



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 9 – The Work of the Beasts and the Work of God

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is to understand the interpretation of chapters 13 and 14:1-13 of the Revelation, with particular emphasis on the identification of the counterfeit trinity.

NOTES ON REVELATION 13

13:1 “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”

This chapter continues God’s “dramatization” of world history from God’s point of view. The drama unfolds through the actions of seven players (the woman, the man child, the red dragon, the remnant, the beast from the sea, the beast from the land, and the scarlet harlot). We were introduced to the first four players in Chapter 12. In Chapter 13, God will introduce the beasts from the sea and land. The translation here is better “And he” and not “And I.” It is a continuation of the thought from the preceding verse, 12:17. The “he” refers to the great red dragon, Satan. It is the dragon that stands on the sea shore to meet the beast that rises up out of the sea. The sea in the Revelation typically represents the Gentile nations (see Revelation 17:15). The beast, then, comes out of the Gentile nations, and not Israel. This does not mean that the beast is a Gentile, merely that his rise to power is among the Gentile nations. The description of the beast from the sea reminds us of the description of Satan in Revelation 12:3, for both Satan and this beast have seven heads and ten horns and crowns on each of the seven heads. In our study of Chapter 12, we identified the seven heads as, in chronological order, the seven primary Gentile world powers that have opposed God and Israel (the woman of Chapter 12) throughout human history: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the New Rome. This conclusion about the identification of the heads flows from Daniel 2 and 7, as well as Revelation 17 (we will hold off commenting on Revelation 17 for now). Recall from Chapter 12 that the dragon was a double referent, primarily to Satan, but also to those Gentile nations through whom Satan has worked his will (the seven heads). We saw in Chapter 12 that there is spiritual warfare that has been ongoing since the beginning between Satan and his demons, and Michael and the angels. The dragon pictures Satan and the Gentile world powers from the perspective of this ongoing spiritual warfare. The beast from the sea pictures those same world powers, but from the perspective of the ongoing physical warfare; this is the human and physical side of the equation. That the dragon and beast look the same is to say that the beast is like the dragon and controlled and influenced by the dragon. The beast is the human personification of the dragon throughout history in countless individuals who opposed God and His people. The ten horns represent kings, a ten-country federation that is the revitalized or New Rome (the latter phase of the legs and feet of Daniel 2 or the fourth beast of Daniel 7). Recall from Daniel 7 that there is an eleventh horn that secures his power by destroying three of the ten horns; he is called the “little horn” or Anti-Christ. The crowns indicate political power or dominion. The blasphemous names appear on the seven heads; those names are probably the names of the countries, but whatever the names, the point is that the names indicate their opposition and rebellion to God.

13:2 “And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

In Daniel 7, Daniel wrote at a time when the first two heads of the dragon (Egypt and Assyria) had already fallen off the pages of history to be replaced by the third head (Babylon). Daniel looked forward (by God’s giving him a vision) through the corridor of time and saw the lion (Babylon), the bear (Medo-Persia), the leopard (Greece), and the fourth beast (Rome). John is looking backwards down the corridor of history, and therefore he lists the Daniel 7 beasts backwards, looking at the leopard, the bear, and the lion. But what he is actually describing is the fourth beast, or Rome, which we know from Daniel 7 was something like an amalgamation of the first three beasts. That is the point made here as well. The fourth beast of Daniel 7 and the beast from the sea are essentially one and the same. The beast from the sea has seven heads, but all seven heads do not exist contemporaneously in time. Instead, at different points in human history, a different head of the beast existed. At the future point in time that John is seeing, the seven headed beast from the sea is manifesting on the stage of human history as Daniel’s fourth beast (which here is the seventh and final head). We are near the end of God’s program for human history before His establishment of Jesus’ eternal kingdom. It is most significant that Satan himself gives the beast from the sea his power, his seat (or throne), and authority. God’s understanding of human history is so contrary to what most people believe. From God’s perspective, much of human history and the impetus behind the events that have transpired has all been about the warfare between the dragon and God, the dragon’s attempt to devour the man child and destroy the woman, and the dragon’s working through the beast of the sea to accomplish this. Make no mistake about it, the Gentile powers throughout history that have oppressed Israel were the agents of Satan himself. But also make no mistake that there are precisely seven heads because Satan can only do what God has permitted him to do. Satan has, throughout history, worked through individuals, giving them power and authority, to have them persecute the woman. We continue to see this in our own day. At this point in the Revelation, the beast is manifesting itself as the Anti-Christ or Daniel’s “little horn.”

13:3 “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”

John now sees one of the seven heads of the beast of the sea wounded to death, then healed, with the result that the world’s population at the time begin to worship the beast of the sea. Remember, the beast of the sea manifests in real people. The “little horn” has taken over and fundamentally is the seventh head of the beast, and it is that head which has been wounded to death. The phrase “wounded to death,” in the Greek, is the same construction as we find in Revelation 5:6 in reference to Jesus, as a lamb “as it had been slain.” Just as there, the indication is that the head (Anti-Christ) actually died. Some expositors hold the view that the Anti-Christ fakes his death and resurrection, or only comes near death and then his health is restored. Others hold that this is metaphorical for a political destruction and political revitalization. The problem, besides the plain text indicating an actual death, is that we see in the next verse that the result of this death and resurrection is that the world worships the beast. A miracle health or political recovery will not result in worship. I am not suggesting that Satan has the power to resurrect, but I am suggesting that God has likely permitted this to occur. Even if this does not indicate a true death and resurrection, it appears as such and has the result that people worship the beast. The significance is that the Anti-Christ not only opposes Christ, but in fact claims to

be God. He is likely Jewish and will make Messianic claims, and in order to be accepted as such, he needs to die and be resurrected (he will need more than that, and we shall see that there is more to it). He is probably assassinated, just as he assassinated three kings to secure his power. Notice that “all the world” wondered after the beast. Again, to get the world’s worship will take a feat of great significance like a death and resurrection.

13:4 “And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”

The world not only worships the beast after his miraculous resurrection, but also worships Satan. It appears that the (unsaved) world recognizes that Satan is the source of the beast’s power and the world is ok with it. The world’s attitude is revealed in the rhetorical question, Who is like unto the beast? The world believes the answer is no one, for after all, he was killed (probably assassinated, as the second rhetorical question suggests) and resurrected. But we know, as do the Christians living at the time, that there is one much greater than the beast, the man child of Chapter 12. They ask a second rhetorical question, revealing again their belief that the beast is God, for they believe he is omnipotent and no one can defeat him. And again, we and the Christians living at the time know that Jesus is imminently returning to make war with the beast and will have a quick and easy victory over the beast.

13:5 “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

This verse helps us tie this passage into Daniel 7. Recall from Daniel 7 that the eleventh horn or the “little horn” always spoke “great things.” (Daniel 7:8, 20) The beast is the “little horn.” He is doing here precisely what Daniel’s vision showed him would happen, namely blaspheming and challenging God. Recall what happened to Goliath when he challenged God. This beast is going down. Notice the repeated use of “given,” a key word in this Chapter. God will allow the beast to exercise and enjoy power for 42 months, that is, three and a half years. This is consistent with Daniel 7:25; the power given to him is God’s allowing him to overcome the saints for three and a half years. It is not the case that Satan wins some battle, but loses others and retreats and regroups, while God also wins some but loses some. Satan (and his beast) only accomplishes that which God allows. God is permitting the beast to have three and a half years, from roughly the mid-point of the Tribulation when his forces overrun Jerusalem until the end when Jesus returns and delivers a crushing defeat to Satan and the beast.

13:6 “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”

The Anti-Christ is always “running his mouth.” He hates God and his words show it. He blasphemes God and his Temple. This reflects the fact that God’s Temple in Jerusalem will be reconstructed by this time. The Anti-Christ also blasphemes those that dwell in heaven; probably saints and angels are in view.

13:7 “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”

This is the same thing Daniel was shown in Daniel 7:21. The Anti-Christ cannot make war with the saints on his own; God has permitted it (“given unto him”). Moreover, God, for His sovereign purposes, allows the Anti-Christ and his armies to overcome the saints. This

means, as we have already seen before, that he is able to take Israel. The remnant (the woman) escapes to the wilderness. The beast not only takes over Israel, but effectively the entire world. God allows this to demonstrate His glory when the fifth kingdom (the rock cut without hands from Daniel 2) crushes the seventh head of the beast.

13:8 “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

The point here is a simple one. Every person who is not a Christian, without exception, will worship the Anti-Christ. There will be no “atheists” as such. People will worship the real Messiah or the counterfeit one. The indication about the names written in the Lamb’s book of life is not that the names were written from the foundation of the world (i.e., from before Genesis 1:1), but that within the Godhead (the trinity), the decision that God the Son (the Lamb) would die for the sins of the world was made before the world was made. God’s plans are never thwarted and so from that point the plan of salvation was a done deal. Accordingly, God the Son can be referred to as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

13:9 “If any man have an ear, let him hear.”

It is as if John says “listen up, this is important.”

13:10 “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”

The point here is that vengeance is God’s and he will take it. Anti-Christ will pay for his actions, and those that follow him will all pay for their sin. The saints are to be patient, and in faith understand where these events fit into God’s plan, and that God will prevail (and the saints with him).

13:11 “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”

We now meet with the sixth of the seven players on the stage of world history. This is a second beast. There are two Greek words in the New Testament translated “another.” There is the Greek *allos* which means another of the same type, and the Greek *heteros* which means another of a different type. (Galatians 1:6 uses *heteros*, and 1:7 uses *allos*) Here, the word “another” is the Greek *allos*, indicating that this beast is cut from the same cloth as the beast from the sea. This beast comes up out of the earth (or land), that is, Israel. We know the earth (the Greek word *ge* can also, depending on the context, be translated land) here is Israel because the sources of the two beasts, land and sea, are set in contrast in this chapter, and since the sea is all Gentiles (see, e.g., Isaiah 60:5; Revelation 17:15), the land must be all that is left, namely Israel. Moreover, referring to Israel as the land is common in the Old Testament (see, e.g., Daniel 8:9, 11:16, 11:41; Hosea 1:2, 9:3; Joel 1:2, 6, 2:18). Thus, he is a person and he is Jewish. He has two horns, indicating power, though not power like Jesus, who had seven horns. But like Jesus, he is pictured as a lamb, a picture of peace. This beast (God’s perspective) will be viewed by the world as a lamb. His deeds will send the message that he is a lamb, but his words, if anyone will listen with discernment, reveal he is not at all like the Lamb, but rather, is like the dragon. (1 John 4:1-3) As I will defend below, the beast from the land is a false religious prophet, completing the unholy trinity (Satan, Anti-Christ, False Prophet). Remember, the Anti-Christ is a counterfeit Messiah, and this is his counterfeit Elijah (recall Malachi 4).

13:12 “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”

The beast from the land has all of the same power as the beast from the sea, which is no surprise since both beasts get their power to deceive the world from Satan. Like John the Baptist, whose role was to point people to Jesus, fulfilling in part both Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 4, the beast from the land points the peoples of the world to the Anti-Christ and leads them to worship him. The last clause of this verse “whose deadly wound was healed” suggests that the primary basis for the False Prophet’s pitch to the people is the supposed or actual resurrection of the Anti-Christ. He is pointing to the Anti-Christ as God.

13:13 “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,”

The False Prophet is a counterfeit Elijah, and in my view will likely misuse the Bible as so many cults do today. The beast calls down fire from heaven just like Elijah did (recall 1 Kings 18). People will witness it and accept him as an Elijah figure, and will accept Anti-Christ as a Messiah. Understand that these are real miracles, just as were the ones done by Pharaoh’s magicians. (Exodus 7:11-12) Miracles do not necessarily vindicate the truth of the message. The False Prophet looks like a lamb (but with no wounds because he has not died for anyone’s sins) and does miracles. Most people look to miracles as a vindication of the message. But the only certain way to measure the message is to listen to the words and compare them to Bible doctrine. Remember, his words are those of the dragon, and that is the give away, not the signs.

13:14 “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*”

Unlike Jesus, the False Prophet is not truth. Like Satan, he is a deceiver, for the world believes the message based solely on the miracles performed in the presence of the Anti-Christ. The False Prophet brings in idolatry by having the people make an image or bust of the Anti-Christ. Note that this verse again confirms the Anti-Christ’s death and resurrection, likely by assassination, and it is this miracle more than any other that is used as a basis for the creation of the image.

13:15 “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.”

However it is done, the image of the beast is animated. The idea is that there is an inanimate face that, by the hand of the beast of the land, becomes animated. It appears to be alive and it speaks with intelligence. The image itself calls on the people to kill all those who will not bend the knee to the image. This, in part, explains the Tribulation Martyrs, for they are the only ones who will not bend the knee.

13:16 “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:”

As part of the attempt to exterminate the Christians, those who worship the Anti-Christ and his image receive a mark on their right hand or foreheads. There has been much speculation on what the mark is. It may be something visible, like a tattoo, or something invisible.

Given the purpose of the mark in the next verse, the mark may be some sort of technology like a microchip. Every person without exception will either take the mark and worship the beast, or risk death for refusing the mark.

13:17 “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.”

The mark enables one to purchase. This means that a man without the mark cannot purchase food for his family. There will be immense pressure, to the point of death, to take the mark and worship the beast. The alternative for many will be martyrdom. There is no gray area of safety and political correctness; it is either the mark and damnation, or no mark and a high probability of martyrdom. This verse implies a universal money in order to enforce the rule that only those with the mark can buy or sale. By controlling the form of money and who gets the money, the Anti-Christ controls who can buy and sell.

13:18 “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

We cannot determine at this point who Anti-Christ is. Many people have their pet theories, devising coding systems to translates persons names into numbers to derive the number 666 (e.g., a is 1, b is 2, ..., j is 10, k is 100, l is 200, etc.). Some work with the Hebrew alphabet, others with the Greek, and yet others with the English. All are incorrect, and too many are too dogmatic and too willing to “devise” a system to fit the desired end result for who they want to identify as the Anti-Christ. I believe God has implanted this code in a way that we cannot determine now, but for the Tribulation Christians the deciphering will be obvious. They will have zero doubt about who Anti-Christ is and zero doubt about the veracity of this book. For us, the main significance is that God’s number is 7 and God is “holy, holy, holy.” Satan’s number is 6, for he is not divine, but a mere created being, “six, six, six.” He is inferior to God and, ultimately, the kingdom of Christ will triumph over Satan and the world.

NOTES ON REVELATION 14:1-13

14:1 “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

The beasts from Chapter 13 are not going unopposed. Despite all of their efforts to deceive those alive during the Tribulation, Jesus is also working to reach people at this time. The Lamb (recall Chapter 5) is Jesus. He stands on Mount Sion in Jerusalem and with him are the 144,000 that were first introduced in Chapter 7. Recall from Chapter 7, that while we were not told much about them, it was strongly implied that they are evangelists. This verse tells us that they are Christians; for they are sealed by God the Father and they stand together with Jesus. This latter point implies what we will be told explicitly in verse 4, namely that they do the will of Jesus, for they stand together. Moreover, this suggests that they are safe. Note that there are 144,000 of them here, at a point in time near the end of the Tribulation, just as there were 144,000 in Chapter 7 at the beginning of the Tribulation; God has not lost a single one, and no surprise, for He sealed them. Finally, note that it is not arbitrary that they are at Mount Sion (or Zion). Often in the Old Testament, Mount Sion is associated with Jesus’ kingdom rule as King of Kings (e.g., Psalm 2:6, Isaiah 2:3). That the 144,000 are with Jesus in this place and at this time indicates that they will rule with Jesus.

14:2 “And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:”

We are not told who the voice from heaven is, but the voice is loud like many waters (i.e., the rushing of waters over a fall or rapids) and thunder. This may be the voice of God the father. John also hears music. The music will accompany the “new song” introduced in the next verse. The soft, melodic sounds of the harps are in sharp contrast to the “many waters” and “great thunder.” The latter are sounds of judgment while the former are of mercy.

14:3 “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

We were first introduced to a “new song” in Revelation 5:9. There, the new song was introduced after Jesus took the seven-sealed scroll (title deed to creation) from God the Father. The new song indicates that the time of Jesus’ second coming and establishment of his earthly kingdom is at hand. Now, there is another new song being sung before the throne of God the Father (just as before) and before the cherubim and 24 elders. Recall that the “four beasts” are the four cherubim (angels) that surround God’s throne. The 24 elders were previously identified as saints, probably with leadership responsibilities. This is not the same song as the one in Chapter 5, however, this song can only be learned by the 144,000. I believe this is a special song for the 144,000 in view of their devotion to Christ and their special evangelistic ministry; it is a song only they know because it is born out of their experience during the Tribulation.

14:4 “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

Here, we learn more about the 144,000. They are virgins, and are, therefore, likely young. Also, they are all male. They are disciples of Jesus, doing his will on the earth. They are also called “firstfruits” unto God and Jesus. The idea is that, in terms of salvation to the people of Israel during this time, the 144,000 are the first; for if they were the only ones, then it would be nonsensical to call them firstfruits. Others will follow their example, probably in response to their testimony. This will be a time of great revival in Israel, as God always promised in the Old Testament. (e.g., Zechariah 12:9-10) The fact that they are unmarried virgins is related to their devotion to Jesus Christ and the ministry. Paul dealt in 1 Corinthians 7 with the issue of marriage, and in that passage he advised against it for those who are able to be celibate without sinning. The reason was that a married person has priorities to God and their spouse, whereas the unmarried (assuming he/she has the gift of celibacy like Paul, 1 Corinthians 7:7) does not have split priorities. This issue is probably in view here. These young men are totally separated to God, to do His work.

14:5 “And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

The 144,000 are without guile in their mouth; in other words, their words are not deceitful. In light of the fact that they follow Jesus wherever he leads them, this verse probably indicates that they speak a truthful testimony of Jesus. For this reason, they are without fault

before the throne of God. This does not mean they are without sin, but rather, that they faithfully complete their ministry.

14:6 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,”

John will now focus on three angels. In plays in the ancient world, scenes and events that could not be done on stage were often handled by a person on stage giving a summary statement of the events that happened. Similarly, in the days of silent movies (before “talkies”), ideas that could not be adequately communicated through silent acting were communicated through a placard; the scene would go blank except for the words for the audience to read. These three angels will serve this purpose, giving us in summary form an explanation for events that are happening. John sees the first angel flying in heaven with the gospel for the whole earth. This verse relates back to the 144,000. What John sees as a symbol in heaven is a reality on earth, namely that the gospel has gone out to the ends of the earth as Jesus commanded in the Great Commission and as he predicted during the Olivet discourse would occur during the latter part of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:14). I do not think the angel preached the gospel, but it is as if he is carrying a banner through the air making the announcement publicly in heaven that the gospel has been preached faithfully to the ends of the earth, which was always God’s plan. The 144,000 played a key role in evangelism, particularly as to the nation Israel. The proximity of the discussion of the 144,000 to this first angel’s message is a picture of cause and effect. The 144,000 are absolutely on fire for God and their evangelistic ministry is tremendously successful throughout the entire world. Finally, note that the gospel is said to be “everlasting,” a descriptor that points to the fact that the gospel is unchanging and what it provides is good news forever – an everlasting gospel for everlasting life!

14:7 “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

This may not be what we would expect to hear from the angel as the gospel. The call is to fear God and give glory to Him. The people of the earth are up to their necks in idolatry, and so the message begins with a statement about the true God, the creator God. They must turn from their idolatry to the true God. What is about to unfold is God’s dealing with Satan and the beasts. The call is for all people to worship the creator God in view of His power and glory.

14:8 “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

The second angel provides a summary of an event that is the subject of Chapters 17 and 18, and so we will get much more detail there; the point here summarized and in the next few verses, given all that was said in the last chapter about the two beasts and their great power, is to give us a glimpse of the end of the Tribulation, a reaffirmation about who the victor will be. In this verse, another angel enters the scene to announce that Babylon, the “great city,” has fallen. The reason for Babylon’s fall is that she led astray the nations of the earth so that her punishment, God’s wrath for her fornication, is also the punishment of the nations. It is not just that she sinned, but that she influenced others to get drunk so that she could entice them to sin. The idea is that the nations will drink of the cup of wrath because they willingly drank the cup of fornication. The text here is full of symbols (it is

allegorical, although speaking of literal events). The fornication is spiritual apostasy and idolatry. The question arises, what does “Babylon” refer to? Commentators often identify Babylon as Rome or Jerusalem or some other city, and at least one commentator has identified it as the United States. The better view, as Dr. Morris indicates in his commentary, is to take Babylon to be the literal city. Other than Jerusalem, no other city has the history throughout the Bible that Babylon has. From the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 through to the Babylon that was a prominent city in Assyria, then the capital of the Babylonian Empire, and then the capital of the Medo-Persians, and then prominent in Alexander the Great’s Empire (Greece). All throughout history, this city has stood for everything that is opposed to God, and in particular has stood for false religion. More than any other, this city has always been Anti-God. That it will fall means that all that it stood for (false religion and opposition to the true God) falls with it. This verse is probably an allusion to Isaiah 21:9, which ties the destruction of Babylon to its idolatry. Since the original Babylon lies in ruins today, this verse may indicate its rebuilding is to be accomplished; the city is in modern Iraq and there have been efforts toward rebuilding it, so this is certainly conceivable. On the other hand, it may just be that the judgment in view here is not so much the city itself as it is everything it has stood for throughout time.

14:9 “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,”

Now, for the third angel and, therefore, the third summary of events. As we have seen so often, in heaven everything is loud, commanding our attention to the next event to unfold. Recall from the last chapter that the beast is Anti-Christ, a counterfeit messiah, and through his counterfeit Elijah (the beast from the land), he required worship of the animated image. What is in view here is that anyone who has worshipped the image and taken the mark on his forehead or hand is judged. This mark was first mentioned in Revelation 13:16-17, and the mark was the only means for a person to buy or sell, indicating that Anti-Christ totally controls commerce which means he totally controls the food supply. In order to have food and other necessities, a person must bend the knee to the image and take the mark.

14:10 “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:”

That same hard choice also means taking the wrath of God (pictured as drinking a cup of wrath). This is not to be taken lightly; that the cup is poured out without mixture means the wine is undiluted. The wine is figurative for God’s wrath, and thus indicates the severest (non-diluted) wrath. Those with the mark will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of Jesus and the angels. Although these people will be tormented on earth, I think this verse looks forward to their ultimate judgment by Jesus and dispatch to the Lake of Fire (we will discuss this point in more detail in Chapter 20).

14:11 “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

Further supporting the view that their eternal damnation is in view, the smoke from the brimstone and hell “ascendeth up for ever and ever.” They will never get any rest for this judgment. John repeats what led to this, namely their worship of the Anti-Christ and his animated image, and their receipt of the mark identifying them as his (these two things al-

ways go together). The decision to take the mark is the decision for all time to reject Jesus Christ, and therefore the volitional decision in favor of the Lake of Fire.

14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Now John switches focus from the unsaved in the Tribulation to the saved. These are those who keep God’s commandments and have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Their “patience” is their perseverance under these most difficult circumstances.

14:13 “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

An unidentified voice from heaven commands John to write. This is a blessing to the Tribulation saints. They will receive “rest from their labours” (a Sabbath reference; they look forward to a permanent Sabbath rest) and “their works do follow them,” that is, they will be rewarded for their works done for God. The patience of the saints, then, is their assurance of salvation even if they are martyred, and their assurance of rewards.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Tyndale House Publishers (1983)

RECOMMENDATION

It is highly recommended that each person taking this course read chapters 13 and 14 for this lesson and chapters 15 and 16 for next week in Henry M. Morris’ commentary.