

Exploring Revelation 25: God's Final Invitation To Men!

An Exposition Of Revelation 14:6-13

In introducing this section of Revelation, notice the significance of its setting. In Revelation 13 is presented Satan's final and most successful effort to control the world. In Revelation 14 is presented God's answer to Satan's final attempt. The Three Angels' Messages present a dire warning and plea to all who refuse to resist the popular trends of the last days. This message is the final message of mercy from Heaven before the Second Advent of Christ for verse 14 declares:

"I looked and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud, one sat like unto the Son of Man having an his head a golden crown and in his hand a sharp sickle." Revelation 14:14.

This is a picture of Christ returning to the earth as King of kings at the Second Advent. This message is God's final invitation and warning, and is a preparatory message for the Second Advent. The Lord promises His people, **"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, except He reveal his secret to his servants the prophets." Amos 8:7.**

Seeing that such a tremendous event as the Second Advent is due, God, in justice, must make a special announcement concerning it. The Three Angels' Messages are connected with the 144,000. In Revelation 14:1-5 the 144,000 are brought to view. This number symbolizes the final product of the Three Angels' Messages. These messages reveal how the 144,000 are produced.

I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLY IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN

The expression 'I saw' in the book of Revelation denotes a new vision, not a continuation of events seen in the previous verses. It may repeat and enlarge on events already mentioned. This is called the principle of 'repetition and enlargement'. Both Daniel and Revelation frequently employ this principle.

"Another angel flying in the midst of heaven." The previous angel described as "flying" is in Revelation 8. **"I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe, to inhabitants of the earth." Verse 13.**

This angel pronounced three woes upon mankind, but in Revelation 14, in contrast, three blessings are pronounced upon mankind. The message of the first angel reads: **"Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him that made heaven, and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters." Verse 7.** This angel is flying in the midst of heaven, which denotes speed, urgency, and the worldwide coverage of the message.

HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL: This is the only instance in scripture where the gospel is so described. Why 'everlasting gospel'? The first reason is that it is impossible to destroy the gospel of Christ. In spite of all attempts to destroy, or pervert it, the gospel continues. The second reason we suggest, is that its effects, or fruitage, are everlasting. It produces everlasting life. Perhaps a third reason is that the tremendous truths of the gospel. God's love for man, God's suffering for man, God's plan of salvation for man, will be retold and studied for eternity.

"The everlasting gospel" in a special sense, is the message of the Three Angels of Revelation 14. It is a great international, or world-wide message. It goes to "every nation and kindred and tongue and people". Through the centuries, the gospel of salvation has been proclaimed, but mostly, only some of the essentials have been emphasized. The full, and complete gospel was not proclaimed in the past, because much of it was lost during the Dark Ages. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the gospel in its main features was restored, but in Revelation 14, in the last days, some essentials of the gospel that had been previously lost, or neglected, are to be brought back and re-established.

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, the sea and the fountains of waters." Verse 7.

Three factors are emphasized in this final, everlasting gospel of the first angel. First: "Fear God and give glory to him." But have not Christians in the past always feared God, and given glory to him? We are living in a period of the world's history when the world's population is about to fear and glorify "the beast", for scripture declares, **"All the world wondered after the beast!" And "All that dwell on the earth shall worship him [the beast]. Revelation 13:3, 8.**

The Three Angels' Messages is God's reply to Satan's final fling of the last days. Instead of fearing the beast, the call is to "fear God". In what way are we to fear God? There are two kinds of fear featured in scripture. The first is slavish fear which is offensive to God. **"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."** 1 John 4:18). The second is a fear involving respect and reverence, and which leads to love and obedience.

"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28-29. Today there is a serious lack of this godly fear, and of reverent respect for God, and His will, especially in the professedly Christian world. God has been presented in an unbalanced light. In the yesteryear God was pictured as harsh and cruel. Today He is pictured as being so loving and forgiving that He will shut His eyes to almost anything. It does not matter what a man believes, so long as he is sincere etc. But the scripture is clear, **"Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13.**

If one is to be ready for translation, at the Second Advent, a correct attitude is essential in regard to our great and holy God. The next point declares, "Give glory to him." This means to give credit, or praise to God, not merely by voice but by action, by life and influence. It is a call to attractively represent God. This means obedience from the heart out of love and not from compulsion. The angel then declares that there is a special reason for giving glory to God.

FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGEMENT IS COME: What judgment is this? Some claim that this means that God is being judged. Is there any truth in this assertion? In a sense God has been vindicated or judged. Through Lucifer's defection, grave questions were raised throughout the sinless universe in regard to God's justice and character, but these questions were resolved at Calvary. (See under Revelation 12:7-12) Jesus himself declared: **"Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [the word 'men' is not in the original] unto me. This he said, signifying by what death he should die." John 12:31-33.**

God was vindicated, or judged, at Calvary. The "hour of his judgment" does not refer to God being judged, but to the judgment of men, and the context of the passage reveals this. The message goes to 1° every nation, kindred tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to him

for the hour of his judgment is come." This judgment concerns men.

What kind of judgment is meant in this verse? The word Judgment in scripture has several meanings. First, it represents the visitation of God's justice or punishment. It means recompense. Perhaps the best example of this will be the coming seven last plagues on Babylon which are termed God's judgments (Revelation 18:10). The second meaning of judgment means investigation, an examination, to determine guilt or innocence. The judgment involving punishment will be at the end of the world.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27. This judgment is after death. Jesus said, **"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48.**

The judgment in the last day, is the final judgment before the great white throne. (Revelation 20) Jesus declared, **"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."** [Or judgment] John 5:28-29. This judgment is at the close of the millennium.

"I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and they were Judged, every man according to his works." Revelation 20:12.

But the message of the first angel of Revelation 14:6-7 declares that "the hour of his judgment is come". It is here. What judgment is here? Undoubtedly it is the second type of judgment; it is an investigation, or a trial. But does God require an investigation, an examination to determine guilt? No! This is not the significance of this scripture. Our God is all wise and all knowing. He reads the thoughts and intents of the heart. He knows all. God does not need even a final judgment, at the end of the world. He knows every person's guilt and what they justly deserve. Nothing is hidden from Him.

Why then the judgment? This brings us to the heart of the question. Judgment is for the sake of people and of the universe. Throughout the universe are unnumbered worlds, inhabited by sinless beings. It is essential that the justice of God be revealed to the universe. This is why there is not only a final judgment at the end of the world, but there is also a judgment that involves investigation, a type of trial, for God must not only be just, but He must be seen to be just. This is the reason for the two-phased judgment; first of all the trial, then the execution of the sentence, the same as it is on earth. Justice must be seen to be done. How often we hear and use the term "a fair trial". Likewise with the Most High; it is important for him to stage a fair trial so that the judgment of the human race will be seen to be fair and right. So there are two phases, two stages, in the judgment, the trial and the execution.

Some claim that believers do not come into judgment; that there is no trial, or examination for those who are "in Christ". A large body of professed Christians reject the claim that believers will be judged. They base their conclusion on their concept of justification. They claim that when a man is justified, he is declared to be righteous, and this means to be judged. It is true that when a man accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, that he is judicially acquitted. He is judged by God as righteous. But the claim is made by very sincere Christians, that therefore there is no further need of judgment. Is this correct? Is the believer declared righteous forever? Two scriptures are mainly used to uphold their view.

"He that believeth on him, [Christ] is not condemned." John 3:18.

"He that believeth on him shall not come into condemnation." John 5:24.

There are two Greek words in the above two verses which are translated “condemned” and “condemnation”. It is claimed that these words should be translated “judged”, and “judgment”. Thus believers are not judged or do not come into judgment. Is this correct? These two Greek words may be translated into other English words. They can be translated, “to try, to condemn, to punish, avenge, conclude, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, or think”. Dr James Strong, Exhaustive Concordance.

The question is, which is the correct English word? We must allow scripture to answer that question. Will justified believers be judged in the great final assize? Will born again people have to answer before God for their deeds? Scripture clearly replies, **“God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.” Ecclesiastes 3:17.**

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Paul is writing to believers, and he includes himself, and he was a justified man. Truly the saints will stand before the judgment bar of God. Again, **“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10-12. “So speak and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” James 2:12.**

We must not be misled on this question. The following verse settles the question forever. **“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, [the church] and if it first begin at us, [i.e. believers] what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God.” 1 Peter 4:17.**

These are solemn words. Every intelligent, responsible person, will stand before the judgment bar of God. But are the saints involved in a trial, or an investigation? Is this essential? Is there an examination of the believer to determine whether he is guilty or innocent? Scripture clearly portrays the setting up of a court trial that involves the saints. In the book of Daniel, which means “God is judge”, an awe inspiring court trial is portrayed. In Daniel 7 it tells how after the reign of the four universal kingdoms, there rises “the little horn” that reigns for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. After 1798 this remarkable court scene is introduced.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down [or placed] and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like the pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame and his [its] wheels, as burning fire. A fiery flame issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousands times ten thousand stood before him, the judgment was set and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9-10.

Another version says, “I beheld till thrones were placed and one that was Ancient of Days took his seat.” The Revised Standard Version. The Amplified Version says, “Until thrones were placed and the Ancient of Days took his seat and the judgment was set and the books were opened.” One version says, “the court sat in judgment.” The Revised Standard Version. Another says, “The court was held, and the records were opened.” It is certain that this is a great court trial. Where is this trial? In heaven above, in the awesome heavenly temple. Who is involved in this great heavenly trial or judgment? It involves the saints, for it says, **“The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever.” Verse 18.** Again, **“Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.” Verse 18.**

It is certain that this great investigative judgment, involves the saints of God. Daniel also says, **“The judgment shall sit and they shall take away his [little horn’s] dominion to consume and destroy it. And the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:26-27.**

This judgment also involves the “little horn” as well as the saints. Thus after 1798 A.D. there commenced in heaven a great court session, involving the people of God, and the message of the First Angel of Revelation 14 declares to the world, that that judgment has begun. “The hour of his judgment is come.”

The exact date of the commencement of this judgment is revealed in the 8th chapter of the book of Daniel. **“Unto [or until] 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14.**

This term “cleansing of the sanctuary”, can be shown to represent a work of judgment in the great heavenly temple. The 2300 days [or years] can be shown conclusively to end in the year 1844 A.D. This means that the heavenly court session commenced in the year 1844. Therefore the time of the commencement of the First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14:6-7 would have to be in the year 1844. Why is it essential to conduct a trial, an examination, of the life record of the saints?

It is to publicly display to the universe that those who are to be saved in the kingdom of God, have met the conditions laid down by heaven. To show that the saints not only started as saints, but that they ended up as saints. There are millions of people who commence the Christian way, but fall away from Christ. Multitudes begin, but do not continue. Vast numbers claim to be Christians but are not born-again. Therefore an examination is essential, a public audit, in order to reveal who can rightfully and justly be granted eternal life at the Second Advent.

But is not eternal life a gift? Yes, it is; but the gift may be lost, because eternal life is conditional. The believer must continue in the faith. Some believe in what is commonly called, “once saved, always saved”, but scripture teaches the opposite. **“He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13.**

The believer, by the grace of God, must overcome. **“He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life.” Revelation 3:5.** It is possible for one to have his name blotted out of the Book of Life if he does not overcome. Eternal life is conditional. We are to be faithful even unto death. **“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10.**

We are to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, in the power of Jesus. **“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world, and the world passes away and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15. “Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world even, our faith.” 1 John 5:4.**

God knows every detail of every person. He is infinite and omniscient. However, created beings are finite, limited in knowledge. Created beings can be deceived. Even a third of the angels were deceived, therefore it is necessary for God to conduct a public examination or court trial before the universe in order to reveal the final state of every believer. Such an examination must transpire prior to the Second Advent because at that time, the saved receive eternal life. Before the Second Advent, there

will go forth from heaven, a special decree, **“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still; and behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man, according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:11-12.**

The First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14 proclaims to the world that the pre-advent judgment “is come”; not, has come, not is coming, not will come, but, it is come, meaning it is here, it has started. It began in 1844. It will conclude at the close of probation, before the Second Advent. The third factor in the First Angel’s Message is: **“Worship him that made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.”**

This is a special call from heaven for men to worship the Creator in the last days. Why such a call? The first reason is that the world in general has forsaken belief in creation. The philosophy of evolution, dominates the thinking of men in regard to origins. Atheism, the belief that there is no God, is rampant, especially among the intellectuals. The modern form of evolution, begun by Darwin, commenced in the year 1844, and in that very year, God raised up a special message for mankind to worship the Creator. How timely: The second reason for such a call, is that the world is being lured into “the worship of the beast”.

“All that dwell on the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life.” Revelation 13:8. Unconsciously mankind is being lured into the worship of the beast and his image as brought to view in Revelation 13. How then is Creator worship distinguished? How may we recognize a man who worships the Creator? Scripture provides a guideline for acceptable worship. This is important because certain forms of worship, Christ declared, are vain and worthless.

“In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:9.

God commands men to worship Him aright. The standard for true worship is the first table of God’s eternal law. The first four of the ten commandments, lay down the essential principles of worship. This table comprises man’s complete duty to God. The second table, comprises man’s duty to his fellow men. The first table of the law contains eight conditions of true worship. (In scripture the number ‘8’ is frequently associated with regeneration or resurrection. The 8 principles involving true worship, declare that only the regenerated [born again] believer can give true and acceptable worship to God.)

The first commandment reads, **“Thou shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3.** This tells us Who we are to worship, and that is God alone. What is a god? A god is anyone or anything, in which you place your trust. Jesus said: **“Thou shall worship the Lord thy God and him only shall thou serve.” Matthew 4:10.**

Again, **“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Matthew 6:33.** The only one in whom man it to place his complete trust, is the Creator. The second commandment lays down at least three principles of true worship. It reads, **“Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.” Exodus 20:4-5.**

This command forbids the use of any material object as an aid in worship. It does not forbid the making of such objects, but it forbids bowing down to them. God forbids the use of any statue, picture, relic, cross, altar, angel, crucifix, or whatever. Nothing is to be employed by which we visualize God in our

worship. Why this restriction? Because it is sensual, it involves the use of the senses, whereas true worship must be spiritual. Jesus said, **“God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24.**

How do we worship God in spirit? It is through the exercise of the mind, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. This commandment concerns our method of worship. Why is God so insistent? Jesus added, **“The hour comes and now is, when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship him.” John 4:23,**

God is very particular regarding the type of worship we give. Why is this? Because false worship is harmful. False worship affects the person, false forms of worship affect the character; whereas true worship uplifts and ennobles; false worship degrades and reflects the character of the devil. This is why God commands true worship. He loves His creatures, and one of the great lessons of history is that every nation, every group of people that has persisted in false worship has finally sunk into degradation and generally become extinct. In the second commandment are laid down three important principles of worship.

1. Worship is to be spiritual.
2. Worship is to be simple.
3. Worship is to be direct.

The next condition of acceptable worship concerns our attitude, and this is spelt out in the third commandment, **“Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Exodus 20:7.** Here is laid down the principle of reverence and respect for the Creator. This respect will lead us to not even use God’s name lightly or unnecessarily. **“Let us serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29.**

The true worshipper must be conscious of the greatness and holiness of the Creator. **“The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20.**

In the fourth commandment there are another three principles. This command tells us when to worship, why to worship, and the condition of worship. **“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, six days shall you labor and do all thy work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth the sea and all that in them is.” Exodus 20:8-11.**

Why does the Creator command no labor on His Sabbath. The principle reason is to give man time to worship the Creator and that time is the day especially blessed by God. The only day of the week that God has blessed is the seventh day. Next is the reason for worship. Why does God call us to worship Him? Because He created us. He made all things. Therefore He has the only right to call for our worship.

He made us. He owns us. We belong to him by right.

Next we have the condition for worship. **“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”** Holiness means to be free from the guilt of sin. True worshippers are those whose sins have been washed away. The only way a man can be free from sin is through the cleansing blood of Jesus, for that alone can wash away sin. **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.** This then is the condition for true worship; to be “washed, in the precious blood of the Lamb”.

True Sabbath-keeping as directed in the fourth commandment is the sign of Creator worship. Speaking to his ancient people, Israel, God declared, **“Wherefore the children of Israel, shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” Exodus 31:16-17.**

So with spiritual Israel today. The term ‘Israel’ represents believers, those who are God-ruled, those who belong to Christ, and the great sign between the true believer and God, that he worships the Creator, is the observance of the seventh day Sabbath. Therefore the First Angel’s Message is a special call to observe the first table of the law, and that involves the observance of the fourth commandment, the true Sabbath. It also includes all other commandments given by God, for Christians.

Has such a movement risen in these last days, commencing in 1844, and endeavoring to fulfill all the above points of the First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14? Yes, only one, and that is the great Seventh day Adventist movement that rose exactly in 1844 and is proclaiming the truths brought to view, in the First Angel’s Message.

THE SECOND ANGEL’S MESSAGE: “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.” Verse 8.

This is the first mention of Babylon in the book of Revelation. She is called “that great city”. In prophecy, a city denotes a church. **“But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”** Hebrews 12:22-23.

In the Old Testament two cities are singled out as two religious organizations; Babylon, representing Satan’s centre of worship, and Jerusalem representing Christ’s centre of worship. In the 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation, Babylon is revealed as the great apostate church of Satan. Revelation 17:18 likens Babylon to “that great city”, and in Revelation 17 ten points of identifications are presented, to show who Babylon is, Only one organization fits the specifications. She is spoken of as the “mother of harlots”. i.e. mother church. It represents the great religion-political system of the Papacy. It does not include all individuals in the church of Rome, because Revelation 18 reveals that God has some of his people there, and He is continually calling them out. This term, “the mother of harlots”, means that Babylon has daughters, daughter churches, that have come out of Rome, but who are now following the practices of the mother church. The question therefore needs to be asked: Did the church of Rome morally or spiritually fall, after the First Angel’s Message began to be proclaimed to the world in 1844? The answer is that she did not. Rome fell morally and spiritually way back in the early centuries of the Christian era when she combined with paganism in the time of Constantine the Great, about 300 AD. That is when the church of Rome became apostate.

What churches, or religious bodies, spiritually fell from 1844 onwards? The Protestant churches in general. How did they fall? They fell spiritually by rejecting truth. What truth? The truth of the First Angel’s Message. The Protestant churches began at that time to reject the doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ. They began to reject the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They rejected the recovered truth of the heavenly sanctuary, including the truth of the pre-advent judgment. They began

to reject the standard of Christian conduct, the ten commandments, commencing with the fourth commandment. They then began to reject the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. They clung to the error of the natural immortality of the soul which is the basis of belief in Spiritualism.

The major Protestant churches began to accept the false theory of evolution, which leads to the rejection of the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Some Protestant churches accepted the system called 'Futurism' invented by the Jesuits, to falsely interpret prophecy, and the result was that the Protestant churches dropped their protest against Rome and are now pro-Catholic in their outlook. Some accepted false views concerning the Second Advent, such as the secret rapture. On top of this they retained pagan rites and ceremonies such as Sunday observance, the celebration of Christmas, Lent and Easter which originated in Paganism. They preferred tradition instead of scripture. Because of compromise worldliness began to flood the churches, which scripture describes as spiritual fornication or adultery.

**"Babylon is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
Verse 8.**

What does wine represent in scripture? Wine denotes doctrine or teachings. Intoxicating wine denotes false doctrine. What is meant by fornication? In a religious sense it means illicit union, union with the civil power, union with the world, or union with false worship. It is unfaithfulness to Christ. The Lord likens himself to the husband of the church, and if the church is unfaithful to him and seeks the favor of others, that is classed as spiritual adultery or fornication.

But what is meant by "the wrath of her fornication"? When men take in the wine or doctrines of spiritual Babylon it makes them wrathful and intolerant. They become intolerant of truth and intolerant of people who hold to the truth. As Revelation 12:17 declares, **"The dragon was wrath with the woman [the church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." "She [Babylon] made all nations drink of the wine."**

Revelation 17:2 says that the Mother Church makes the inhabitants of the earth drunk with her wine. Through the centuries Rome has extended her cup of false doctrine to the nations. But today, apostate Protestantism is doing the same. Since 1844, when the First Angel's Message began, the Protestant churches, first of all in the United States, rejected that message and as a result they began to spiritually fall from grace. Ever since, apostate Protestantism has been infecting the world with her false teachings. She has been gradually sliding down the path of apostasy until finally, as we will show from Revelation 18, the Protestant churches will come to the place where they will be totally under the control of occult powers. This is a sad picture, when we recall how mightily God has used each Protestant church in the past.

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE. "And the third angel followed than, 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, 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. And the smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name." Revelation 14:9-11.

This is an appalling picture, and it is vital to understand it aright. This is God's answer to Revelation 13, where mankind is compelled under threat of boycott, and finally of death, to worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. God declares, **"If any man (does) worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God"**.

What is the 'Mark of the Beast'? In a previous lesson we dealt with this question; showing that it will involve the enforcement of Sunday sacredness. Rome has continually claimed that Sunday sacredness is the mark of her authority, and all who accept Sunday observance when it is enforced by law, will thereby receive the Mark of the Beast. There is only one satisfactory explanation of the Mark of the Beast. Search where you may, the interpretation as given by the proclamation of the Three Angel's Messages alone, is satisfactory. Since the mid 1800's Seventh-day Adventists have taught with conviction, that the mark will be enforced Sunday observance. Many claim that no one knows what the Mark of the Beast is. If that were true, then the Third Angel's Message is meaningless or guesswork, and the integrity of God is put under question. Some confuse the number 666 with the Mark of the Beast, but the mark is a spiritual mark, not a number.

The third angel sounds "with a loud voice", indicating that its message is to be proclaimed with power. It will be a world-wide message because the worship of the beast will be world-wide. **"All the world wondered after the beast"**, every one **"whose name is not in the Book of Life"** will worship the beast; therefore, God's answer must also be **"to every nation, kindred tongue and people"**.

"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Here is God's fearful threat to earth's last generation that worships the beast and his image and receives his mark. Notice that there are two cups, two wines, and two wraths. "The wine of the wrath of [Babylon's] fornication" and "the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture". What a contrast! Babylon has a golden cup in her hand "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication", (Revelation 17:4); but God's cup overflows with indignation. If we accept Babylon's cup we will receive the cup of the wrath of God. On the other hand if we reject Babylon's cup of false doctrine, we will receive "the wrath of the beast". However this wrath even though multiplied a thousand times, could not compare with a single drop of the wrath of God.

What is the wrath of God? John declares, **"I saw seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God."** Revelation 15:1. These are punishing judgments, ordained by God and superintended by Christ and the angels. **"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."** These plagues do not come from natural causes. They are ordained by God. This is divine justice. **"The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever [continuously] and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receives the mark of his name."**

If these plagues were from natural causes then all would suffer the consequences, but the man who rejects the worship of the beast and his image and his mark, will escape the wrath of God. The description above is a frightening picture. It sounds like eternal torment, and some use this scripture to teach that the unsaved will be damned to eternal hellfire. However when we analyze the phraseology, it is evident that it is drawn from the Old Testament account of the destruction of ancient Edom and uses the imagery of Edom's punishment to describe the punishment of earth's final generation, that worship the beast and his image and persecute God's faithful remnant. Edom was located southeast of the Dead Sea. Descendants of Esau, they were the blood brothers of Israel.

“My sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, [Edom] and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. For the Lord has a sacrifice in Bozrah, [Edom’s capital] and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. Their land shall be soaked with blood. For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance. The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it, for ever and ever.” Isaiah 34:5-10.

This is a picture of the total destruction of the Edomites and their civilization, the wording does not mean eternal torment, but complete and utter destruction. It is true however, that there will be a certain amount of suffering during the plagues, because it states that they are “tormented day and night”, but it is not eternal.

In the next verse is presented a beautiful contrast. It is a description of those who have responded to the Three Angel’s Messages. They are the product or fruitage of these messages. **“Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12.** What a contrast! Here are those who have heeded the Three Angel’s Messages, and have rejected the Mark of the Beast. They are distinguished by three characteristics.

1. They Are Patient: “The patience of the saints.” This denotes steadfast endurance. In the tremendous conflict with the beast that is just ahead, the saints will need to endure; they will need to maintain their integrity; they must refuse to yield; they must be willing to die, rather than sin against God. In the last days when the conflict comes, the saints will have reached a stage of character development in which their characters have become fully mature. They are immovable, their characters become fixed in righteousness. **“He that is righteous let him be righteous still [i.e. remain righteous] and he that is holy, let him be holy still [i.e. remain holy].” Revelation 22:11.**

Dr. Weymouth, in his footnote on this verse declares, “The word seems to denote development and crystallizing of character immediately preceding the coming of the great Judge of all.” Verse 12.

Before the Second Advent, at the close of probation, God’s people will be sealed. They will be holy, they will be settled in the faith, they will be immovable in their obedience.

2. They Are Commandment Keepers: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God.” This is in glaring contrast to those who keep the commandments of the beast, who obey men rather than God. Not only do God’s people teach the commandments of God, but they keep them, they obey them, they fulfill them. Now seeing that “sin is the transgression of the law”, it means that at least by this time, the saints have overcome. They are no longer sinning, for they keep the commandments of God. Today God’s people endeavor to keep all of God’s commandments, but often fall short. However, through repentance and confession, God forgives. But as we grow in grace, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, we will come to the state, where it will be said of God’s people, that truly, **“Here are they that keep the commandments of God.”**

3. They Are Faithful: “And the faith of Jesus.” What is the faith of Jesus? Here are three applications of this term.

(A) The Teachings of Jesus: The term “faith” may represent a body of belief or doctrine. The Three Angel’s Messages: “the everlasting gospel” involves the restoration of all the truths or teachings of

Jesus that have been lost over the centuries. In the last days the gospel to be proclaimed, is to be the gospel in its fullness, the gospel fully restored. The Protestant Reformation which commenced in 1517 did not possess a complete gospel. Since then lost truths have been recovered and set in their rightful place.

(B) The Confidence of Jesus: The faith of Jesus also means having the same confidence that Jesus Christ possessed in His Heavenly Father. Jesus is our great example, not only in deed, but also in faith and trust. It will be this faith that will enable the saints to be victorious. **“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:14.**

“I saw them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark. Stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God.” Revelation 15:2. If God’s people are to gain the final victory they must possess the faith that Jesus had.

(C) Faith in Jesus: This term “faith of Jesus” could also mean “faith in Jesus”. This involves faith in His blood, faith in His sacrifice; believing that it takes away all my sin and guilt. It means faith in His resurrection, faith in His intercession and mediation, faith in His promises of power to change me and prepare me for translation. Faith that, one day soon, He is coming back. Faith in His protecting power in the coming conflict with the beast and his image.

A SPECIAL REWARD. The concluding verse of this scripture reads, **“I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” Revelation 14:13.**

“Blessed are the dead.” Are all the dead blessed? No! All those outside of Christ, sleep the death of damnation. Jesus said, **“All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” [Or judgment] John 5:23-29.**

The resurrection to life refers to those that died trusting in Christ. **“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Psalm 116:15.** Why is this beautiful promise given in verse 13? Why are the dead blessed? Scripture declares, “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16) What advantage is there in rising first? **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.**

What a blessing! On the other hand those who rise in the second resurrection, on them the second death does have power. But in Verse 13 there is a blessing upon a special group of righteous dead; **“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth”.** What does henceforth mean? This refers to the period in which God’s final message of the three angels, is being proclaimed, i.e., from 1844 until the close of probation, just before the Second Advent. There is a special blessing upon those who die in the Lord, in the faith of the Three Angels Messages. This is the setting of this remarkable promise.

There is also a special blessing upon the living who are true to the Three Angels Messages. They are classed as the 144,000, the symbolic number representing those who will not die, but will be translated without seeing death. But this special blessing of verse 13 is upon the dead who die in the Lord in this particular period. What special blessing could be upon the dead who die in the truth of the Three

Angels Messages? Is there a special resurrection of any particular group of saints? Yes, there is. Scripture reveals that some saints rise from death before the general resurrection of the saints at the Second Advent. **“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel 12:2.**

This is not speaking of the general resurrection of the saints at the Second Advent because in that resurrection only the blessed and holy take part. (Revelation 20:6.) In the resurrection of Daniel 12:2, however there are some righteous and some wicked. Some are raised to shame and everlasting contempt. This then must be some other resurrection. To what time does Daniel 12:2 apply? It applies to the time of trouble preceding the Second Advent.

“At that time, shall Michael [Christ] stand up, and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation, and at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1. This is at the close of probation and the ensuing time of trouble which involves the seven last plagues. During the plagues then, there is to be this special resurrection of some of the righteous and some of the unsaved. Who will the unsaved be? The answer is given in Revelation 1, where it reveals that at the Second Advent, there will be some present who had crucified Christ 2,000 years before, **“Behold he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him.” Revelation 1:7.**

Those who tortured the Son of God in his humility, who so brutally nailed Him to the cross, will be raised up before the Second Advent in order to behold Him. But not only that; those also who unjustly condemned him; the high priest and his cohorts will be raised. At Jesus' farce trial, in answer to the demand of the high priest as to whether he were the Son of God, Jesus replied, **“Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:63-64.**

These guilty parties will be raised up before the Second Advent to see Christ returning. What a shattering experience! This special resurrection is generally called, “The Partial Resurrection”. At what time will this partial resurrection take place? According to Daniel 12:1, it is during the seven last plagues that **“thy people shall be delivered”**. The living saints of the end time, are delivered from their would-be slayers during the plagues. Likewise the special group of the righteous dead of the end time, are delivered from the grave, and raised to everlasting life. The righteous living are delivered under the sixth and seventh plagues in the drying up of the Euphrates. The special group of the righteous dead will be resurrected soon after.

“Graves are opened and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. All who have died in the faith of the Third Angel's Message, come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept his law.” The Great Controversy, page 982.

Verse 13 continues: **“Yea said the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.”** “That they may rest from their labors”. The word “labors” means “wearying toil” or “strenuous effort”. The word is used in the New Testament of “the labor of love” of believers in the cause of Christ. Often this involves wearying toil as the Apostle Paul experienced. **“In weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.” 2 Corinthians 11:27.**

Verse 13 is referring to the wearying toil of God's servants in proclaiming the Three Angel's Messages. Has this been true of those who have died in the Third Angel's Message? It has been true of many, and it is still true of some in certain areas of the world today where the Three Angel's Messages are being proclaimed. It was certainly true of the pioneers of the Three Angel's Messages. James White performed the work of three men and finally died of overwork. Ellen White also, was involved in wearying toil for over seventy years in the cause of Christ. Colporteurs, evangelists, missionaries in isolated, uncivilized areas, labored, often painfully, in the proclamation of God's last message. On the other hand, there are many who have died in the Third Angel's Message who may not have experienced wearying toil such as that of the pioneers. Will they share in the partial resurrection? We suggest that the wearying toil, the strenuous effort could also apply to the continuous toil of fighting the good fight of faith, the continual struggle against the carnal nature, against principalities and powers, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.

"There are living upon our earth men who have passed the age of fourscore and ten. The natural results of old age are seen in their feebleness. But they believe God, and God loves them. The seal of God is upon them, and they will be among the number of whom the Lord has said 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord'. With Paul they can say, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. There are many whose grey hairs God honors because they have kept the faith." SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 982.

Again, "Though Christ is everything, we are to inspire every man to unwearied diligence. We are to strive, wrestle, agonize, watch, pray, lest we shall be overcome by the wily foe. Teach man to cooperate with God, that he may be successful in overcoming." Selected Messages, Volume 1, page 381.

AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM. When God's people are laid to rest not only are they not forgotten, but God remembers their works. Why does God remember their works? We suggest that it is because they "are rewarded according to their works". Is there anything special about their works? Under the Three Angel's Messages, they have been called to full obedience to the commandments of God; they have been called to walk in opposition to Christendom, to sacrifice position and the favor of their fellowmen. They have been called to a life of temperance, and reform, of sacrifice of time and of money for the salvation of others. They have been called in a special way to separate from the degenerate world, and for many it has meant the endurance of hostility, and for some it has, and will mean imprisonment and even martyrdom. Before the close of probation, "there will be many martyrs." Selected Messages, Volume 3, page 397. Already in some areas, men and women have sacrificed their lives for Christ, and before the close of probation, many more will be called upon by God to bear testimony by their death. God rewards them according to their works and it appears that their reward will be to share in the special resurrection. At the commencement of the Three Angel's Messages, there is revealed a special reward for the living; the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1-5) and at the close, of the Three Angel's Messages, there is a special reward for those who die under those messages.

In what way is the partial resurrection different or superior to the general resurrection of all the saints at the Second Advent? The partial resurrection occurs a few days prior to the actual appearance of Christ. The rest of the righteous are raised up at the actual Advent, when Christ is already in the heavens above. With those who are raised several days before the Advent, there will be a vast

difference. They will witness the awe-inspiring events that climax in the Advent. They will experience events to which, in life, they looked with great anticipation and for which they labored so diligently.

They rise from death after the living saints are delivered from their would-be slayers. Probably they will witness the destruction of the religious leaders by their own followers; they will undoubtedly see the awful earthquake, the mountains disappearing, the hail devastating the earth and they will pass through it unharmed. They will see the atmosphere depart, the dark clouds rolling away amid the deepest thunder, and way yonder on the eastern horizon they will behold that small distinctive, captivating cloud, on which, all eyes will be riveted. With awe and inexpressible gratitude, they gaze upon that cloud as it moves closer and with the living saints, they will cry, **“Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isaiah 25:9.**

They have waited in their graves for a period, but they have waited nevertheless, and at last, God rewards them by giving them the privilege of seeing Christ coming. They behold the remarkable transformation of that small dark cloud from black to brilliant white, as it draws nearer the earth; and soon they discern in the midst of the cloud the figure and face of the Lord Jesus enthroned and crowned, with a sickle in one hand and a trumpet in the other. He is surrounded with multiplied millions of radiant beings. They witness the greatest event ever known in the history of the universe, the transcendent glory of the returning Christ with the heavenly hosts. With awe-inspiring joy, they hear the clear resounding peals of the trumpet echoing across the heavens. They hear that incredible voice, in moving tones, calling to the sleeping saints of the ages, **“Awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust and arise!”**

What a call! What a command! In that voice is creative power, and throughout the earth, from every cemetery, graves split open, and in an instant the sleeping saints rise up and step from the tomb. The special resurrected group see the angels, guardian angels, flashing from the cloud to the gravesides, to welcome back to life the ones whom they tended through life. Throughout the earth, are the resurrected dead, a vast army of multiplied millions of glorified beings, of all ages, and races. They are aglow with immortality. When they come forth from the grave, they realize they have been delivered from death and they burst forth into grateful and glorious song. As the prophet declared, **“Thy dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise; Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.” Isaiah 26:19.**

What do they sing? Here it is: **“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:54-55.** What a song! And undoubtedly the living righteous, join in and proclaim the marvelous victory over death. What a victory! What a reward!