

Keys to Prophecy



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#16 - Mark of the Beast - Seal of God

We should have the data in place now to make some sense out of Revelation 13 and 14
We will need to pull from much of what we have covered over all the previous sessions

We have to get our bearings starting in Revelation 12 - Because this is one continuous section

Revelation 12:1-6 (1182) - We have outlined the confrontation between Christ and Satan when Jesus came to earth
Satan, the Dragon (12:9), working through Pagan Rome - Constantly threatened Jesus while on earth
At the cross - Satan wounded Jesus severely - But Jesus crushed his (the serpent's) head - Genesis 3:15 (3)
And salvation was put "in the bank" for every human being who has ever lived
Then Jesus ascended to heaven as Victor and Savior
The dragon - Went after the followers of Jesus - the Church - the woman - Chasing her into the wilderness
God prepared a place for her there for 1260 days = years - To feed, protect and care for her

12:7-12 - An interlude showing the origin of Satan - The rebel who started a war in heaven - and was thrown out
At Adam and Eve's invitation - This world became his laboratory -
Here the universe can see what things would be like if Satan were in charge - in place of God
The blood of Jesus sealed Satan's fate - And our testimony about Jesus helps others escape his control
Though Satan is defeated - He is not dead yet - He is still very dangerous - for a little while

12:13-16 - Picks up where 12:6 leaves off - The Dragon is chasing the woman - Persecuting her
She flies into the wilderness - To be nourished for 3½ times
These two numbers - 1260 days and 3½ times - Along with the 42 months
Match the medieval apostasy of Daniel 7's Little Horn - 538-1798 AD
We have seen this prophecy repeated seven times in Daniel and Revelation
Satan does all he can to sweep God's faithful Christ-followers away
Sending a flood of humanity to destroy them - But ultimately he fails
Though millions die - The church survives

12:17 - Now the Dragon is really enraged - He couldn't wipe out the Christ
His medieval attack did great damage - But Christ's people survive and thrive
Satan knows his time is short - And he is going all out against God's people in the End Time - After 1798
Who are identified as balancing the Law and the Gospel
Keeping the commandments of God = Obedience to all of God's Law - God's way of living
And bearing the testimony of Jesus Christ = the Gospel of Salvation by Grace through Faith alone
in the God who came Himself - and gave all of Himself to save us

- What will Satan do to vent his rage against God's end-time people?
- What will SATAN'S FINAL STRATEGY be to finally knock out God's faithful end-time people?

That is the focus of Revelation 13 - And God's response is the focus of Revelation 14

Turn to Revelation 13 (1183)

Revelation 13:1-4 ¹Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.
²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.
³And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.
⁴So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

- John sees a BEAST RISING OUT OF THE SEA - A power rising out of the people of the world
 Having seven heads and 10 horns - This is the same as the Dragon in 12:2 - Just at a later time in history

In 12:2 the crowns are on the heads of the beast - Where the heads are a succession of kingdoms
 Like the succession of kingdoms represented by the Image of Daniel 2 - and the beasts of Daniel 7
 Now the crowns have moved to the 10 horns - This matches the time of the 10 toes of Daniel 2
 And the 10 horns of Daniel 7 - After Rome has been divided
 We know further from the time sequence of the 1260 days - 3½ times of 12:6,14 - This is after 1798
 The divided nations still rule during this time

There is a blasphemous name on his heads - or probably one of his heads
 That head is the focus of the rest of this passage

This beast is a composite of four different beasts - Leopard - Bear - Lion - Dragon
 Where have we seen these four beasts before? - Daniel 7 - The Lion - Bear - Leopard - and Dragon
 All of these ancient nations were used by Satan to attack and oppress God's people - in the past
 Now in the End Time - We see that they are somehow all combined together into one entity

- We see that Satan will take the OLD WORLD - "BEST OF..." FROM THE PAST -
 Synthesize it all together - into a super-weapon to try to wipe out God's end-time people
 He has one shot left - And he is going to give it all he's got

One of his heads has been mortally wounded - But the mortal wound was healed
 When you read the following verses - The activities of this composite beast and this blasphemous head
 Come straight from Daniel 7 and 8 - From the description of the Little Horn
 It is a reincarnation of all the powers of Daniel 7 - Lion - Bear - Leopard - Dragon - 10 Horns - Little Horn

- All working together to form an end-time REINCARNATION OF THE MEDIEVAL LITTLE HORN
 - ONLY BIGGER - and "badder"

The Little Horn went down in 1798 at the end of the 3½ times/1260 days/42 months
 When France brought an end to the political power of the medieval papal church
 Inflicting what appeared to be a mortal wound on corrupt, politicized Christianity

But the prediction here - is that that wound will be healed - And once again the world will follow this beast
 An end-time re-incarnation of the medieval Little Horn will rise to have world influence again
 And repeat the same atrocities for a short time just before Jesus comes

This system receives the worship and adoration of the world - for a specific reason
 This is a power unlike any other on earth - Which seems to have the potential of ending war!
 "Who can make war with the beast?" - Insinuating that the world concludes - "No one!"
 Therefore - The world unifies behind this power in hopes of bringing an end to world war

There are a number of scenarios which one could envision that would fulfill this prediction

Revelation 13:5-8 ⁵And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

These descriptions come straight out of the description of the Little Horn in Daniel 7 and 8
 Clearly it is the head with the blasphemous name - Which was wounded - yet lives - Which is here described
 He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies
 He blasphemed against God - His name - His tabernacle - and those in heaven
 This ties back to the boastful words against the Most High of the Little Horn of Daniel 7:8,20,25
 And the attack of the Little Horn on the Prince, host and tabernacle in Daniel 8:10-13,25
 Against God's name - Reputation - Character - What God is really like - The Prince of the Host
 God's tabernacle - Casting down the sanctuary - and truth - Distorting the gospel
 Going up against the host of heaven - and the Prince of the Host Himself
 There is nothing relating to God, His kingdom and people this power will not slander and misrepresent
 Make war on the saints and overcome them - Matches the Little Horn in Daniel 7:21,25; 8:24
 In Matthew 24:21 (960) - Jesus said we would face a time of trouble in the end unlike any before
 Given authority to continue 42 months - That ties in with the 1260 and 3 ½ times - Daniel 7:25

Authority was given him over every tribe - tongue - and nation - All the earth will come under his sway

Here we have the descriptions of the little horn in Daniel 7 and 8 synthesized together
 Returning to global influence and power in the End time
 The medieval power reincarnated in the End Time - Only bigger and badder

All the unsaved who dwell on the earth - whose names are not written in the Book of Life - will worship him
 So there will be a group on earth who remain standing - while the rest of the world bows down
 Those whose names are in the Book of Life - the true believers - will refuse to worship this beast
 The central issue is what? - WORSHIP - This is a religious power

Revelation 13:9-10 *If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Are you listening? - But here is a window of hope
 Those who use power and control tactics will ultimately fall to those tactics
 The captivator will be made captive - The violent will end in violence - The killer will be killed
 Saints - Be patient - and keep trusting - God will bring final victory - Hang on

We don't have time to decipher all the fine details of this passage tonight - But we can see enough to know that...
 Satan is going to put together a super weapon against God's church in the end-time
 It will essentially include all the physical cruelty of the ancient nations
 And all the spiritual desolations of the medieval Christian apostasy
 This will be the Best of the Best of all the devil has tried in the past - He is out for blood and destruction

So while God is in the process of restoring the sanctuary - Lifting up the truths cast down for so long
 Satan will be actively trying to keep that rebuilding from happening
 Just like after the Jews returned from Babylon - after the 70 years captivity
 When they began to rebuild the sanctuary and city -
 They were soon attacked by surrounding peoples
 Who used verbal discouragement - legal restraining orders - and physical violence
 To try to stop the work and prevent the rebuilding
 A message is going to go out in the end-time - Restoring truths - Preparing the world for Jesus' 2nd coming
 And Satan will leave no stone unturned to try to prevent it
 He will develop this super "best of" weapon - But that's not all - He has more in mind...

I believe we live in the EYE OF THE STORM - After the mortal wound in 1798 - and before final attack
 In Matthew 24 Jesus says there will be increasing trouble right up until the 2nd coming
 Yet Daniel has that trouble lasting for 3½ times - 1260 days - 42 months = 538 to 1798 (See study on Daniel 7)
 Now Revelation says the same power as in Daniel 7 - yet bigger and badder - is coming back with a vengeance
 It looked like it was taken out for good - a mortal wound - but that wound will be healed - and "look out"
 And this time the trouble will last right up to the 2nd coming of Jesus
 So we live in the calm - after the initial storm - and before the final hit
 Like the eye of a hurricane - There is a calm, the sun comes out and all seems well - But the storm is not over
 You are simply in the middle - Then, suddenly, the storm hits again, harder than ever

And if that is not enough - Now something new happens

The first beast of Revelation 13 is a rehashing and refining of the old world systems

What happens next - the next beast - is something entirely new - Yet with an old twist to it

Revelation 13:11-12 ¹¹Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

¹²And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

□ Another beast - coming out of the earth - as opposed to the sea

I believe it can be shown that the “earth” represents areas not heavily populated at the time of the ancient nations

Remote places where the true Christ followers fled for refuge from the medieval Little Horn-dragon

In Revelation 12:15-16 - The dragon tried to carry the woman away with a flood -

Waters represent people - Revelation 17:15 (1186)

A flood = masses of people - armies - mobs - sent to wipe out God’s faithful followers

But the earth helped the woman - The more remote - less populated regions - provided shelter

So the “sea” and “waters” represent masses of people in the more densely populated areas

In contrast - “earth” represents places far away from population centers where God’s people sought refuge

Places like the remote mountain valleys of northern Italy - and even the New World

So this beast from the earth - arises from a part of the world separate from the old-world population centers

An area largely uninhabited during the time of the medieval persecutions

Two horns like a lamb - Spoke like a dragon

Who is the dragon in Revelation? - Satan - working through various earthly powers

Who is the Lamb in Revelation? - Jesus - the Lamb of God - Slain for us

This new earth-beast has the appearance of being a Christ-like power - horns represent power

But speaks like a dragon - The ways of Satan

This is a dragon in sheep’s clothing - Outwardly Christ-like - Inwardly evil

Satan trying to dress up as Jesus - in order to fool the world - The Little Horn in a Jesus mask

But his voice betrays him - What he says does not match up with the words of Jesus

Exercises all the authority of the first beast - in his presence -

So the earth-beast is contemporaneous with the sea-beast

During the time when that blasphemous head of the sea-beast is wounded and healed

And comes to lead the world - and receive the world’s worship

Therefore the earth-beast is a new end-time power - After the 1260 days / 3½ times - 1798 and after

Causing the earth and those who dwell in it... - This power’s commands have global effect

□ So this new END-TIME earth-beast - that grows up in an area of the world previously unpopulated - in a place where people fled to in order to avoid religious persecution becomes a WORLD-COMMANDING POWER - A SUPER-POWER - in the End Time

He causes the earth and those who dwell in it - to worship the first beast

□ He COMMANDS the world to bow in “WORSHIP” OF THE OLD WORLD COALITION

So when the whole world worships the sea-beast - v.4,8 - It is because the earth-beast orders them to

Revelation 13:13-14 ¹³He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Great signs - fire from heaven

Fire from heaven always comes as a validation of the power and presence of God

Like Solomon’s temple - Fire from heaven kindled the fire on the altar - God’s glory filled the building

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 (381)

Like Elijah on Mt. Carmel - God sent down fire - Proving he was the one and only true living God

1 Kings 18:38 (315)

But the earth-beast does not bring down fire from God - This is a false demonstration of spiritual power
 This is why this earth-beast comes to be called the "False Prophet" - Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10
 He deceives the world by these signs - False spiritual miracles - Thus gaining power over the people

- Thus - He LEADS A GLOBAL FALSE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL
- On the authority of which he CREATES AN ICON OF THE OLD WORLD COALITION
 Commanding the world to make an image to the first beast - A look-alike - that functions in parallel
 An icon of loyalty - Like the golden image to Babylon in Daniel 3

Revelation 13:15-17 ¹⁵He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
¹⁶He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.
¹⁸Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

- He is given power to bring this image to life - So it can function - commanding worship - on pain of death
 LEGISLATES A DEATH PENALTY - BOW OR BURN

He has power to require everyone on earth to receive a mark in the right hand or forehead
 Under penalty of economic sanctions
 Either receive the mark, name or number of the beast - or starve - and die

So this earth-beast becomes a false prophet - Performing great signs and wonders
 Just like Jesus predicted in Matthew 24:24 (960)
 Thereby deceiving the world into setting up an image - an icon of loyalty - to the sea-beast
 And commanding everyone to bow in worship to that image - or die

And this earth beast has an ID number - 666 - A number that deals with man - not God

What Bible story is this scenario based on? - Daniel 3 - The three Hebrews and the Fiery Furnace
 Nebuchadnezzar - of Babylon - Builds an image all of Gold - To match the head of gold from the image of Daniel 2
 Representing - "Babylon will last forever" - Contrary to God's prediction of four successive kingdoms
 Everyone is commanded to bow down and worship - or burn - There appears no way out - Compromise or die
 Either accept this human centered viewpoint which is contrary to what God clearly stated
 Or pay with your life

And the central issue is what? - Worship - Worship is that to which you bow in ultimate allegiance
 v.12 - *Causes the earth and those who dwell in it to WORSHIP the first beast*
 v.15 - *The image to the beast should...cause as many as would not WORSHIP the image...to be killed*

So - In the scenario of Revelation 13... - In the End Time...
 The old world powers are going to re-combine to attack God's people - Identified in the sea-beast
 The powers of Europe and the Middle east - The legacy of the four beasts, the 10 horns and the Little Horn

Then a new power comes on the scene - In a new area of the world - Not built on the ruins of any old-world power
 With a Christ-like facade - A Christian nation, so to speak
 But which comes to speak in support of the old world end-time power system

What world-commanding super power has arisen during the time of the end - 1798 and after?
 Outside the population centers that gave rise to the old world powers?
 With a strong Christian appearance or connection?
 There really is only one such world-commanding end-time super power currently in the world
 But I'll let you draw your own conclusions - And we will all wait and watch

Satan plans to sandwich God's people in between the proverbial rock and the hard place
 He has a left hook and a right hook planned to deck Christ's true end-time followers
 The old world system is revived - And a new world-commanding power is coopted to support the old
 Christ followers will be caught between the sea-beast and the earth-beast backed image
 To worship according to the dictates of either is functionally the same
 Being commanded to worship contrary to God's instructions - Thus breaking God's law
 Just like the three Hebrews in Daniel 3 - at the fiery furnace

Remember that end-time people - Revelation 12:17 - They keep the commandments of God and proclaim the gospel
 Satan is going to set up a lethal knuckle sandwich - demanding that people worship contrary to God's commands
 And there will appear to be no way out - Bow or burn - Compromise or die!

What is the central issue behind the actions of both beasts of Revelation 13?

- The Old World Coalition and the New World-commanding Superpower? - WORSHIP

Will Satan succeed in intimidating all Christ's followers to compromise? - Even on threat of death? - Let's read on...

Revelation 14:1-5 *¹Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. ⁵And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

- We now get a glimpse of the 144,000 -

- Who FOLLOW THE LAMB - REGARDLESS OF THE BEAST'S THREATS

While the beasts roar - They just keep following the TRUE Lamb - Not the beast masquerading as a Lamb

Notice the contrast of the two numbers -

Remember - There are no chapter divisions in the original Bible manuscripts

Chapters and verses were added centuries later - as reference aids

So let the story flow from the end of Chapter 13 right into Chapter 14

The beast's number is the number of a man - human stuff - and it is 666

- The LAMB'S NUMBER IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST TO THE BEAST'S 666 number

John sees the 144,000 standing with the true Lamb - in spite of the beast's threats

- And the 144,000 have the FATHER'S NAME written where? - ON THEIR FOREHEAD

This is also in direct contrast to the placement of the Mark of the Beast

- Those with the 666 number have the MARK OF THE BEAST on their FOREHEAD OR HAND

This is a very significant difference - Remember this is sign language - Symbols with real meanings

What is the difference between the forehead and the hand?

- The FOREHEAD indicates what you think - the mind - thoughts - decisions - beliefs - understandings
 What you put your head to - has to do with your BELIEF - INTERNAL ACCEPTANCE

- The HAND would indicate what you do - COMPLIANCE - EXTERNAL ACTIONS
 What you put your hand to - has to do with what you DO - Actions
 Whether you believe or not - Going along for the purpose of staying out of trouble
 Caving in to pressure to comply - Even against your convictions

Note - The mark of the beast can be received in either - Forehead or Hand

Satan doesn't care if you actually believe in him or not - Just so you go along with his commands

Just so you let him be in control - Either because you agree - or are just coerced

God only works on belief - You cannot comply your way into God's kingdom - That's legalism

Only FAITH counts - Inner acceptance - A heart relationship - with Jesus Himself

So those with the devil's name and number - can be marked in either hand or forehead
 They actually believe in the Devil's option - or they just go along because of the threats
 Those with the Lord's name and number - get it only in the forehead - Belief
 That is why threats of hell are so contrary to God's whole approach to love - life - and salvation
 Responding to a threat - and going along to avoid trouble - is a HAND thing
 God's side only works with the HEAD - While Satan will take either HEAD or HAND

Let's drop back and confirm this point from Revelation 7.

Revelation 7:1-4 (1179) ¹After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed...

v.1 - Four angels holding back the times of trouble

Holding back the very things we now see happening in Revelation 13

v.2 - An angel from the east - East seems to be the direction God comes and goes from

Genesis 3:24 (3); Numbers 2:3 (124); Isaiah 41:25 (696); Ezekiel 10 (808); 43:1-4 (848); 44:1,2; Daniel 11:44 (871); Matthew 2:1,2 (935); Revelation 16:12 (1185)

v.3 - Don't let these troubles come until God's people have been sealed - Where? - In their foreheads

v.4 - And who are the sealed - John hears their number - 144,000 - from the 12 tribes of Israel

Revelation 7:9-10 ⁹After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

John hears a specific number - 144,000 - from a specific ethnic origin - the tribes of Israel

But when he turns to look - He sees an innumerable number from every nation, people and tongue

NOTICE - John HEARS the number 144,000 - from the tribes of Israel

When John turns to look - He SEES an innumerable multitude from every ethnic origin

This same sequence happens two other places in Revelation

Revelation 1:10-13 (1174) ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." ¹²Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

John hears a loud voice like a trumpet - He turns and sees one like a Man dressed as a priest

Revelation 5:5-6 (1177) - ⁵But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

⁶And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain...

John hears about a Lion - He turns and sees a Lamb

In both of these instances - what John hears and sees are the same thing - Though they are described differently

What he hears is one aspect of what God wants to show him

What he sees is another aspect of the same thing - Two sides of the same coin, so to speak

The trumpet voice and the man are the same

The Lion and the Lamb are the same

So in Revelation 7 - John hears a description that involves a specific number and ethnic origin - 144,000 Israelites
 What John sees is an innumerable multitude - from every ethnic origin - Saved by the righteousness of Christ
 I believe this is the same group - A spiritual description followed by a visual reality

Remember - this is all symbolic - Don't start going literal here and there - that is inconsistent
 God's true Israel after the cross is made up of all those who put their faith in Jesus Christ
 Regardless of ethnic origin
 And unlimited in quantity - "Whoever believes shall have eternal life" - John 3:16 (1027) - Wide open

- Romans 2:28-29 (1086) *²⁸For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

Being a Jew is an inward matter of the heart - Not outer nationality

- Galatians 3:7 (1121) *Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*

Being a child of Abraham has to do with faith-line, not blood-line - Abraham was a Babylonian who believed

- Galatians 3:26-29 (1122) *²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Trusting in Jesus as Messiah makes you Abraham's seed - and qualifies you for all the promises of Israel

So God will have a whole multitude - Numbered with His number - Named with His name
 Spiritual Israelites - But from every nation on earth
 And check it out - All the parts of the number 144,000 - 12 x 12 x 1000...

1. Are present as the building blocks of Israel and the Church
 12 Tribes - 12 Apostles - Bringing in the 1000s - the multitudes
2. Make up the dimensions of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21
 12 foundations - 12 gates - Walls measuring 144 - City measuring 12,000
 God is building a city into which His faithful people will fit perfectly

God is rebuilding people of every ethnicity - according to His divine dimensions and specifications
 Who are His special nation of the saved - People of faith - Spiritual Israel
 Who will fit perfectly into the place He is preparing for them - the Holy City
 Who wear His ID number across their jersey - 144,000

Satan has his nation - built according to rebellious purposes - His violent purposes
 The nations of the lost - Babylon the Great - Drunk with the wine of deceit, power and control
 Who fit perfectly into the world he desires to rule
 Who wear his ID number across their uniforms - 666

- So God has a Name-Number-SEAL - that goes only on the forehead - Clearly-openly identifying His people
 Satan has a Name-Number-MARK - that goes on the forehead or hand - Clearly-openly identifying his people
 These people are seen in direct contrast with each other - The Marked in 13:16-18 - The Sealed in 14:1
- Revelation 14:3 - The Sealed are SINGING A NEW SONG - that only they know - A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE
- They are REDEEMED from the earth - SAVED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB
- v.4 They are SPIRITUAL VIRGINS - FAITHFULLY AWAITING THE MARRIAGE
 Faithful to the Bridegroom - Jesus - while awaiting the marriage supper of the Lamb
 No flings with other lovers on the side - No false doctrine - No false spiritual alliances
 While their Bridegroom is away - and His return is delayed
 They follow the Lamb wherever He goes - faithful and true

- v.5 And in their mouth is NO GUILE - No fish bait - No hidden agenda
What you see is what you get - Purely and honestly faithful to Jesus
Pure in Heart - "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" - Matthew 5:8 (938)

So Satan has a knuckle sandwich planned for God's faithful people - A right and a left

The old-world system revived - Backed up by the new world-super power

It involves WORSHIP - and a death penalty - Either take his mark or die

But the true Christ-followers - the 144,000 - Just keep on following Jesus - the Lamb - Faithful and true

With the seal of God - God's mark - on their foreheads - which is God's name - or Character

Ignoring the threats of the dragon - As they follow the one who is the resurrection and the life

And if you want to make a bully really made - just try ignoring him

Now - Revelation 14:6 *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—*

Another angel - flying in the midst of heaven - A heavenly messenger

Proclaiming the everlasting Gospel to the whole world

This is a message God sends out to the whole world - In direct context of the Beast - Image - Death threats

- In fact there are THREE ANGELS - and three messages - God wants to get to the world

The 1st Angel

Revelation 14:7 *saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."*

- Message #1 - Contains three commands and a reason
- Fear God - In contrast with whom? - The beast
- Give God glory - Give him your allegiance - In contrast with the beast's demands for allegiance
- Worship Him who made heaven and earth - In contrast with the beast's demands for worship
- Why? - Because it is the hour of God's judgment - It is judgment time - Decision time - Now!

So this is God's counter message to the Beast's message of chapter 13 -

The Beast says - "Fear me - Bow to my image or burn - Acknowledge my supremacy"

God says - "No, fear Me - Give Me Glory - Bow in worship to me - As the Creator of heaven and earth"

Which quotes from the Sabbath Commandment

- Exodus 20:8-11 (71) ⁸*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...*
¹¹*For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them...*

The 2nd Angel

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

- Message #2 - BABYLON IS FALLEN - In the midst of a drunken party
This concept comes straight from Daniel 5 - Belshazzar's feast the night Babylon fell
Babylon fell - without a fight - on a night when she was stronger than ever - in the midst of a drunken party
Spiritual Babylon - the city of the Beast - Does not look fallen - She looks stronger than ever
She looks like something to be feared - Someone who can carry out her threats
The wine of her false teachings has befuddled the world

But God says - No - She is fallen - She is going down - Though there is no outward evidence of that yet

She is like the Titanic - Stronger than ever - Yet two hours later she sinks and is gone

She is mortally wounded - Though you cannot see the wound - It is below the water line

So don't be threatened by Babylon - She is fallen - She is going down - Worship God - Follow the Lamb

But you have to step out by faith and oppose Babylon - Because she still looks deadly

The only reason you have to think you can survive opposing Babylon - is God's word

God says she is fallen - You have to trust His word even though it is not yet visually supported

This message seems to link directly with another angel with a message in Revelation 18

Revelation 18:1-4 (1071) ¹After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ²And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."
⁴And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

Here the warning of the fall if Babylon is repeated - with an additional voice making an appeal
 "Come out of her, MY People" - Calling God's people to leave Babylon - Now
 Like a sinking ship - If you don't abandon the ship until you feel her slipping beneath the waves
 It will be too late - You will be sucked under with her
 You have to leave the ship before she sinks - if you are going to survive

We must leave Babylon's false system of worship by FAITH - based on God's word - His prediction
 If we wait until we can see her going down - and then try to get out - It will be too late
 We will end up sharing in her sins and receiving of her plagues

It is like as if an old prophet had been walking up and down the streets of ancient Babylon
 on the morning before Belshazzar's feast
 Shouting, "Babylon is fallen. Run for your lives. Get out while you can"
 People would have called him to crazy - Babylon was stronger than ever - Certainly not "fallen"
 Yet that very night - Babylon fell - without a fight - in the midst of a drunken party
 This is the story from which these warnings that "Babylon is fallen" are taken

The 3rd Angel

Revelation 14:9-11 ⁹Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

☐ Message #3 - And by all means...

DON'T ACCEPT THE MARK OF THE BEAST - just to avoid the Beast's wrath
 Because if you accept the Beast's mark - then you will drink of the wine of God's wrath - Full strength
 By avoiding immediate trouble - you will get yourself into much deeper eternal trouble

The wine of the wrath of God

God is fed up with the carnage - the pain - the abuse - the destruction
 God's anger is not against people - He loves all and desires all to be saved - To repent and live
 But God hates the carnage of sin - The inhumanity of man against man
 And He will ultimately respond with lethal force against those determined to destroy His bride
 He will destroy the destroyers - To set the captives free

Tormented with fire and brimstone - in the presence of the holy angels and Lamb

When Jesus comes - He comes with all His holy angles - Matthew 25:31 (962)

When Jesus comes - He will let out His full glory - Full strength - 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10 (1025)

Which equals fire and brimstone on everything tainted with sin

Like Sodom and Gomorrah - Eternal fire - Jude 1:7 (1173) - Turned them to ashes - 2 Peter 2:6 (1166)

God's glory is a consuming fire to the wicked - Hebrews 12:29 (1157)

Light always annihilates darkness

All the lost run for the rocks and mountains to be hidden from the Lamb - Revelation 6:16 (1064)

When Jesus comes - The beast and false prophet are thrown into the "lake of fire burning with brimstone"

And all the people on their side are killed by the sword from Jesus mouth - Revelation 19:20-21 (1072)

After the Millennium and 2nd Resurrection - When the lost surround and attack the Holy City
 Fire comes down from God and devours them - Revelation 20:9 (1073)
 All not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire - Revelation 20:15 (1073)
 Which is the 2nd Death

Fire and brimstone happen whenever God releases His unfiltered glory where sin exists
 The lost are tormented - and killed - by God's fiery presence at the 2nd coming
 They are raised after the 1000 years - Experience the White Throne judgment
 And then killed again by God's fiery presence in the final Lake of Fire

Though this "tormented with fire and brimstone" could be on either end of the millennium
 This passage seems to point to the 2nd coming - When the Lamb and his angels come to rescue the bride
 And in the process the wicked are destroyed by the glorious presence of God

The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever
 Again - This is a symbolic passage in a symbolic book
 Just like the smoke from the destruction of Babylon "rises up forever and ever" - Revelation 19:3 (1072)
 Does not mean the literal city of Babylon will be on fire forever
 But that the spiritual power antagonistic to God and his people will be forever destroyed
 There will be nothing left - Just the smoke floating up and away
 So - The lost will be destroyed by God's glorious presence - And nothing will be left of them but smoke
 They will never come back - Just the smoke floating up and dissipating into the sky
 This represents complete annihilation - never to return
 The smoke is the evidence that the fire has done its work

They have no rest day or night - who worship the beast and his image - who receive the mark
 Both "rest" and "worship" are in the present tense - Which has an ongoing sense in the original Greek
 Literally: "They ARE HAVING no rest who ARE WORSHIPING the beast and his image"
 The beast and the false prophet - who deceives the world into worshiping the beast and his image
 Are destroyed at the 2nd coming - Thrown into the "lake of fire burning with brimstone"
 At which time all the rest are destroyed - Revelation 19:20-21 (1072)

So this passage is talking about the present state of the wicked while they are worshiping beast and his image
 Which has to be while they are alive - And before the beast is destroyed
 That would be between the time they receive the mark and the 2nd coming of Jesus
 That is when they "are having no rest"

Isaiah speaks to this...

☐ Isaiah 57:20-21 (714) ²⁰*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest,
 Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
²¹"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*

☐ So this third angel warns that if you cave in to the beast's threats - Receive the mark - Worship the beast
 You might avoid being killed by the beast
 But instead of finding rest from trouble - you will find yourself in bigger trouble
 You will experience the fire and brimstone when Jesus returns and lets out His glory
 And between the time you receive the mark and the 2nd coming - you will have not rest - or peace

This passage has nothing to do with a place of eternally burning torment after the lost have died
 I cannot take a symbolic passage to overturn all the rest of what Scripture says
 I must take a symbolic passage and interpret it according to the clear passages
 The wicked cannot burn forever and ever - Because they are not eternal - They are burned up
 And they will never return - Only smoke is left - Dissipating up into the universe forever

So - This passage is not talking about the ages of eternity - But the time before and around Jesus 2nd coming

Revelation 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

Finally - Be patient - saints - You who keep the commandments of God - and trust in Jesus - Be patient
Your bridegroom will return - The end will come - Justice will be done - Wait for it!

All of this is clearly inter-connected - And worthy of detailed study - But we must grasp just the big picture tonight

The beast - demands worship - and uses threat and force to gain compliance - Just like Babylon of old
God calls for worship - warns us not to cave into the threats of the beast
Worship will mark us for the beast - Worship will seal us for God
The big issue in this end-time scenario is WORSHIP - The one to whom you bow in ultimate allegiance

Now - What has God given us in Scripture - that relates directly to worship -
That is given to function as a mark or sign of our allegiance to Him?

Ezekiel 20:12,19-20 (819) *¹²Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.
¹⁹I am the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them;
²⁰hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.'*

Exodus 31:13 (82) *Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you."*

God says specifically that the Sabbath is to be a sign of relationship - allegiance - connection - belonging
A sign - a mark - an symbol - an identifier - for His faithful people
And God's faithful end-time people are God's true Israel - for whom the Sabbath is their sign of loyalty

And why are we to keep the Sabbath as this sign?

Exodus 20:8-11 (71) *⁸"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
¹⁰but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them...
The Sabbath is based on worshiping God as CREATOR - Because it is based on creation

Genesis 2:1-3 (2) *¹Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

Look at Revelation 14:7 - Worship Him who MADE the heaven and earth, the sea, and springs of water
Here is a call to the end-time world to worship God as creator - That quotes from the 4th Commandment

Now - If you don't believe I have made a compelling Biblical case about the 7th day Sabbath as the true Lord's day
Then you probably won't find this connection compelling either
But if you see from Scripture that God's Sabbath has been holy since creation
Identified by the Manna experience - Written in stone in the 10 commandments
Honored by Jesus and Paul - And absolutely no change has been made in the New Testament
Nor will there be any change in God's law as long as heaven and earth exist

Then I don't think you can help but see the connection here

- 1. God identifies his end-time people twice - as those who
 - 12:17 (1182) - *"keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ"*
 - 14:12 (1184) - *"keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus"*
 God sets up commandment keeping - in balance with the Gospel - as the identifier of His end-time people
- 2. God calls the world to worship him as creator - And quotes from the 4th commandment - Rev 14:7 (1183)
 - a. The Sabbath is from creation - given at creation in honor of God's finished work - Genesis 2:1-2 (2)
 - b. The Sabbath commandment points back to creation - for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth Exodus 20:11 (71)
 - c. The Sabbath is the sign or seal of relationship - The mark God gave to identify us with himself God's wedding band for his bride - Ezekiel 20:12,19,20 (819); Exodus 31:13 (82)
 - d. God's people will all receive God's seal in the forehead - In our minds - belief - Rev 7:3 (1179); 14:1 (1183)

In the exact same context

Satan demands some form of worship contrary to God's commands - 13:11-18 (1183)

To mark us for the beast - or die

The very fact that God counters him with a call to the Bible Sabbath could give us a strong indication that the devil's demand for worship contrary to God - will then involve a counterfeit day of worship

An image of God's Sabbath - But man made - Some other day to replace God's Sabbath

And at some time this difference is going to be enforced with legal penalties - even on pain of death

And - it is interesting to note - Every time Satan corrupts God's truth - He changes God's Sabbath

The medieval church-state system - Identified as the Little Horn apostasy

claims to have changed the sacredness of the Sabbath over to Sunday

- and boasts that the change is a mark of her great spiritual authority - as God on earth

The Moslem world - has changed the day of worship to Friday

Satan hates the Sabbath - Because it stands for allegiance to the One he rebelled against

To the One who threw Him out of heaven

To the One who conquered him at the cross

The One he could not control by either enticement or torture

The One he could not keep in the grave - But ultimately conquered him through the resurrection

The test for the three Hebrews was focused on the 2nd commandment - Don't bow to an image

The test for God's end-time people - I believe - will focus on the 4th commandment - God's day of worship

How will this all work out? - Some think they have the scenario all figured out to the detail

Complete with charts and predictions

I prefer to look at the big picture - and watch to see what actually unfolds in reality

Satan will sandwich God's people between the old-world power coalition - and the new world super power

Demanding worship contrary to God's law - or die

Simultaneously - God calls the world to come back to creator worship - quoting the 4th commandment

To fear him, not the beast - Don't be bluffed by Babylon, because she is really fallen

And whatever you do - don't get bullied into accepting the Mark - Receive God's SEAL instead

Therefore - I personally believe that the Sabbath issue will take on special end-time significance

And will become a pivotal point in the future for God's end-time faithful remnant people

If I simply begin to honor God's Sabbath now - as the three Hebrews honored God early in their captivity

I will keep right on honoring God and his Sabbath - being sealed with God's seal

If I simply honor all God's commandments now - Letting Him live them out in me by Faith

Then - whatever this end-time test is on - Whether it is the Sabbath or some other command of God

I will keep right on honoring God through obedience - and receive that final seal of God

And be part of the 144,000 who won't be afraid of the beast - But simply follow the Lamb wherever...

See - if you think you can let the Sabbath slide now - or any other commandment of God
Because you decide it is no big deal - A bit odd - Inconvenient
But when you see this scenario coming true - Then take your stand - You will never make it
It is always the little decisions along the way that set the stage for the big decisions in the future

God calls us to honor his Sabbath as a way of life -
To receive the blessing - That begins by calling the Sabbath a delight - the Holy day of the Lord honorable
To be marked clearly for Him - by worshiping as God has directed - and made holy
And when the big issues comes - life and death - We will simply keep standing tall - as did the three Hebrews
We will follow the Lamb - Babylon will threaten - We may even be thrown into the fiery furnace
But Babylon will crumble around us - And go down like a sinking ship
And Jesus will meet us in person in the fire - Which actually becomes our lifeboat
He will see us through unharmed

NOW - Am I saying that people not keeping the Sabbath now have the Mark of the Beast now? - NO
The Marking and Sealing comes at a time when these issues become life and death in clarity -
along with governmental legislation and enforced civil and capital penalties
That is not the case at this time - at least not here in Phoenix - Not in the United States

Furthermore - It will never be my prerogative to judge who has the Mark of the Beast
That will be up to God - He knows the heart - I don't
But it is my responsibility to personally follow the Lamb - to personally honor God as Creator
And to personally invite you to do the same

The question tonight is - How will you respond to God's call to worship?
Are you willing to follow the Lamb now? - To stand tall now, when times are not so tough?
When the penalty may be simply the pain of change - or the inconvenience of being different?
To step out now and identify with God's faithful end-time people who...
Keep the commandments of God - And bear the testimony of Jesus by faith alone?

God is calling - The angels are shouting with a loud voice - But the choice is up to you.