

## **Study 28: Revelation 14:1-11**

**1 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.**

- When we left the last study, the mark of the beast was mentioned in one verse. So much has been written and there has been so much speculation about that one verse that mentions the sign 666. Yet the writer quickly returns the focus to the Lamb, where it should be.
- Remember, there were no chapters and verses in the original manuscript. Therefore, John saw the Lamb immediately after the warning about the beast. The central theme of Revelation is the ongoing and ultimate victory of God in Christ. The focus was not to be the beast or the antichrist.
- There was a company of 144,000 standing with Christ on Mt. Zion. They too had a mark on their forehead. Why isn't anyone speculating about what this mark is? Because most believe it is a spiritual symbol and not a literal mark. Then why would the mark of the beast be a literal mark? It makes no sense if you follow this logic.
- There aren't literally 144,000 only who are "saved" and standing with the Lamb. The number is symbolic. I have tried not to get too immersed in the meaning of numbers in this study. But 144,000 is 12 times 12 times 10 times 10 times 10 – two 12s and three 10s. Let's just say these are all numbers with positive meaning and implication, so this 144,000 represents the totality of God's government on earth.
- Since the 144,000 are standing on Mt. Zion, a location on earth, I believe the number represents the entire Church or number of saved on the earth at any one time.
- God's name is written on my forehead. He is always in front of me, always on my mind. When I look at myself closely, I am reminded to look at Him. When I get too into myself, I am reminded to think about Him,

**2 And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps.**

- Here is another loud noise from heaven. As we said in earlier studies, heaven makes its message and voice heard. You must work not to hear what God is saying. He is a great communicator.
- Even studying the heavens and creation speaks to the existence of God. What we see is too magnificent for it to be an accident. This speaks loud and clear to anyone who is interested to hear it.

- Since harps are mentioned here, many through history have felt that we will all play a harp when we get to heaven. Notice it doesn't say there were harps; John wrote that the sound resembled that of harps playing.

**3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.**

- God is so magnificent, so wonderful, that we must always be searching for new ways and words to express His glory and majesty. Those who behold Him regularly still see parts of God that they previously went unnoticed. These new insights require new songs. Those who do not know God, don't know what all the singing is about.
- Yet those that don't know God still sing, but they sing of their gods – love, money, sex, history, learning or relationships. All of earth sings, but only the 144,000 (the Church) for they are the only ones who know Him.
- Are you singing a new song? Is your relationship with God fresh, thus causing you to see and declare new aspects of Him that you haven't seen previously? If not, what can you do to sing this new song? Can you fast and pray? Read a book about God? Read more of the Bible? Attend a retreat or special conference? Remember:

**Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:8-10).**

- You often determine how God will meet you by your own approach. If you seek Him, He will allow you to find Him.

**The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty (Psalm 18:24-27).**

**4 These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.**

- These are not celibates in a natural sense, but they are celibate in that they have not joined themselves to anyone or anything but the Lamb of God. They have kept themselves pure from idolatrous defilement.
- Guidance is not a problem for the 144,000. They simply have to follow the Lamb. Guidance should not be a problem for you either. You simply commit to do God's

will before you know what it is, and He will show you. Rather He **must** show you if He expects you to do it.

- The problem is not that we don't know God's will, but rather that we don't want to do it. Often, God's will may represent a radical departure from the norm that scares us. We can then slow down the rate of obedience by praying or waiting for confirmation. I have done this many times in my own life and seen it done regularly.
- Are you delaying God's will in your life at this time? Is there anything you have ignored or are waiting for additional confirmation when you know already? If so, then please take steps of obedience today.

## **5 No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.**

- The mouth is the focus of much of our walk with the Lord. The Bible has much to say about the power of the tongue and its potential for evil, for the mouth reveals the condition of the heart. Without any commentary from me, read the verses below and evaluate your own walk with the Lord as it pertains to your mouth.

**Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water (James 3:5-12).**

**You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:34-37)**

**There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19).**

**Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment (Proverbs 12:18-19).**

**The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit (Proverbs 18:21).**

**6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth-- to every nation, tribe, language and people.**

**7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."**

- There is another loud voice, this time belonging to an angel who is declaring the "eternal gospel." This gospel is for everyone who inhabits the earth and it composes of three commands: fear God, give Him glory and worship Him.
- The message of the gospel is simple. Don't make it hard. Many people don't share their faith because they don't know what to say, don't have the answers to the questions that people ask. But keep it simple and straightforward and you can't go wrong.

**8 A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."**

- The second angel declared a different message concerning the fall of Babylon the Great. The Babylon of Daniel's time was an idolatrous place, with a god for everything and everyone. This declaration can hardly be noteworthy if the angel was referring to literal Babylon, for Babylon had been reduced to nothing centuries earlier than Revelation was written.
- The angel must be referring to something else. The truth is that the angel is declaring the end of any system who sets itself up against the Lord and His Anointed One. Once again I must ask you to keep in mind that the early church was under persecution from Rome. They were being told that the Roman system had already been judged and found lacking in God's sight. But they were told in "code" so that the message of Revelation, if read by a unbelieving Roman, would make no sense.
- The phrase "maddening wine of her adulteries" is so accurate. People run into error as if drunk. What they do makes no sense, yet they pursue their false interpretations of God and their idolatries with reckless abandon.

**9 A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand,**

**10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.**

- The third angel has another message, this time pertaining to the beast and his worshipers. We see now that the mark of the beast can be carried on the forehead or the hand, through how one thinks or what one does.
- Babylon had her wine, which men drank and God has His wine as well. His wine is drunk from the cup of His wrath. God is slow to anger, but once angered, His actions are irrevocable.
- The reference to sulfur is probably a reference to hell. Imagine the stench! Also the heat! And finally the torment of it all carried out in the presence of the Lamb and His angels. What torment hell must bring.
- Hell is not a state of mind. It is a physical place of torment.

**11 And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name."**

- The work of the Church has high stakes. Heaven and hell are the choices that people have and that is why we must urgently proclaim the message of His grace. What are you doing to lead people to the Lord?
- I am not a particularly gifted soul winner, but I do all I can to promote new church planting efforts and missions work. I want to support those who are effective evangelists because their work is so important.
- There is no rest for the wicked, or so an old saying goes. And this verse supports that claim. Those who worship the beast have no rest now, nor will they ever have any. It is hard to *not* serve the Lord.

**Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard (Proverbs 13:15) (KJV).**

- Are you doing all that you can physically and financially to see that people do not spend eternity in hell? I urge you to do so.