

### **Revelation 14a – Job Description of the Sealed**

**Revelation 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.”

**A Lamb** - Is the definite article and so refers to the Lamb mentioned in Revelation 5:6. This Lamb is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. (John 1:29; Daniel 7:13; Revelation 1:13)

**Mount Sion** - See Psalms 48:2. Revelation 14:1-5 is closely connected with Revelation 13:11-18. The 144,000 are shown here with the Lamb on Mt. Zion to indicate their triumph over the beast and his image. Earlier John had seen them passing through the severest trial as he had seen them condemned as worthy of death. But in their darkest hour they were delivered and are now with the Lamb secure from the conflicts of earth for ever.

Chapter 13 closed with the people of God in a deadly conflict and being severely persecuted by the mightiest powers on earth that the dragon can muster. A death decree has been passed and backed up by the supreme power of the land, that the people of God must worship the image and receive the **mark of the beast**. Here in the first 5 verses of chapter 14, we see a victorious company standing on Mount Zion, the same company who were going through the severest of trials in chapter 13. God's faithful, who have gotten victory over the beast, his image and mark and over the **number of his name** will be delivered.

There are two pictures given of the sealing of the 144,000 each different from the other and there is a good reason why the Lord gave these two different pictures.

- a)** - *In Revelation 6:14-7:4 we see a rather fearful, destructive and woeful time with the coming of the day of God's wrath. But it is made perfectly clear that only those who have the seal of God will be **protected** from His wrath.*
- b)** - *Revelation 14:1-5 describes to us the **character** of those who are sealed and thus describes to us the character of those who are protected. Emphasis of character is of interest for herein we also find the message of Righteousness by Faith which will give the pre-requisite character. The message of Righteousness by Faith is also contained in the 3 Angels Message, which is the last message of love to a world on the precipice of destruction. Also that they have accepted fully the Laodicean message with its remedy, Revelation 3:14-22.*

It is important to understand the *character* of those who are sealed (Revelation 14:1-5) but it is also important to know *why* they are sealed (Revelation 6:14-7:4) and that is *for their protection* during the day of wrath, just as the Israelites were

protected in Egypt when God's wrath was poured out upon the Egyptians. The blood was to be for them a token/mark/sign that when it was seen, the angel of death would pass over them. The token was the children of Israel's assurance of safety from the plague. Yet the mark of deliverance was quickly followed by the angel of death: '*this night*', Exodus 12:12-13. Therefore we shall see in the antitype (1 Corinthians 10:11, margin) that destruction will come promptly after the application of the sign of deliverance - the seal of God. One must grasp this understanding as it will help to take away much of the confusion.

This brings us to a natural conclusion that the sealing of God's servants is a special seal given for a special occasion, **a)** namely for the safety and security of the sealed ones, and, **b)** therefore it also distinguishes between those who are God's and those who are not, those assured of His protection and those who are not.

**Father's name written** - In Revelation 7:3 the 144,000 are said to be sealed "in their foreheads." The Father's name is said to be written in the forehead showing that the seal and His name are synonymous. Ancient seals contained the name of the authenticating agent. The names applied to the 144,000 represent (1) Ownership. The 144,000 belong to God; (2) Character. The 144,000 reflect fully the image of Jesus. So in scripture name denotes character, as the Greek word here used for name also means character, thus indicating that the 144,000 have reached a stage in spiritual growth, by the grace of God, where they fully reflect the character of Christ their Saviour and are ready for translation. Yet this is not all for notice the following;

In Isaiah 8:16 we find that God's law is to be sealed amongst His people. (the law is also a transcript of God's character, Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-8; 20:5-6) Every law must have a seal to be valid. This seal of the law is found in the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath Commandment.

**a)** - *The Sabbath is also a seal/a sign of creation, that God created all things, Exodus 31:17.*

**b)** - *It is also a seal/sign that God is the One Who sanctifies you (that is, the restoration of the image of God in man) Ezekiel 20:12.*

**c)** - *The way in which a believer receives the seal of the Sabbath is by hallowing it, Ezekiel 20:20.*

**1)** - *Hallow means, to keep holy, consecrate etc.*

**2)** - *In keeping holy the Sabbath day it shows ones allegiance to God, Exodus 16:4, 25-28.*

**d)** - *This is shown by the 144,000.*

**1)** - *They keep the law of God, Zephaniah 3:13, Revelation 14:5.*

**2)** - *Image/character of God has been restored in them, (sanctification) Revelation 14:1.*

**3)** - *Therefore the 144,000 are honouring the law and the seal of the law, the*

*Sabbath.*

**4)** - *Therefore they will be honoured with the seal of the Creator/Living God, Ibid 7:2-4, as the two go hand in hand at the end of time, they are inseparable.*

**5)** - *Only those who honour the seal of the law will be honoured by the seal of the Creator.*

It is also interesting to note that the seventh day Sabbath message is found to be a part of the last message to a world on the brink of destruction, within the 3 Angels Message, 1st) “*worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*” This is a direct link to the fourth commandment. 2nd) A call to expose the wine of Babylon (its false doctrines/teachings), whom the inhabitants of the earth have been made spiritually drunk with, of which Sunday sacredness is a part, is in direct opposition to the seventh day Sabbath. 3rd) the mark of the beast (Sunday sacredness) is in opposition to the seal of God, the Sabbath. Also, within the 3rd message, we have the keeping of the commandments of God, including the fourth. So within the 3 Angels Messages there is a strong, repetitious call back to the true worship of God, which should be of no surprise considering chapter 13 deals with forced worship at the end of time.

This raises an interesting point, for in rejecting the seal of the law, the Sabbath (the sign of allegiance to God); you will not receive the seal of the Living God, which only leaves one other option, that is, the mark of the beast. So while one group, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other in choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God.

It is also seen that the mark of the beast is to be enforced by coercion and laws, and is vying for the same position as the seal of God, the forehead. (Revelation 13:16-17; 7:3) Also, the seal of God and the mark of the beast will be a test question, as we see that there will be those who gain the victory over the beast, his image, and his MARK etc. (Revelation 15:2) And all of this is mentioned in connection with the outpouring of God's wrath, the seven last plagues, thus showing then that the seal is for the protection of the 144,000 during this time. This is also seen in Revelation 14:9-12, two groups are contrasted, those who receive the mark and those who keep the law of God, particularly the seal of the law, the Sabbath.

Those who keep the law, including the seal of the law which is the Sabbath (choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority), do not receive the mark of the beast but receive the seal of God for protection against the coming wrath of God. This seal is received while facing the threat of death by resisting the mark of the beast. The people, who accept the sign of submission to earthly powers, then receive the mark of the beast and are without protection from the wrath of God and are marked for death.

So the acceptance or rejection of the seal of the law will determine whether we receive the seal of God for protection or the mark of the beast and the wrath of God. By rejecting the seal you automatically, by default, receive the mark.

**In their foreheads** - The same location for the mark of the beast. (Revelation 13:16)

**Revelation 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.”*

**I heard a voice** - Some think that the harpers and singers here are not the 144,000, but the angels whose song only the 144,000 are able to understand. However, in Revelation 15:2-3 the 144,000 are clearly represented as having harps and singing. So others believe the 144,000 are also referred to in verse 2.

**Voice of many waters** - Or “sound of many waters” (Revelation 1:15)

**Voice of a great thunder** - Or “sound of great thunder.” Thunder is here as elsewhere is connected with divine presence (Job 37:4; Psalms 29; Revelation 4:5; 6:1)

**Voice of harpers** - Literally “sound as of harpers.” The sound that John heard was like that of harpers. Perhaps he did not see actual instruments being played hence his cautious identification.

**Revelation 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.”*

**No man could learn** - The experience is of such a personal nature that only those who pass through it can appreciate its significance. To them the song is a treasured and comprehensive summation of the experiences through which they have passed in the closing stages of the conflict between good and evil.

**Redeemed** - “to buy,” “to purchase.” The word is translated “buy” in Revelation 3:18; 18:11) Compare phrases “redeemed us to God” (Revelation 5:9) and “redeemed from among men.” (Revelation 14:4) Compare also Romans 3:24 and 1 Corinthians 6:20.

**Revelation 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.”*

**Defiled** - Meaning “to defile,” “to stain,” “to soil” such things as the conscience (1 Corinthians 8:7) or clothing. (Revelation 3:4) Here the reference is figuratively to the defilement of illicit relationships. (see below on “virgins”) The tense of the Greek verb refers the action to a specific period of time. Here to the time when the coalition of religious elements, symbolized by “women” (see below on “women”) will bring pressure upon the saints to renounce their fealty to God and His commandments and to join their organization. Any yielding would be an act of defilement. Now standing victoriously on Mt. Zion the saints are commended for their fidelity.

**Women** - Symbolically a woman is used in Scripture to represent a church, a pure woman the true church (Revelation 12:1) and an immoral woman the apostate church. (Revelation 17:1-5) The Church of Rome and various apostate churches who follow in her footsteps are symbolized by an impure woman and her daughters. It is to these churches that the prophet refers. (see above on “defiled”)

**Virgins** - A term applied to both men and women, here of men. This is clear both from the Greek and from the figure of “virgins” not being defiled with “women.” Because the whole passage is metaphorical, literal virginity whether men or women is not the point of consideration. If so, this passage would contradict other scriptures that commend the marriage relation. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) The saints are here called virgins because they have either kept themselves from Babylon or no longer have dealings with her. (Revelation 18:4) They have refused any connection with Babylon and her daughters at the time when these have become the agents of Satan in his final effort to eradicate the saints (Revelation 13:15) They were not defiled by association with this union by Satan, though they may formerly have belonged to one of the various bodies.

**Follow the Lamb** - This seems to point to some special privilege the 144,000 will have. The details are not revealed and hence is a matter of conjecture. See Revelation 7:14-17.

**Firstfruits** - “first fruits,” related to the verb *aparchomai*, “to make a beginning [in sacrifice],” “to offer first fruits.” The ancient Israelites offered first fruits to the Lord, both as personal (Deuteronomy 26:1-11) and as national (Leviticus 23:10, 17) offerings. The offering of the first fruits was an acknowledgement of the goodness of God in giving the harvest. The national offering also had typical significance (1 Corinthians 15:20)

The term “first-fruits” applied to the 144,000 may be understood in two ways.

- (1) As being the first installment or pledge of the great harvest. The 144,000 are those who are victors in the great conflict with the beast and his image. (Revelation 14:1) They are delivered from this struggle and are now safe before the throne of God.



## (2) As simply meaning “gift” or “offering.”

The 144,000 may thus be considered as “firstfruits” either in the sense of being a part of a larger harvest or in the sense of being a gift or offering to God.

You will find in 1 Chronicles 24:7-19, an organization of a 24 course of priests. These were to minister in the sanctuary under Aaron the high priest. This was still the case when Christ was upon the earth. (Luke 1:5, 8-9) Thus these elders are ministering in the sanctuary in heaven under Jesus Christ our high priest. But even more, when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, the priests gathered around the porch in the courtyard. We believe the earth is the courtyard because the altar of sacrifice represents Calvary. So While Christ is the High Priest and is in the Most Holy place, we must see the antitypical priest in the earth at a special place doing a special work. This is brought clear in 1Peter 2:9 and 2Corinthians 5:18-20 and Joel 2:12-17. As present truth church, we are not in the category of “The duty of the congregation during the Day of Atonement” but “The Duty of the Priests During the Day of Atonement”. I can just say Seventh Day Adventism has suffered an Identity Crisis when it comes to the Sanctuary message. So while the 24 elders are strong angels a representation of the angels on the curtain of the sanctuary and the cherubims overshadowing the mercy, we have another group in Revelation 14 called the 144,000, the firstfruits that follows the lamb wherever he goes representing the priests that gathered at the porch on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place.

In the sanctuary, the first-fruits were not the whole harvest but the choicest of those ready. There are arguments that the 144,000 are the saved of all ages, the whole saved from Adam to the last person but this is just a destruction of the sanctuary symbolism and typology. Also Malachi 4 talks about Elijah being send in the last days. The work of Elijah was to contend with Idolatry in Israel per se. He had no guile in his mouth neither was he defiled by any woman either physically or spiritually So I believe that the Elijah people are One True God believers and this is all about 144,000. He stood on a mountain to contend with this false worship. The 144,000 are standing on Mount Zion in their introduction to sounding the three angel’s messages which are aimed at Babylon that woman Jezebel as the papacy is called in Revelation 2:20. I have proved from other writings that the papacy is Jezebel. If you missed that refer to “Revelation 2b - The Imminent Return of Jezebel and Elijah”. Lastly, the same question posed in Revelation 6:17 is an update of Joel 2:11. Those who can abide are those in Joel 2:15, 16 blowing the trumpet in Zion, gathering the people, sanctifying the congregation, assembling the elders, gathering the children, and those that suck the breasts. According to Joel 2:17 these are the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weeping between the porch and the altar, and saying, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. There are no other people standing on Mt. Zion but when the question of Joel 2:11 and Revelation 6:17 is

asked but the 144,000. Hence it won't be erroneous to conclude that the 144,000 are the Elijah people, the priests at the porch on earth, those against false gods; the 144,000.

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

**Was found** - The form of the Greek verb suggests that a certain point of time is under consideration. At that point of time investigation proves the 144,000 to be faultless. This does not mean that they had never sinned but that by the grace of God they had overcome.

**Guile** - “deceit,” “subtlety,” “fraud” or “guile.”

### **The Three Angels' Message**

**Revelation 14:6-13** *“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, **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. **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. **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, **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: **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. **12** Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. **13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”*

We can see from the wording of the verses that the messages are successive, the third “followed” the second and the second “followed” the first, one being proclaimed after the other. It is also seen that one cannot accept the second angels message and yet reject the first angels message and likewise with the third. For one cannot embrace the truth of Babylon is fallen and the wine of Babylon yet reject the message of the everlasting gospel, the judgment hour message and the true worship of the Creator etc., when the teachings/wine of Babylon is contrary to these truths. Likewise, one cannot embrace the truth of the mark of the beast and his image etc., yet reject the truth of Babylon is fallen and what constitutes the wine of Babylon when both the mark and image are intertwined with Babylon and

its wine. The first angels' message prepares the way for the reception of the second and the second the third.

### **The First Angel's message**

**6. Angel fly in the midst of heaven** - This of course is symbolic of the saints who give this message, for it has not been given unto angels to go and preach the gospel, but unto men this commission has been given. Although the angels take a great interest in the affairs of salvation as ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14) to them has not been given this responsibility.

The heavens (flying in the midst of heaven is obviously referring to the atmospheric heavens, for the entire message is for those dwelling upon this earth, and thus to say that the angel is flying in the starry heavens or in paradise heaven is a mockery) encompass the entire earth showing the worldwide nature of the message, as Jesus stated “*And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*” Matthew 24:14. This is also evidenced by the statement that the message is to be given to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. And because it is a worldwide message there must likewise be a worldwide movement to proclaim it.

It is clear that this message is the last message to be given to the world, for the pouring out of God's judgments, the seven last plagues/the wrath of God, follows it. Also we see that the harvest follows this message. (verses 14-20) And we are told that the harvest is the end of the world. (Matthew 13:39)

**The everlasting gospel** - It is referred to as “the” everlasting gospel showing that there is only one gospel and that there has only ever been one gospel. Yet this does not push aside the understanding that there are different phases of the message that are emphasized at different times as appropriately needed or when relevance requires. In saying so, there is still one theme that runs like a thread through every phase of the message, from the beginning to the end, and that is salvation through Christ. The three angels' messages clearly constitute a part of the everlasting gospel.

To give a thorough understanding of the everlasting gospel just on this single web page is virtually impossible, instead a brief statement will be given.

The everlasting gospel (the glad tidings of salvation) was proclaimed to Adam and Eve before they were driven from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15) Noah was known as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) showing that he was a preacher of righteousness by faith, and it was only because he “*found grace in the eyes of the*



Lord” (Genesis 6:8) that he could proclaim the message of salvation from sin. Faithful Abraham taught the same glorious gospel (Galatians 3:7-9) and Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. (Hebrews 11:23-27) The children of Israel were given a good understanding of the gospel through the sanctuary and its services. (Hebrews 4:2) And so the list continues on. Just as there has been but one true church in all ages, there has also been but one gospel, which is everlasting in both time and results. It is identical with the “everlasting covenant.” There is but one gospel, one plan of salvation, one body or church, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one name by which we can be saved. (Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 4:12) The positive phase of the gospel throughout all the ages has been justification and righteousness by faith in Christ. (Romans 1:16-17) This is the good news phase of God's message to men. It is the very centre and core of the gospel around which all other truths cluster. The negative phase embraces the warnings against the prevailing apostasy of the age in which the message is being given. The negative phase therefore changes to meet the changing conditions. It warns against the agencies used by Satan to oppose the gospel. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, constitute the Satanic triumvir against which the final warning is given. Such a warning had never been given before because the same combination of evil had never before existed.

As we have already stated, Noah was a preacher of righteousness. While righteousness by faith was the centre and positive phase of his preaching which saved from sin, the negative phase was the warning of the sure results of disobedience, the coming deluge. His message was present truth for that generation, and regardless of their creeds and forms of religion, the eternal destiny of the antediluvians depended on their attitude toward the everlasting gospel as it applied to their time and conditions. The same was true of the message of Lot to the cities of the plain; of Elijah to apostate Israel; of John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles to the Jewish nation, and of the threefold message of chapter 14 to the modern world. The latter is God's message of present truth for the present generation, and regardless of the profession of godliness and forms of religion and the benefits derived from them in the past, the eternal welfare of all mankind depends on their attitude toward this heaven-sent message for our day. To accept it means eternal life; to reject it brings the vengeance of an offended and longsuffering God. Because of its preeminent importance and momentous consequences to all judgment-bound creatures, it is given with a “loud voice” so that all can hear and prepare.

There is an incredible amount of information contained in each of the three messages eg. in the first message we have the following topics - fear God - give glory to Him - judgment hour message - worship - and the message of the Creator and creation. It is impossible to give fine detail to these things with the limited space we have, so short explanations will be given.

**7. Fear God** - The word “fear” means to revere or reverence, clearly stating that we are to reverence God. Reverence is to prostrate in homage, or to make obeisance and worship. (which is to be obedient to the one you pay this homage to) From Proverbs 16:6; 8:13; 3:7 and Job 1:1, 8 we gain the understanding of what it means to fear God, it means to depart from evil/sin and walk in the path of righteousness; it is the promise of victory over sin. This is evidenced by the final verse in the third angels' message where we have the patience of the saints of God who actually keep the Commandments of God (Revelation 14:12) and also shown by the character of the 144,000. The word *patience* also translates to *endurance* and means those who endure tribulation, which are those who do not get the mark of the beast. Note the significance here in that those who do not get the mark keep the Commandments of God.

Of course the fruit of righteousness can only be manifest in a persons life as they, by faith, abide in Christ through Whom they can do all things. (John 15:4-5; Philippians 4:13; Romans 1:17) They do not manifest the lusts of the flesh, for they have crucified the flesh with the lusts thereof and have become a new creature in Christ walking in newness of life. (Galatians 5:16, 24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4; Galatians 5:22-23)

The message of “*fear God*” is a message and promise of victory over sin.

**Give glory to Him** - The following information is for the truly converted Christian that is willing to entirely devote themselves to God in every area of their lives.

We are told in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” In the first part of this verse we see the health message, glorifying God by what we eat and drink. Our bodies are not our own they are a temple/dwelling place for God. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19, 20) For we have been bought with the precious blood of Christ and thus should keep holy His purchased possession by eating and drinking that which He advises.

Man's original diet only consisted of nuts, grains, and fruit/berries. (Genesis 1:29) After sin this was changed through the introduction of root vegetables. (Genesis 3:17-18) After the flood God allowed them to eat clean meats as most of the vegetation had been destroyed by the flood. (Genesis 9:3) It is interesting to see that they had an understanding of clean and unclean animals before the flood. (Genesis 7:1-3) The introduction of flesh into the diet after the flood had a dramatic effect upon the longevity of the life of man. His lifespan dropped from 800-900 years to the 400's, 200's then 100's very rapidly.

The laws of clean and unclean meats were expanded upon in Leviticus 11:2-31 after Israel's bondage in Egypt, for they had lost much of the understanding of truth being in slavery to and steeped in Egyptian paganism. The way in which God had instructed to eat flesh was without either the blood or fat. (Leviticus 3:17) The blood of the animal carries the life of the animal (Leviticus 17:11, 14) and thus carries the nutrients, oxygen, diseases etc., to the body, and thus by partaking of the animals' blood you are partaking of its diseases etc., which ultimately brings about disease in the human body. Fat of animals plays a major part with heart disease etc. Whatever fat is solid at room temperature will have the same congealing/solidifying effect in the body. This is where we can see how our health relates to the spiritual life. An unhealthy diet creates unhealthy blood and thus poor circulation. This in turn clouds the mind and with the mind not being clear there is poor judgment. The Holy Spirit's impressions upon the mind are not discerned as easily, for the mind is sluggish and clouded. Thus spiritual things are not as easily discerned. There is so much more that could be said but space does not allow.

Proverbs 20:1 instructs us that we are to use total abstinence in the event of alcohol. Solomon describes the effects of alcohol upon the human mind and body in Proverbs 23:29-35. Woe, contentions, and babbling. Alcohol is a depressant, and it clouds the judgment and reason to the point that a person will fight to the death for no valid reason at all. The speech becomes very slurred and the conversation becomes gibberish. Wounds without cause, redness of eyes, balance progressively disappears as the alcohol takes effect on the mind, thus causing one to stumble and fall, injuring themselves but not remembering how it happened. The eyes become very bloodshot. Alcohol biteth like an adder, it is very unforgiving, it bits hard. Void of judgment, the passions are not under the control of reason and thus run riot. The mouth becomes perverse and vulgar. When all is said and done, they seek it again, for alcohol is addictive. It is easily seen that a true Christian will not partake of such a vulgar practice. With this type of effect upon the mind, it is not hard to see what effect it would have upon the spiritual well being of a person. Alcohol is behind a great deal of domestic violence, car accidents and many deaths and health problems. The Bible instructs us to drink the pure (if something is fermented it is not pure) blood of the grape (Deuteronomy 32:14) for there is a blessing in it. (Isaiah 65:8)

The Bible also speaks against unnatural stimulants in Deuteronomy 29:18, (Gall = Poisonous herb/poppy. (opium, an unnatural stimulant) Wormwood = Poisonous) We are not to be using drugs that cause unnatural stimulation on the system as they are damaging to the body and mind. It has been proven back in the mid 1800's that caffeine was one of the worst things that could be put into the body because of its debilitating effect upon the nervous and digestive systems. Not much need be said about nicotine, marijuana, speed and the many other drugs, some

with their addictive effects, others with their mind altering effects and all with health repercussions. They defile the temple/dwelling place of God.

We have not done justice to this incredibly large subject but we can sum it up in the following points. One should have adequate NUTRITION to have a healthy body and mind. EXERCISE should be a part of the daily life to keep the body and mind sharp and in good condition. WATER, pure and fresh should be drunk regularly to help the body stay clean. SUNSHINE is vital for the health of the body in correct doses. TEMPERANCE is the total abstinence of that which is bad and the balancing of that which is good. AIR, clean and fresh, aids for a good working body and mind. REST, adequately taken, helps the body to repair and regroup and helps to have a clear mind. TRUST IN GOD who is the Sustainer of all life and the great Physician. If these eight laws are abided by good health will result.

The second half of 1 Corinthians 10:31, deals with every other facet of our lives, “whatsoever ye do.” This means it has a direct relation to the way we dress and adorn ourselves, what we watch, read, listen to and the amusements we take part in, so we are to glorify God in every aspect of our lives. We must be “*proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:10) and not making any provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Romans 13:14) Therefore you will not (please take note of the two words that are used for we are not trying to promote in any way a monastic type of lifestyle. There are certain things that just cannot be avoided to live in this world) **purposefully** or **willingly** place before your eyes and listen to with your ears that which is evil or does not glorify God or entices you to break His commandments. (Psalm 101:3; Isaiah 33:15; Proverbs 19:27) The reading material, music, television programs, etc. must be proved to see if they are acceptable to God. Satan will work through the senses to gain his objective, the surrender of you to him, and this we see in the temptation of Eve, her sight, taste, hearing and no doubt her sense of touch were being enticed to draw Eve into choosing to sin. Philippians 4:8 is a very worthy test to put these things through to see if they are what the true Christian will partake of. The emphasis is that the devil will try and take you down in any way he possibly can and therefore every avenue should be carefully guarded. This is why the Bible says “*Keep (or, keep with all keeping) thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*” Proverbs 4:23. Once again so much could be said but space disallows it.

The true Christian will follow the principles found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 thus glorifying God by the way they adorn themselves. Clothing should be, a) modest, this means that, particularly for ladies, when you bend over people should not be able to see, putting it nicely, from north to south and when you hold both arms straight out from your side they should not be able to see from east to west, not revealing, **b)** with shamefacedness, which means the standard of dress is to be humble, not that which will attract unwanted attention to yourself, **c)** with sobriety, means temperate, discreet, **d)** not with braided hair. The plaiting of hair

is fine; it was the elaborate hair styles of the day that took a lot of time to do. Gold, coins and ribbons were plaited into the hair thus drawing attention to oneself. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of greater price than these to God. The true Christian will not participate in these things. More information can be found in, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, James M. Freeman, Published 1996. **e)** Dress should be without the use of gold or pearls. See also Genesis 35:1-4; Isaiah 3:18-24; 4:4. The painting of the face and the putting on of jewellery was a sign of moving into apostasy. (Ezekiel 23:40) Cross dressing is also an abomination in the eyes of God for it brings in confusion of the sexes, plus it was practiced amongst the pagan religions. (Deuteronomy 22:5) In chapter 12 the church of God is likened unto a woman clothed in natural beauty whereas the apostate church in chapter 17 is decked with the things of this world.

Tattoos are not in accordance with the Word of God (Leviticus 19:28) for they deface the temple of God as does body piercing. Tattooing and body piercing are a part of heathen customs and also a part of their spiritualistic/witchcraft practices.

God is looking for a peculiar people who will be ambassadors for Him. (2 Corinthians 5:20) An ambassador is a representative of his country and is dressed accordingly. If we are ambassadors for Christ we are representatives for Him and should show this by the way we present ourselves.

***The hour of his judgment is come*** - The reason for the message of “fear God and give glory to Him” is because “the hour of His judgment is come.” So we see that God, in His mercy, has given the message of victory over sin, the health message and the message of Christian standards for the purpose of preparing a people to be able to stand during the time of judgment. This shows that one is not judged according to what they profess but according to what they do, according to the character they have formed. There is no need to fear the judgment for if one is in a faith relationship with their Saviour it will naturally be shown by how they live (James 2:17-18, 26) faith establishes the law (Romans 3:31) and faith works by love (Galatians 5:6) the two are inseparable.

This judgment spoken of here began in 1844. To gain a good understanding of how this is worked out please see [Daniel and the Judgment](#).

This also brings to view the message of Christ our High Priest ministering on our behalf in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

***Worship Him that made*** - The first thing that is interesting to note is that the thrust of the previous chapter, chapter 13, is worship. The last part of the first angels' message is a direct quote from the fourth/Sabbath commandment of [the](#)



[Ten Commandments](#), which is a call to worship the Creator of all things. This message is a call to give your complete obedience and allegiance to the Creator of heaven and earth, of which the Sabbath commandment is the only one in which you show who you are giving this allegiance and obedience to. (this we dealt with when looking at the 144,000 at the beginning of this chapter and in chapter 7) It is a call to restore the Seventh day Sabbath to its rightful place as part of the Law of God. And it is this Law that is to be written in the believer's heart and mind, as a part of the New Covenant experience (Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-17), and have their sins blotted out. One who does not accept and keep holy the Sabbath day, *at the end of this world's history*, will not and cannot have the New Covenant experience, thus their sins will not be blotted out and they will be eternally lost. For how can one claim to have the New Covenant experience of having the Law of God written in their heart and mind yet completely oppose and reject the fourth commandment, the Sabbath, contained in this very Law? See [the Ten Commandments of God](#).

So as the world is being called to worship the beast (the papacy, see Revelation 13) and receive his mark (Sunday sacredness, see Revelation 13) there will be a faithful remnant who will stand up, in the face of great opposition, and give the Sabbath message, the message of the true worship of God. Even today there is a great movement against this message and against those who proclaim it. This opposition will increase, as we saw in the last part of the previous chapter, until a death decree will be passed for the extermination of those who persistently desire to honour God by keeping holy His [Seventh day Sabbath](#).

Those who persistently desire to oppose the Sabbath command are actually working in direct opposition to God and His last day message, which is to make ready a people prepared for their Lord, as seen here by the first angels' message. They are promoting the beast powers (the Papacy's) false system of worship and will, if they do not heed the call to come out of her my people (Revelation 18:4), unite with her in opposition to God and His people.

This call to worship the Creator of heaven and earth, etc., also comes at a time when the majority of the world including many in the Christian realm, are embracing some form of evolution. People today would prefer to worship the creature more than the Creator. (Romans 1:22-25)

There is a fundamental reason of why Satan attacks the message of creation with its Creator God. Throughout the Old and New Testaments you find that the one who has created you is also the one who redeems you. (Isaiah 43:1-3; 44:24; 45:11-12, 17-18; John 1:1-3, 12-14; Colossians 1:14-17; Hebrews 1:3) There is an incredibly powerful reason for this fact found in Romans 1:16, 20. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The type of power that saves is found to be that power which created the world. So in setting aside creation and the Creator they are setting aside the very power of the Gospel which redeems them/man from sin.

If God is not a God who has the power to instantly create things out of nothing, then He does not have the power to redeem/save.

The first angels' as being a part of the everlasting gospel message is a message of;

1. Of victory over sin, obedience to the Law of God through faith.
2. Contains a message on health.
3. A message dealing with Christian standards.
4. A judgment hour message, living in the time of judgment since 1844.
5. This also involves the work of Christ as our High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary.
6. Seventh day Sabbath, the fourth Commandment.
7. God is the Creator of all things.

Every one of the above points as contained in the first angels' message is under heavy attack from Satan. Believe it or not, and it is sad to say, the majority of the attack comes from other “Christians.”

**8. Followed** - Greek *akoloutheō*, “to accompany,” “to follow.” (see Matthew 19:27-28; Mark 1:18, where the word has the idea of accompanying Jesus personally) It seems to have both meanings in this text. In point of time the second angel follows the first, but it is also true that the first angel continues his ministry when the second angel joins him. In this sense the second angel's message accompanies that of the first.

### **The Second Angel's message**

**Another angel** - Textual evidence attests the inclusion of the word “second.” In some manuscripts the word for “second” stands in place of the phrase “another angel” and in others, as an addition to the phrase. Still other manuscripts read “a second angel” instead of “another angel.”

**Saying** - The first and third angels' messages are proclaimed with a “loud voice.” (verses 7, 9) The message concerning the fall of Babylon is later proclaimed with a loud voice.

**Babylon** - The ancient, literal city by this name was already largely a desolate ruin in John's day. (see Isaiah 13:19) As with so many other terms and expressions in the Revelation, the significance of this name (see Acts 3:16) may best be understood in terms of the role of its historical counterpart in Old Testament times (see Isaiah 47:1; Jeremiah 25:12; 50:1; Ezekiel. 26:13; Revelation 16:12, 16 and additional note on Chapter 18) The designation “mystery, Babylon” in Revelation 17:5 specifically identifies the name as figurative (see Romans 11:25; Revelation 1:20; 17:5; cf. on Revelation 16:12)

In Babylonian the name *Bab-ilu* (Babel, or Babylon) meant “gate of the gods,” but the Hebrews derogatorily associated it with *balal*, a word in their language meaning “to confuse.” (see Genesis 11:9) The rulers of Babylon doubtless called their city the “gate” of the gods in the sense that they chose to think of it as the place where the gods consorted with men, to order the affairs of earth. (see Judges 9:35; Ruth 4:1; 1 Kings 22:10; Jeremiah 22:3) The name thus seems to have reflected the claim of the Babylonian kings that they had been commissioned to rule the world by divine mandate. (see Genesis 11:4)

Babylon was founded by Nimrod. (see Genesis 10:10; 11:1-9) From the very beginning the city was emblematic of disbelief in the true God and defiance of His will (see Genesis 11:4-9), and its tower a monument to apostasy, a citadel of rebellion against Him. The prophet Isaiah identifies Lucifer as the invisible king of Babylon. (see Isaiah 14:4, 12-14) In fact, it would appear that Satan designed to make Babylon the center and agency of his master plan to secure control of the human race, even as God purposed to work through Jerusalem. Thus, throughout Old Testament times, the two cities typified the forces of evil and good at work in the world. The founders of Babylon aspired to set up a government entirely independent of God, and had He not intervened, they would eventually have succeeded in banishing righteousness from the earth. (cf. Daniel 4:17) For this reason God saw fit to destroy the tower and to scatter its builders. (Genesis 11:7-8) A period of temporary success was followed by more than a millennium of decline and subjection to other nations. (see Isaiah 13:1; Daniel 2:37)

When Nebuchadnezzar II rebuilt Babylon it became one of the wonders of the ancient world. (see Daniel 4) His plan to make his kingdom universal and eternal (see Daniel 3:1; 4:30) was a success to the extent that, in splendor and power, the new Babylonian Empire surpassed its predecessors. (see Revelation 2:37-38; 4:30) However, it also became haughty and cruel. It conquered God's people and threatened with defeat His purpose for them as a nation. In a dramatic series of events God humbled Nebuchadnezzar and secured the submission of his will. But his successors refused to humble themselves before God (see Daniel 5:18-22), and eventually the kingdom was weighed in the balances of heaven, found wanting, and its mandate revoked by the decree of the divine Watcher. (see Daniel 5:26-28) Later Babylon became one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, but it was partly destroyed by Xerxes. Over the centuries the city gradually lost more and more of its importance and eventually, toward the close of the 1st century A.D., virtually ceased to exist. (see Isaiah 13:19; Revelation 18:21)

Ever since the fall of ancient Babylon Satan has sought, through one world power after another, to control the world, and would probably long since have succeeded had it not been for repeated instances of divine intervention. (see Daniel 2:39-43) Undoubtedly his most nearly successful attempt to subvert the church has been

through the papal apostasy of the Middle Ages. (see Daniel 7:25) But God intervened to prevent the success of each subsequent threat to the ultimate accomplishment of His purposes (see Revelation 12:5, 8, 16), and the nations have never been able to “cleave” together. (see Daniel 2:43) Evil is inherently divisive. However, near the end of time Satan will be permitted to achieve what appears, briefly, to be success.

Apparently toward the close of the 1st century A.D. Christians were already referring to the city and empire of Rome by the cryptic title Babylon. (see 1 Peter 5:13) By that time the once magnificent literal city of Babylon lay, almost, if not altogether, in ruins, an uninhabited waste, and thus a graphic illustration of the impending fate of mystical Babylon. The Jews were again in exile under the merciless hand of Rome, even as they had once been exiled by Babylon, and Christians also experienced repeated sporadic persecution at her hand. Among Jews and Christians alike, Babylon thus became an appropriate and incriminating term to describe imperial Rome.

During the early Christian centuries the cryptic designation Babylon for the city and empire of Rome appears commonly in both Jewish and Christian literature. For instance, Book V of the Sibylline Oracles, a pseudepigraphical Jewish production dating from about A.D. 125, gives what purports to be a prophecy of the fate of Rome closely parallel to the description of that of mystical Babylon in the Revelation. Speaking of Rome as a “*wicked city*” that loves “*magic*,” indulges in “*adulteries*,” and has a “*bloodthirsty heart and a godless mind*,” and observing that “*many faithful saints of the Hebrews have perished*” because of her, the writer predicts her eventual desolation: “*In widowhood shalt thou sit beside thy banks. ... But thou hast said, I am unique, and none shall bring ruin on me. But now God ... shall destroy thee and all of thine.*” (verse 37-74; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 400; cf. Revelation 18:5-8) In 2 Baruch, another pseudepigraphical work of the 1st or 2d century A.D., the name Babylon is used of Rome in the same way as in the Revelation. (chapter 11:1; Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 486) Similarly, the writer of the Jewish Midrash Rabbah, on S. of Sol. 1:6, says, “*They called the place Rome Babylon.*” (Soncino ed., p. 60) Tertullian, who lived at the close of the second century, specifically declares that the term Babylon in the Apocalypse refers to the capital city of imperial Rome. (*Against Marcion* iii. 13; *Answer to the Jews* 9; see also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* verse 26. 1) Among the Jews of early Christian times Edom was another cryptic designation for Rome. (see Midrash Rabbah, on S. of Sol. 1:6, p. 60; also Talmud *Makkoth* 12a, Soncino ed., p. 80)

Babylon, both literal and mystical, has thus long been recognized as the traditional enemy of God's truth and people. As used in the Revelation the name is symbolic of all apostate religious organizations and their leadership, from antiquity down to

the close of time. A comparison of the many passages of the Old Testament where the sins and fate of literal Babylon are set forth at length, with those in the Revelation descriptive of mystical Babylon, makes evident the appropriateness of the figurative application of the name. (see Isaiah 47:1; Jeremiah 25:12; 50:1; Revelation 16:12-21; 17; 18) A perusal of these and other passages reveals the importance, also, of a thorough study of the Old Testament with respect to literal Babylon as a background for understanding the import of New Testament passages relating to mystical Babylon.

**Is fallen, is fallen** - Textual evidence may be cited for the omission of the second “is fallen.” The passage seems to echo Isaiah 21:9, where in the LXX textual evidence is divided between reading “is fallen” once or twice. The Hebrew repeats the term. Repetition lends emphasis to the message. It could also allude to the fact that Babylon has fallen twice, as in literal Babylon has fallen and spiritual Babylon has also fallen. Babylon is a comprehensive term that John employs to describe all religious bodies and movements that have fallen away from the truth. This fact requires us to view this “fall” as progressive and cumulative.

This prophecy of the fall of Babylon finds its last-day fulfillment in the departure of Protestantism at large from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. This message was first preached by the advent movement known as Millerism, (*William Miller, Baptist preacher*) in the summer of 1844, and was applied to the churches that rejected the first angel's message concerning the judgment. The message will have increasing relevance as the end draws near, and will meet its complete fulfillment with the union of the various religious elements under the leadership of Satan. The message of Revelation 18:2-4 announces the complete downfall of Babylon and calls upon God's people who are scattered throughout the various religious bodies comprising Babylon, to separate from them.

**That great city** - The adjective “great” is applied to Babylon consistently throughout the book of Revelation. (see Revelation 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 21)

**All nations** - The universal nature of the apostasy is here described. The substitution of human laws for the laws of God and the enforcement of religious decrees by the state will become universal.

**Drink** - A figure describing the acceptance of the false teachings and policies of Babylon. Coercion is suggested in the phrase “made all nations drink.” Religious elements will bring pressure to bear upon the state to enforce their decrees.

**Wine of the wrath** - The figure is probably borrowed from Jeremiah 25:15, where Jeremiah is bidden to “*take the wine cup of this fury ..., and cause all the nations ... to drink it.*” But wrath is not Babylon's object in offering the wine to the various nations. She contends that drinking of her wine will bring peace to nations. However, the drinking of it brings down on men the wrath of God.



Some suggest that the word here translated “wrath” (*thumos*) should be rendered “passion.” The passage could then be translated, “she has caused all nations to drink the wine of her passionate immorality.” (cf. RSV) However, elsewhere in the Revelation *thumos* seems to have the meaning “anger,” “wrath,” and that meaning should probably be adopted here also.

**Fornication** - A figure of the illicit connection between the church and the world or between the church and the state. The church should be married to her Lord, but when she seeks the support of the state, she leaves her lawful spouse. By her new connection she commits spiritual fornication. Compare on Ezekiel 16:15; James 4:4.

### **The Third Angel's message**

**If any man** - The Greek is equivalent to “he who.”

**The beast** - That is, the beast described in Revelation 13:1-10. The second beast solicits the worship of men for the first beast. It should be noted that this warning will have ultimate force only after the healing of the deadly wound and the formation of the image to the beast when the mark of the beast becomes an issue. As preached today, the third angel's message is a warning concerning issues to come, a warning that will enlighten men as to the issues involved in the developing struggle and enable them to make an intelligent choice.

**And his image** - The conjunction “and” identifies the worshipers of the beast with those of the image. A further conjunction identifies these worshipers with those who receive the mark. The beast and the image are united in their aims and policies and in their demand that men receive the mark of the beast. Hence, one who worships the beast also worships the image and is a bearer of the mark.

**10. Wine of the wrath** - That is, wine, which is the wrath. Men who drink of the wine of the wrath of Babylon's fornication (v. 8) will drink of the wine of the wrath of God. The warning is clear and plain. None need misunderstand.

**Poured out** - Literally, “mixed.” The clause reads literally, “which is mixed unmixed.” The potion is prepared without the usual addition of water. Compare this verse with Psalms 75:8, where the wine is apparently mixed with spices to increase its intoxicating power.

**Cup of his indignation** - Or, “cup of his wrath.”

**Shall be tormented** - Greek *basanizō*, “to torture,” “to torment,” “to distress.” Compare the use of *basanizō* in Matthew 8:6, 29; 14:24 (translated “tossed”); 2 Peter 2:8. The seven last plagues fall upon the worshipers of the beast and his image. (Revelation 16:2) In addition, these devotees of the beast rise in the second

resurrection and receive their punishment. (Revelation 20:5, 11-15) It is not clear to which phase of punishment the revelator here refers. Perhaps it is to both. In both there will be torment. The first will end in death when Jesus appears from heaven the second in eternal death.

**Fire and brimstone** - The figure is apparently drawn from Isaiah 34:9-10. Compare Genesis 19:24, where fire and brimstone are mentioned in connection with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**The presence** - Both the plagues and the destruction of the wicked after the millennium will take place upon this earth. However, in the latter case the camp of the saints will be upon the earth. Christ will be with His people, and doubtless many angels will be there.

**11. For ever and ever** - Greek *eis aiōnas aiōnōn*, literally, “unto ages of ages.” This expression may be compared with the phrase *eis ton aiōna*, literally, “unto the age,” generally translated “for ever” (see Matthew 21:19; Mark 3:29; Luke 1:55 etc.), or the phrase *eis tous aiōnas*, literally, “unto the ages,” also generally translated “for ever” (Luke 1:33; Romans 1:25; 11:36), or the adjective *aiōnios*, literally, “age-lasting,” generally translated “eternal,” or “everlasting.” (Matthew 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; etc.) Like *aiōnios* (see Matthew 25:41), expressions *eis ton aiōna* and *eis tous aiōnas* do not necessarily denote endless existence. But, it may be asked, Do not these expressions at times denote perpetuity? If so, should not the compound expression *eis aiōnas aiōnōn*, “unto ages of ages,” be regarded a more emphatic declaration of perpetuity?

This compound expression occurs elsewhere as *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*, literally, “unto the ages of the ages,” and in every case is connected with God or Christ, and so expresses endless existence. However, this meaning is derived, not from the expression itself, but from that with which it is associated. The expression itself means multiplied ages.

The following is a possible explanation of the use of the compound expression here. The subject matter is the torment of the worshipers of the beast in an inferno of fire and brimstone. The age of a man in such an environment would be very brief, so that if the expression *eis ton aiōna*, “unto the age,” had been used, it would be possible to conclude that the punishment would be but momentary. The compound expression shows that the torment would be for a certain period, not unending of course, as is evident from other scriptures that show that the final fate of the wicked will be annihilation. (see Matthew 10:28; Revelation 20:14)

The figure of the smoke ascending forever is doubtless drawn from Isaiah 34:10, where the desolation of Edom is described. That the ancient prophet did not envision unending fires is seen from the fact that following the conflagration, concerning which Isaiah 34:10 says, “*It shall not be quenched night nor day; the*

*smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*” It can be plainly seen that Isaiah did not envisage unending fires from the fact that following the conflagration in which he says, “*The smoke thereof shall go up for ever,*” the country becomes a desolate waste inhabited by wild beasts. (verses 10-15) The figure denotes complete destruction. see Malachi 4:1.

**Rest** - Greek *anapausis*, “cessation,” “rest,” “refreshment.” The meaning here is that for the duration of the punishment, which continues until death ensues, there will be no relaxation of the punishment.

**Day nor night** - That is, daytime, or night-time. The time of day matters not; the torment is continuous.

**Worship the beast** - The classification is repeated (cf. verse 9), doubtless for emphasis. The third angel utters a most fearful threat. The inhabitants of earth will be without excuse if they do not escape the entanglement here warned against. They should put forth every effort to discover the identity of the beast, his image, and mark, and to become acquainted with his wiles and policies.

**12. Patience** - Greek *hupomonē*. (see Romans 5:3) Here the translation “steadfast endurance” would be a more suitable rendering. The context calls attention to the fearful struggle with the beast and his image. Every attempt will be made to force the remnant to join the movement promoted by the second beast, including the threat of boycott and death. (Revelation 13:11-17) At the same time Satan will work with all “deceivableness of unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10; cf. Matthew 24:24), making it appear that the power of God is manifest in the movement. Through all this the faithful remnant steadfastly endure and maintain their integrity. Their steadfastness merits special commendation.

**Saints** - Greek *hagioi*, literally, “holy ones.” (see Romans 1:7)

**Keep the commandments of God** - This statement is particularly significant in its context. Led captive by Satan's delusions, the world will bow to the beast and its image, and carry out its dictates and decrees. The saints, on the other hand, refuse to comply with its demands. Do not miss this next crucial point and evidence to the mark of the beast. This group keep the commandments of God and by doing so do not get the mark. The special point controverted will be the fourth of the Ten Commandments. There is general agreement among Christians that the other nine are of universal obligation, but early in the Christian Era men began to set aside the seventh-day Sabbath and to substitute the observance of the first day of the week as the day of worship. (see Daniel 7:25) Sunday-observing Christians today set forth various reasons as to why they observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh, and as to why they feel free to ignore the original Sabbath. Some say that the Decalogue was abolished along with all Old Testament laws; others that

the time element in the fourth commandment is ceremonial but the observance of one day every seven is a moral obligation. In the Roman Church the claim was long made that the church had, by its divine authority, transferred the sacredness of the day. However, in recent decades attempts have been made to invoke the authority of Christ and the apostles. Since all those views are unsupported by Scripture, they are unacceptable to all for whom the Bible and the Bible only is the rule of faith. The crisis will come when symbolic Babylon prevails upon the state to enforce Sunday observance by civil law and seeks to punish all dissenters. This is the issue described in Revelation 13:12-17. In this dark hour those who cling to the Bible will refuse to give up the observance of the true Sabbath. Among the identifying features of the faithful ones that might have been mentioned, the prophecy points out two predominant marks: the keeping of the commandments of God and of the faith of Jesus.

**Faith of Jesus** - Or, “faith in Jesus.” The Greek may be understood either way, though the latter meaning is generally preferred. For the difference in meaning between the two expressions and for the importance of faith to Christian experience see Romans 3:22. The faith of Jesus and the keeping of the commandments represent two important aspects of Christian living. The commandments of God are a transcript of the character of God. They set forth the divine standard of righteousness that God would have man attain but which in his unregenerate state he cannot attain to. “*The carnal mind ... is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” (Romans 8:7) Despite his best attempts, man continually comes short of the glory of God. (see Romans 3:23) But Jesus came to enable men to be restored to the divine image. He came to show men what the Father is like, and in this sense amplified the moral law. Through His power men are enabled to keep the divine requirements (see Romans 8:3-4) and thus reflect the divine image.

The remnant church thus honors the commandments of God, and observes them, not in any legalistic sense but as a revelation of the character of God and of Christ, who dwells in the heart of the true believer. (Galatians 2:20)

**13. Voice** - The voice is not identified, but is apparently distinguished from the voice of the third angel. (verses 9-12)

**Blessed are the dead** - This is one of the seven so-called beatitudes of the book of Revelation. (cf. Matthew 5:3) The others are found in Revelation 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.

**In the Lord** - Not the dead generally are here pronounced blessed, but only those who die “in the Lord.” These are they who died with their faith fixed in Jesus. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

**From henceforth** - This doubtless refers to the period of the three angels' messages, which embraces the period of persecution by the beast and its image, when the boycott is imposed and the death penalty passed. Those who go to their graves in this period rest, as it were, a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Then they will be privileged to come forth in the special resurrection preceding the general resurrection of the righteous. (see Daniel 12:2)

**Labours** - Greek *kopoi*, “wearying toil,” “weariness,” “strenuous effort.” Compare the use of the word in 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23, 27; 1 Thessalonians 1:3. Death is a rest from the wearying toil of life.

**Works** - Greek *erga*, “activities,” a general term here contrasted with *kopoi*. (see above)

**Follow them** - This expression has been interpreted in two ways: (1) On the basis that the Greek reads, literally, “follow with them,” that is, accompany them, some consider that John here refers to the laying down of the burdens of this life and the continuation of activities in the future world. Activity would, of course, cease during the period between death and the resurrection, for that is a time of unconsciousness and inactivity. (see Psalms 146:4; 2 Corinthians 5:1-3) But heaven will be a place of pleasurable activity. (2) Others interpret the clause “their works do follow them” as referring to the influence a good man leaves behind when he dies.

**Revelation 14:14** “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”

**A white cloud** - Verses 14-20 are a symbolic vision of the coming of Christ. Rules for the interpretation of symbolic visions must be applied for the exposition of this passage. For the significance of clouds with reference to the coming of Christ (Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27; Revelation 1:7) The nature of the three angels' messages and the fact that immediately following them the coming of Christ is discussed, shows that the three messages are God's final message of warning to the world. (Revelation 18:1-4)

**Crown** - “a wreath,” “a crown,” here of victory. The golden crown may be contrasted with the “crown of thorns.” (Matthew 27:29)

**Sharp sickle** - Jesus is represented coming as a reaper to gather the harvest. (verses 15-16)

**Revelation 14:15** “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for you to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”



**Another angel** - That is, in addition to the three who delivered the messages of warning before the second coming of Christ. (verses 6, 8-9)

**Temple** - The temple has earlier been introduced into the prophetic picture. (Revelation 11:1-2, 19) It will be noticed that John frequently alludes to items introduced in earlier visions. The setting remains largely the same. For example, the four “beasts” introduced in Revelation 4:6 appear repeatedly in subsequent visions. (See Revelation 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4)

**The harvest** - Verses 15-20 describe the great harvest at the end of all things. The harvest comprehends two distinctive events. One is described in verse 16-17 and the other in verses 18-20. The first refers to the gathering of the righteous represented here by ripened grain as shown in the Greek by the word translated “ripe.” The second refers to the wicked represented by the clusters of “fully ripe” grapes.

**Is ripe** - “to become dry,” “to become withered” used of the ripening of grain crops.

**Revelation 14:16** *“And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”*

**Was reaped** - This represents the gathering of the righteous. (cf. Matthew 13:30; Luke 3:17)

**Revelation 14:17** *“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.”*

**Revelation 14:18** *“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.”*

**Power over fire** - The reason for mentioning that this angel has power over fire is not clear. Perhaps fire is a symbol of vengeance. Compare the phrase “angel of the waters.” (Revelation 16:5)

**Clusters of the vine** - The figure of the two harvests is borrowed from the ancient Palestinian agricultural year, which consisted of two main harvests. The grain harvest and the vintage. Here the vintage represents the wicked gathered for destruction.

**Revelation 14:19** *“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.”*

**Winepress** - The figure is suitable with reference to the color of the wine, which resembles blood. The figure is probably drawn from Isaiah 63:1-6.

**Wrath of God** - The reference here is perhaps particularly to the seven last plagues. (Revelation 15:1)

**Revelation 14:20** *“And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”*

**Trodden** - The wine press in days of old was trodden by the feet of men. (Isaiah 63:2-3)

**Without the city** - The picture is probably drawn from Old Testament prophecies describing the destruction of God's enemies outside Jerusalem. (Joel 3:12-13)

**Horse bridles** - A figure of speech indicating the great and complete slaughter of the wicked hosts. A parallel figure is found in the apocryphal book of Enoch: *“And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten And brothers one with another shall fall in death Till the streams flow with their blood. ... And the horse shall walk up to the breast in the blood of sinners, And the chariot shall be submerged to its height.”* (Chapter 100:1-3; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, p. 271)

**Furlongs** - Sixteen hundred furlongs would be about 321.8 kilometres or 200 miles. No satisfactory explanation can be found for the particular number 1,600. Jerome thought it to be an allusion to the length of Palestine. This is speculation however and adds little to the understanding of the passage. The main thought is that the enemies of the church of God are to be completely and finally overthrown. Therefore the church can look forward to full and complete deliverance from all her enemies and joyful triumph in the kingdom of God.