aligned to the English icon /tattoo/. It is a tattoo, or the action of tattooing. It does not produce the Arabic numeral /6/ in any reasonable form of translation, or transliteration. And since this letter alone represents a "mark" or "marking" as in ownership, the remainder of the "mark of the beast" should, logically, be that mark or should describe that mark which is tattooed as the sign of ownership.

Here wisdom is truly required: *YHWH* said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, “Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths [note the plural form], for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you”” (Exod 31:12-13). So the Sabbaths of God, with these Sabbaths listed in Leviticus chapter 23, are “a sign” that God sanctifies Israel, the nation that now consists of Jews with circumcised hearts (Rom 2:29). Therefore, when that old dragon, Satan, and his angels are cast to earth (Rev 12:9-10), two signs exist: the first sign (1) is the Sabbaths of God, a sign made between God and Israel that this holy nation (1 Pet 2:9) may know that God sanctifies none other. The second sign (2) is /χξ/, the tattoo, /s/, of which on the hand or in the forehead [referring to a mindset] denotes the person being the property of the beast that the whole earth follows as the whole earth worships the dragon (Rev 13:3-4). Now add, the dragon, when cast into time, goes after the remnant who keeps the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17); so, since keeping the commandments requires keeping the Sabbath commandment, the sign that the offspring of “the woman” of Revelation 12:13-17 bears is the Sabbaths of God, the first sign, the sign that denotes those human beings who have been sanctified by God during the first half of the seven endtime years of tribulation, when the man of perdition attempts to change times and the law (Dan 7:25).

If the sign of those human beings who have been sanctified by God—the sign of those who constitute the holy nation Israel, a people with circumcised hearts that was not before a people (1 Pet 2:10)—is observance of the Sabbath of God, then those human beings who take the tattoo, /s/, of *chi xi*, /χξ/, the second sign, do not observe the Sabbaths of God. Therefore, during the first half of the seven endtime years, observance of the plural Sabbaths of God marks those who are sanctified by God in a manner analogous to how χξs marks those who are of the beast and who will be slain by Christ Jesus on His return (*cf.* Rev 19:20-21; Isa 66:15-17). And the prophet Isaiah offers more information about those whom the Lord will slay upon His return: “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the Lord” (66:17).

God sanctifies those who observe the plural Sabbaths of God, with Sabbath observance being an outwardly visible sign of Divine sanctification. The tattoo of χξ marks those who do not keep the Sabbaths, and who sanctify and purify themselves, who eat swine flesh, and who will be slain by Christ Jesus ... does anyone recognize a theology that does not keep the plural Sabbaths of God, that eats swine, that sanctifies itself through its liturgy? Hold that recognition for a little while before being appalled.

Now, returning to the front of χξs ... the first letter, /χ/, produces the phonetic /ch/ sound, and is the common substitute for /Christ/ as in /Xmas/ for /Christmas/. The Roman Emperor Constantine claimed to have seen the superimposed Greek letters *chi-rho* or /χρ/, the operating system by which Microsoft sought to conquer its competitors, as a heavenly sign on the eve of a battle against overwhelming forces. Constantine used the sign to energize his legions, while publicly professing conversion to Christianity, saying that it was he, not Bill Gates, who would conquer by the sign of the tipped cross. And his troops won the battle and prevailed throughout Asia Minor, thereby consolidating the empire that had shortly before been divided among four regents.

Constantine's conversion to Christianity is not how "conversion" works scripturally; plus, his actions after his alleged conversion suggest that no other than political expediency occurred. So what really happened when Constantine said that he saw a cross in the sky remains shrouded in the political realities of the day; nevertheless, it was Constantine's acceptance of a Greek belief paradigm—openly placed before the philosophical gates of Rome as Greeks had earlier placed a wooden horse before the gates of Troy—that brought an end to the Roman emperor-worship cult by which the empire had long sustained itself. And it was Constantine's acceptance of /χ/ as a representation of the "Christ" that has made the "cross" the universally recognized symbol of Christianity.

A Roman made /χ/ the sign of Christ, not God.

Since early in the 4th-Century, the /*cross*/ equates to /*Christ*/ throughout the Roman world and all of Western civilization. Even today, the correspondence of visual sign, /χ/, and lordly title, /*Christ*/, remain inseparable. Only a few minor denominations and fellowships, with the Jehovah Witnesses being the largest, do not use the *cross* to represent *Christ*. Even scholars regularly translate the Greek linguistic icon /σταυρός—*stauros*/ as the English icon /*cross*/, when *stauros* would have a usual object-to-icon assignment of a "stake" or "pole set upright" if it were found outside the Bible.

Whether Jesus was crucified on an upright stake or on the traditional lower case "t"-shaped cross remains debatable if resolution of this controversy is restricted to Scripture alone, or even to archeological evidence. But when using wisdom to read "the mark of the beast" the Roman introduction of the cross to represent Christ strongly suggests that Jesus died on an upright pole to which was affixed a crossbeam.

The infamous χξς is the name and number of a man: the name of the man is "Christ."

Since a Roman made /χ/ the shortened representation of Christ, and since Jesus was killed on a Roman "σταυρός—*stauros*," inscription of the middle letter, /ξ/, or *ksee*, in Latin characters as an /x/ is within the logical restrictions of the concept of *Thirdness* ... if the three letters, χξς, were to be read by a 4th-Century Roman, they would read as /*Christ-x-tattoo*/.

How would a pagan Roman have read the mark of the beast: χξς? He or she would have read it as the "tattoo [s] of Christ's [χ] cross [ξ]." How should an endtime disciple read χξς? As the "tattoo of Christ's cross"? Yes, this is how χξς should be read. Why, then, is χξς translated as 666? Because someone centuries ago could read the mark of the beast as a politically sensitive symbol—would you, as a scholar in a Mediaeval scriptorium, have gone to your patron and said that "the Cross" is the mark of the beast? To do so would have been suicidal as well as against personal beliefs held because God had consigned the Church to mental servitude in spiritual Babylon. No one was released earlier than twelve centuries after the Church was "officially" sent into its Babylonian captivity at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE-1525 CE). Those few disciples who tried to escape were unsuccessful, as was most of the remnant that left as Anabaptist *Enthusiasts*. A very few, such as Andreas Fischer and some of his followers, escaped for long enough to reach spiritual Judea, that mental landscape Beyond the River denoting obedience to God.

A dishonest mistranslation of χξς was really the only option facing Mediaeval translators. But the logic for the Cross becoming the universally recognized symbol of Christendom is truly remarkable; for if Jesus would have been killed with a mace, would a “mace” become the revered symbol of the Savior? What about an axe? An AK-47 assault rifle? A tomahawk cruise missile?

The person who wears a crucifix wears the image of a murder weapon.

The Cross is the image of the beast that was dealt a death wound by God, a wound that occurs when the two witness are publicly resurrected; when the Holy Spirit [Πνευμα Ἅγιον] is poured out on all flesh, thereby liberating everyone from indwelling sin and death. The mark of the beast is the mark of “Death,” the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse (Rev 6:7-8), the fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7, on whose head is ten horns, three of which are uprooted before the little horn that is the workings of Satan who enlivens and empowers the man of perdition. The mark of Death is χξς.

When Satan is cast to earth, acceptance of the tattoo of the Cross is acceptance of the mark of death—this person has just marked him or herself for death when Christ returns. This person is today a “Christian” in one of the many visible denominations that do not keep the Sabbath and would have its members sanctify themselves. And there is little anyone can do to cause this person to cease worshiping Death, the beast to whom God will deliver a mortal wound half way through the seven endtime years. Not even the death of Jesus and of two parts of humankind is enough (Zech 13:7-8) until the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh.

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