

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Reward for Perseverance

Revelation 14:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

Throughout the book of Revelation, we have seen a clear picture of what life will be like for the church. We have been shown that there is a spiritual battle going on behind the scenes. We saw that the dragon had been defeated at the cross and was cast out of heaven to the earth. He was full of rage, because he realized that he had but a little time left. So he went out to make war against those who "**keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus**" which is the church.

Last week we looked at 666: the mark of the beast. Many Christians are justifiably troubled by the mark of the beast because they are not sure of what it is or how you receive it. There is a fear that they may unknowingly receive the mark and be doomed for eternity. As a result, many avoid the number 666 at all costs. They are afraid of social security numbers, identification numbers, and even microchips.

You cannot you accidentally lose your salvation anymore than you can accidentally get it. It is not the way it works! Where in the gospels or the epistles does it tell me that if I accidentally receive a mark, that no matter what I do, I cannot come to Jesus? Where does it tell me that? **(Pause)** The mark that is on your forehead is who you **belong** to. When you **become** a follower of Jesus you are stamped with His name. Your sins are covered in His blood, you belong to **HIM!** And although you will not see a physical mark on your forehead, others should see that you have the seal of God based upon the way you live! This is no doubt what Christ meant when He said we are to be "The Light of the World"! We are to know the Word of God so well that our ethics, the actual way we live, are controlled by the Word and the world will see it in us.

We learned last week from the scriptures that how you receive the mark of the beast is not a mystery. One receives the mark of the beast by **worshipping the beast**. You receive the seal of God by **worshipping God**. In Revelation, worship is war. Who you worship is who you are stamped by. It not only seals your fate, it determines how you fight. Jesus told us that "**No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other**".

With God there is no compromise. Either you are serving Him or you are serving the beast. The world wants whatever feels good to them. They want everything the world has to offer them, even if it means hurting other people to get it.

We are told that 666 is the **number** of his name. Whose name? The "beast". There was a practice in the ancient world known as **gematria** where every letter in the alphabet was assigned a number. So they would take the numerical value of each letter in a name or

phrase and add them up to come up with a number for that name.

So we have gematria and we have 666 attached to its name. So what does this number translate into? It is really very simple.

The Greek word for "beast" is thareon (thair e on). When you transliterate it into Hebrew and add up the value of the Hebrew letters. It adds to 666. So the number 666 simply refers to "BEAST".

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 14:1-13 (NASB)

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion

14 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was* like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps. ³ And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These *are* the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

Vision of the Angel with the Gospel

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷ and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

⁸ And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

Doom for Worshipers of the Beast

⁹ Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." ¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Prayer

Father we thank You for this Revelation that You have given to us. We thank you for the encouragement and the blessings that are found within it. I pray that you might grant to us eyes to see and ears to hear that which is being revealed here. That it will generate

endurance for our faith and generate the fruit that You desire from each of us. I pray that You will be among us morning and minister to us through Your Word. Please give me grace, clarity, and accuracy as try to proclaim this message. Most of all I pray that it will honor Your Son Whom You sent to die on the cross for our sins.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

As we begin this morning, I would like to ask you a question.

What is it that motivates you? What causes you to accomplish difficult tasks, or causes you to go beyond the call of duty at your job, or even accomplishing tasks that you do not really enjoy doing?

What is it that motivates you to do all of that? I would assume that you are willing to do these things because, in the end, you have an expectation that you, in some way, will be rewarded for all of your efforts. If it is in school maybe you are hoping to get good grades and maybe even a scholarship to college. If it is in sports maybe you are hoping to win in the competitions and go to the playoffs at the end of the season. If it is your job maybe you are expecting a raise or a promotion. Whatever it is, you have this hope that you will receive something back for all of your efforts.

In the same way, what is it that motivates you in your Christian life? Especially when it is hard or uncomfortable. Our passage this morning is going to suggest that it is the same thing that motivates us in all of those other real life scenarios. It is this hope that there really is a reward on the back end for holding fast and enduring to the end. This vision was written to tell us that God wants to produce perseverance and endurance in us and ensure us that there **will** be a reward in the end for all of our efforts. **The goal is perseverance!**

We will also discover that there is an enormous contrast between our future destiny and the future destiny of the beast and those who follow him. Let us begin.

BODY:

I. THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION.

Revelation 14:1-5 (NASB)

14 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Remember chapter 7? We know that the 144,000 is not a random number nor is it a literal number. Rather it is a symbolic number. 144,000 is a derivative of 12. It is 12 x 12 x 1000. The 144,000 represent the complete people of God. Remember the twelve tribes of Israel? They represented the complete people of God in the Old Testament. The twelve apostles were chosen to bear witness to what Jesus did and spread the good news of the gospel to the whole world. Everyone who accepts that Gospel represents the people of God in the New Testament.

Want to hear something interesting. John tells us here that those who have the seal of God have "**His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads**". "His name"

is **Lamb** in the verse and the Father's name is **God**. If you take the Greek word for God (Theos), the Greek word for lamb (Arneon), transliterate it to Hebrew, and use gematria on those two names, guess what it adds up to? **777**. Isn't that interesting? The number **seven** stands for completeness and perfection. Three sevens would indicate total completeness or perfection. The number **six** falls short of completeness. It symbolizes man and human weakness.

So those who worship Satan are marked with 666 the number of sinful man and it appears that those who worship God are marked with 777 the perfect number of God.

These seals and marks represent ownership. What John is saying is this...the God that you worship should be as clear as if it were written on your hand or your forehead. All of us are either marked with the Seal of God or the Mark of the Beast and that mark indicates who owns us. There is no compromise with God.

There is a difference between a seal and a mark. They both designate ownership. But a seal goes beyond just ownership. It signifies security and protection by the one who placed the seal.

For example. When the tomb of Jesus was sealed by Herod, it did not only say that it was the property of Herod, but it also declared that the seal was under the authority and protection of Herod and anyone who might break that seal was subject to death.

So the reason that Satan's followers are said to have a mark is because it does not protect one from the wrath of God.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.

We have heard these voices and loud sounds before haven't we? Except this time the voice is very beautiful, like a **jubilant massive** choir that sings in perfect harmony.

3 And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders;

Huh! I thought the 144,000 in chapter 7 were on earth? Where are they in this verse? **(Pause for response)** They are in heaven aren't they?

What does that tell you? **(Pause for response)** Christ has come again and it is all over. We are at the end of time **again**.

and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

Only the 144,000 could sing this new song because only they could experience the glories of being ransomed and redeemed by the Lord. They were singing a new song concerning the glory that they have and are still experiencing. Only those who have been saved from the bondage of sin can participate in this song. Every time that God's people experience a massive victory and deliverance that God has won for them, they break out in song.

4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

Remember we are in a vision. The vision was written to symbolize something that has a spiritual meaning. The statement concerning the virginity of the 144,000 does not suggest that they are all males who have never had a sexual relationship with a woman. We know from scriptures that sexual relations with your wife is approved by God.

Instead this has to do with the loyalty and fidelity of God's people with the Lord. The scriptures often relates purity with spiritual loyalty. If someone is referred to as a harlot, it suggests that they lack purity and loyalty to the Lord. This scripture is talking about those who have remained loyal to the Lord. They have not chased after other Gods, but they have stayed faithful with the Lord.

The church is often referred to as the bride of Christ. Jesus refers to it in the parable of the ten Virgins. We will also see the bride referred to several times in the latter chapters of Revelation.

Revelation 19:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” ⁸ **It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

So it is not men who are virgin. It speaks of the true **church**, the bride of Christ, who has been loyal to the Lord. They are found blameless because Christ paid for their sins on the cross and are now found righteous before God.

II. THE ANGEL WITH THE GOSPEL.

Revelation 14:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷ and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

Now the vision has shifted once again. We find ourselves back on earth. We see an angel which symbolically represents the gospel being sent into the whole earth to call everyone to repentance in light of the impending judgment. This is exactly as Jesus foretold in Matthew 28 that the gospel would be proclaimed to the whole earth before He would return again.

⁸ And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”

A second angel announces the fall of Babylon. Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BC, Babylon and the Babylonians have symbolized the pagan powers of the world who have oppressed the people of God. So again, this is not talking about the fall of the city of Babylon which is in modern day Iraq. Instead it symbolizes the world systems that seeks to seduce the people of God into idolatry and promotes the persecution of God's people. Thus Babylon is portrayed here as a sleazy harlot.

III. DOOM OR VICTORY.

Revelation 14:9-13 (NASB)

⁹ Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; (What is he saying? Worship is war. Who you worship determines which battle you are fighting.) and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (How long until You avenge our blood? God is showing how He is going to avenge their blood by tormenting those who killed them forever and ever because they refused to repent even after they were told to repent and fear God.)

¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. (If we want to escape the wrath of God we MUST PERSEVERE!)

Listen to this because we are about to hear another beatitude. The beatitude is going to give us the purpose of this vision.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'"

Christ has conquered death. We no longer fear physical death when we have the seal of God on our foreheads. Death, where is your victory? Where is your sting?

CONCLUSION:

The difference in WHO you follow is a future of eternal rest versus a future of eternal restlessness. How wonderful it is to know that there is a reward at the end of a faithful life. You can see the reward and work toward that prize while sitting on this side of eternity. We need to have that prize set before us because it motivates us to remain steadfast before the dragon and his two beasts that are assaulting the church and trying to deceive it with a flood of false doctrine. They are trying to lure you to do worldly things.

There are all sorts of conflicts, and struggles, and temptations, and deception, and persecution, and opposition, and ridicule. Events that would make us ask WHY? Why walk with Christ? Why follow Him? Why should we have to put up with all of this?

So once again I ask you, "What is it that motivates you?" For the beast and those who follow it, there is an ETERNITY of torment and unrest. But for those who follow the Lamb, there is eternal refreshment.

¹² Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

Do you **REALLY** believe that there **is** a reward reserved for you when your life is over? **If you DO**, are you just **hearing** these words or are you **living** them?

This is the Day!