

(Revelation) Revelation 13:14-14:12

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discernment and devotion to Jesus Christ in the face of supernatural signs and wonders, and warns against the mark of the beast and the abomination of desolation.

Duration: 1:01:07

Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 2:1

Topics: "Idol Worship", "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the danger of worshiping images and idols, particularly in the form of television and video. He emphasizes that many believers spend hours in front of screens, prioritizing them over prayer and studying the Word of God. The speaker warns against following false prophets who perform supernatural miracles but teach things contrary to the Bible. He encourages believers to focus on obedience to the Word of God and to learn a new song of praise and thanksgiving, free from complaining and grumbling.

Transcript

Now we want to turn to the book of Revelation and chapter 13 and continue where we left off last week. We saw that in the book of Revelation we have the description of the Antichrist and the false prophet, one a political leader, the other a religious leader, who together are going to head up the government of the world in the last days before Jesus returns. And we were considering how this false prophet described in verse 11 onwards, verse 13, it says, he performs great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

Supernatural signs by which he deceives the people. It says in verse 14, he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform. And we notice that phrase, it was given him, meaning that God permitted him to exercise certain supernatural powers.

And the preparation for this type of deception through supernatural miracles is already beginning to take place. And if we are wise, we shall be on our guard when we see the supernatural, that we don't swallow everything that comes our way as though it belongs to God. I want to give you one example from the Acts of the Apostles, in chapter 8, where it says in the city of Samaria, Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8, verse 9, there was a certain man called Simon who was formally practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great.

That was by the miracles and signs, wonders that he did. And all the people in Samaria, from the smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, this man is what is called the great power of God. Now, there's going to be something like that in the last days when the antichrist and false prophet rise, something of that type of response.

This man is what is called the great power of God. And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. Now, we can ask ourselves, why does God allow Satan and his evil spirits to exercise supernatural power? Wouldn't the problem be solved if God withdrew supernatural abilities from the hands of Satan and his evil spirits? But we read in the book of Deuteronomy that there is a purpose with which God allows false prophets and those who are the agents of Satan to exercise supernatural power.

And that's in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 13 and verses 1 to 5. There it says that if a prophet arises in your midst and he gives you a sign or a wonder that is just some supernatural miracle, and that sign and wonder comes true, it's a genuine miracle by supernatural power. And then he teaches you things, let me paraphrase those words, he teaches you things which are contrary to the word of God. You must not, verse 3, listen to the words of that prophet.

And then we can ask, why in the world then does God allow him to exercise a supernatural miracle? Here is the answer, because the Lord your God is testing you. And we could say, he's testing you to find out whether you'll follow the word of God or whether you'll be taken up in wonder with supernatural signs. So, the thing we need to ask ourselves whenever we see a supernatural sign or miracle being performed by anyone, whether it's in the name of Jesus or not in the name of Jesus, is to ask ourselves, is this person leading people to obedience to the word of God? If not, we've got to just write it off and say it has no value.

Now, if we don't develop that sense of discernment in these days, then as we approach the end, we'll find that we are thoroughly deceived. We need to exercise that discernment. The Bible says, don't believe every spirit.

We need to exercise discerning of spirits to see whether it's from God or not. Revelation 13, 14, he deceives those who dwell on the earth. And then it says in the middle of verse 14 that he does these miracles in the presence of the beast, that is, in the presence of the Antichrist.

And he tells those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. Now, we consider the satanic trinity, that is, the devil, Satan, the dragon, the Antichrist, and the false prophet counterfeiting the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And just like the Holy Spirit exalts Christ, we find here the false prophet is exalting the Antichrist.

And so, to further exalt the Antichrist, this is religion and politics, hand in hand together, the Antichrist, the political leader, and here he's got this religious leader supporting his ministry, just like religious leaders' support is sought even today for political power. You find that particularly in countries like the United States, where people come to political power, they want the support of religious leaders, and they canvass that support. This is all the preparation for the final day when religion and the state will be united.

It is already united in many countries. And we find this, and it says here, he, to exalt the power of the Antichrist, he says an image must be made, a statue. This reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar, who built a statue and got people to bow down to him and said, if you don't bow down to me, bow down to the statue, you're going to be punished.

And there was a remnant in that day, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who stood up, very small number. While everybody bowed down, there were three people who stood erect, and there are going to be the equivalent of that in the last days too. There are going to be those who are going to stand erect and who refuse to bow down.

That's what God is preparing us for in these days. And it says here in verse 15, there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast. This is an amazing thing, what it says here, that there's going to be some type of fantastic supernatural deception that is going to imitate creation.

Can you think of that? To imitate creation. Man is in the scientific world, is in the pursuit today of creating life. Well, God's going to permit a fantastic amount of deception here, and it says here he's going to give breath to the image of the beast.

And the image of the beast will even be able to speak, and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed, exactly like in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Now, this image is probably what is going to be placed in the temple in Jerusalem in the last days, and is what perhaps what Jesus referred to in all likelihood as the abomination that causes desolation. You remember, and Jesus said that in Matthew 24, and verse 15.

We looked at that some time ago, where Jesus was speaking about the last days, and people asked, the disciples asked Jesus what was going to be the sign. And one of the things he said was, verse Matthew 24, 15, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, and it says in the brackets, let the reader understand. We are expected to understand that, not to be ignorant of it.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. I just want to give you a little background to this from the book of Daniel. If you turn to the book of Daniel, which Jesus referred to, following Jesus' exhortation there, let the reader understand.

We need to understand. If you turn to Daniel chapter 11, I mentioned in an earlier study that in the book of Daniel, we see about these kingdoms, the kingdom of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome is not mentioned, though it is pictured there. But before the Romans came into power, between the Grecian empire and the Roman empire, something happened in between, which is described in Daniel chapter 11.

And that is when Alexander the Great, who was the great emperor of Greece and a world ruler, died all of a sudden at a very young age. His kingdom was divided up between four of his generals, and two of those generals who were most powerful, one ruled in Syria and one in Egypt. And in between Syria and Egypt was the land of Israel.

And this is what is described in Daniel chapter 11. The king of the south, Egypt, and the king of the north, two of Alexander's generals. This is a period between the reign of Greece and the reign of Rome.

And you'll understand why I'm saying this when you consider here. It says here in verse 35, some of those, let's look at verse 33, verse 31, sorry, and forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary, fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice, and they will set up the abomination of desolation. Now what happened was, about 175 years before Christ, there was a king of Syria, whose name was Antiochus Epiphanes.

And he was one of the generals of, the descendants of one of the generals of Alexander the Great, and he came down into the city of Jerusalem, stopped the sacrifice, he sacrificed a pig on the altar, and he set up a statue of Jupiter in the most holy place of the temple. Thus he desecrated the sanctuary, and that's referred to here as the abomination of desolation. That's actually happened.

That happened 175 years before Christ. But Jesus says in Matthew 24, 15, that there is going to be a repetition of that in the last days. And therefore, Antiochus Epiphanes, who lived 175 years before Christ, is a type of the Antichrist who's going to come.

And something similar that took place there is going to take place again at the end of the age. And we see here a little description of him, which is also going to be true of the Antichrist in the last days. It says here in verse 32, by smooth words, he will turn to godlessness, those who act wickedly toward the covenant.

But in those days, the people who know their God will display strength. That's going to be fulfilled in the last days. If we know God, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we will be able to stand.

Otherwise we'll collapse, because he's got all the smooth flattering words to deceive people. And verse 33, those who have insight among the people will give understanding to many. Those who have revelation on the word in those days will explain that this is the fulfillment of prophecy.

Yet they will fall by the sword. And it says here, verse 35, some of those who have insight will fall in order to refine, purge, and make them pure until the end time. Verse 36, this is a clear reference to the Antichrist, the king will do as he pleases.

He will exalt and magnify himself above every god. He will speak monstrous things against the God of gods, and he will prosper until the indignation is finished. For that which is decreed will be done.

And it goes on to say that in verse 38, he will honor a god of fortresses. In other words, he will rule by power. And it goes on to say how he is going to enter, verse 41, the beautiful land.

That's referring to Israel, and many countries will fall. Now we can turn back to Revelation 13 and see that this is the fulfillment of what Jesus spoke of, the abomination of desolation. This image that's going to be placed in the most holy place of the temple.

Let's turn now to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. This is a New Testament passage referring to the Antichrist. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. It says here, Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that you should not be quickly shaken from your composure, as though that day of the Lord has already come. For it says here in verse 3, Let no one deceive you, for that day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy, that is, the falling away from the faith, comes first.

And I just want to tell you that falling away has already begun. It's already begun in Christendom. The falling away from that true faith which Jesus and the apostles gave to the world.

The faith that leads to a godly life. They've fallen away from that. The beginning, anyway.

And the man of lawlessness, or the man of sin, is revealed, the son of destruction. That is the title Jesus used for Judas Iscariot, the son of destruction. And Satan entered into him.

Here is another person who is going to come at the end of time, called the son of destruction, the man of lawlessness. What does he do? He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship. He takes a seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

That's how it's going to be. And he says, Don't you remember that I was, while I was still with you, I was telling you these things. That means when Paul was in Thessalonica, he felt it important enough to teach them about the coming of the antichrist.

It is something that all believers need to know about. And then he says in verse 6, You know what restrains him now? What is it that restrains the full revelation of the antichrist? That is the power of the Holy Spirit manifested through the overcomers in the church of Jesus Christ in the last days. That's what's restraining.

But it says in verse, because that time has not yet come, but the time is drawing near now, when he will be revealed. Verse 7, For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains, that is the Holy Spirit, restraining, not eliminating the power of Satan, but restraining the power of Satan, will restrain until in God's time that restraining influence is removed, and the Holy Spirit moves out of the way so that the antichrist can be revealed.

And then when that restraining influence is removed, the lawless one will be revealed, and he will rule the earth for three and a half years. That is what we have seen in the book of Revelation. His coming, verse 9, is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs, and we can say deceptive wonders.

With all the deception of wickedness, there are going to be supernatural signs and wonders in abundance, but it's all meant to lead people astray, and that's why we have to be very careful in this area of supernatural signs and wonders that we don't get led astray by them. And it says here in verse 10 and 11, that God allows people to be led astray because they do not love the truth. So these supernatural signs and wonders are going to be a means by which God is going to allow people to be deceived because they did not love the truth.

And so our salvation in the last days is going to be by loving the truth. That is the protection against all deception. Then we shall not be deceived now, we shall not be deceived then.

Then I want you to turn back to Revelation 13.15. It says here, there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Now this is quite something to create an image and to make that speech and to get people to worship it. I'm reminded of television and video.

There is an image and the image speaks. And there are people all over the world who worship. Why? What do I mean by worship it? They spend hours in front of that TV and video who have no time for prayer.

I'm talking about believers. No time for studying the word of God. They have come to worship the image that speaks on the TV screen.

It's just the preparation for a godless Christendom that has a form of godliness without that inner devotion to Jesus Christ. Little by little, I'm not saying the television is the Antichrist. I say all these things are means by which Satan is preparing the world for the revelation of the Antichrist where men begin to worship something other than the true and living God.

Now we come to Revelation 13, verse 16. It says here, and the false prophet now he causes all the small in the graves and the rich and the poor and the free men and the slaves to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. This is called the mark of the beast.

There's going to be a mark they have to receive on their right hand or on their forehead and he provides that there will be no one should be able to buy or to sell even the necessities of life except the one who has the mark either the name of the beast or the number of his name. Now this teaches us that the Antichrist is going to give people the option of either being public followers of him or secret followers of him. Public followers of him means the mark is on your forehead.

Secret followers of him means the mark is in your right hand and you can keep it hidden. Now this has an application for us even today because we have considered in 1 John 2, 18 and 19 that the spirit of the Antichrist is already at work in Christendom and it is possible for people today to publicly follow the Antichrist. For example, the prostitutes, the gamblers, the drunkards, the film stars, they publicly follow the Antichrist but it is also possible to secretly follow the Antichrist to do unrighteous things in one's office with one's right hand, sign false statements, get a little more money, give a little bribe with the right hand and then come and sit in the meeting as a spiritual brother, spiritual sister to praise God and have a reputation.

That is to get the mark of the beast right now in your right hand right here. And you see there are people who don't want to have it on the forehead because then they won't have a good testimony in the assembly but they'd like to have it secretly somewhere because there's some profit from it in the world by compromise and here is where our faith is tested and our devotion to Jesus that we stand clear of this mark of the beast in any form not on our forehead and what is even more dangerous not secretly on our right hand where the other believers don't know anything about what we're doing in our private life and our private financial affairs etc. But we stay clear like the Apostle Paul we say I have the marks of Jesus Christ on my body Galatians 6 17.

I don't need the mark of anyone else and we see here it's going to be quite a test in the last day when you have to for example if you can't buy food unless you have the mark of the beast that's going to be quite a test. The test that came to Eve in the Garden of Eden was a test of food and the first temptation that came to Jesus in the wilderness was the test of food you're dying why don't you turn the stones to bread and Jesus said it's not necessary to live it's only necessary to obey the word of God and I want to tell you this brothers and sisters it's the person who has that attitude who is going to be an overcomer in the last day it is not necessary to survive it is only necessary to obey the word of God man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. If we don't have that attitude that it's better to obey God's word and die rather than compromise and live we are going to be sucked away in this apostasy and falling away that there is in Christendom already.

Further verse 18 says here here is wisdom and let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast for the number is that of a man and his number is 666. Six in the bible is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day that's why we say six is the number of man.

Seven is the number of perfection when God rested and eight is the number of a new creation because the eighth day is the beginning of a new week you know that and in music the eighth note is the beginning of a new octave so eight is the number of new creation it is all in creation the number eight and six is the number of man.

Now what does it mean when it says let him calculate the number of the beast in the greek language in which the new testament was written they use alphabets the greek alphabets for numbers for example the greek alphabet alpha has got the value one and like that right down through the letters of the greek alphabet each alphabet has got a numeric value and i want to tell you something here about the name jesus the name jesus it's difficult to write it in english how it is written in the greek language but the closest to writing it in the english would be yesus with six letters i h s o u s and in the greek language these letters have got a each has got a different value and when you total up the value of these different letters in the greek language yesus the total value comes to 888 you see

that's very significant it's 888 it's exactly 888 if you're interested in the value of each it's 10 plus 8 plus 200 plus 70 plus 400 plus 200 that's 888 that is the number of the new creation jesus rose up on the first day of the week that is the eighth day and began a new creation now here is the antichrist whose number is 666 and this seems to indicate that whoever the antichrist is going to be his name is going to add up to 666 that will be one indication that this is the man and also we can say that since six is the number of man 666 is man's attempt to be like the trinity to be like god and this is the significance of six three times because god is the trinity the antichrist man attempting to be god now we move on to chapter 14 and there is a contrast here just like there were those

who received the mark of the beast on their right hand or forehead here we read of certain other people who also have a mark but this mark is not in the hand or the forehead it is only on the forehead chapter 14 verse 1 i looked and behold the lamb was standing on mount zion and with him 144 000 having his name and the name of his father written on their foreheads not on their right hands notice the contrast what does it teach us it teaches us that the followers of the antichrist can be public followers or secret followers but the followers of jesus christ can only be publicly known as his followers there is no such thing as a secret follower of that's a lot of humbug people talk about it but jesus said if you don't confess me before men if you're ashamed to confess me before men i will

be ashamed to confess you that's why i say dear friends if you're working in an office i hope the mark of the lord is so evident symbolically that it's on your forehead so that everyone in your office knows that you are a follower of the lord jesus christ there is no such thing as having a little mark on your hand and being a secret follower of christ anyone sitting here who thinks he's a secret follower of christ i just want to tell you you're living under a world of delusion there is only one type of follower of christ a public openly known follower of jesus christ who's got the mark right on the forehead everybody knows and i tell you it's an absolute shame for a lot of believers in our land i see hindus who come to the offices with the something like the mark of the beast on their

forehead and christians who are absolutely ashamed to be publicly known as followers of jesus christ shame on them what type of christians are they i'll tell you compromisers they're not in this number here they're not the people who are unashamed to boldly admit that they are followers of jesus christ they are wondering whether they'll get that promotion if they confess to be followers of christ they're wondering whether they'll get that increment they're lovers of money lovers of promotion not bold witnesses of jesus christ the lamb and his followers are marked by this they are publicly known as disciples of jesus christ their relatives know that they are wholehearted disciples they're not compromises in the midst of their unconverted relatives they are not compromises in their office

they're not compromises in their neighborhood the mark is clearly seen and every time we see a hindu man with a mark on his forehead let that speak to us if that man is not ashamed to show that he worships

the devil why in the world should i be ashamed to admit that i am a son of the living god the lamb was standing with 144 000 having his name and the name of his father written on their forehead now this has a symbolic meaning too because in the old testament name symbolized nature verse one i looked and behold the lamb was standing on mount sign with him 144 000 now this is not the 144 000 that we saw earlier in chapter seven because they were from the tribes of israel 12 000 each and the tribes of israel certainly don't follow the lamb that's clear they don't believe that jesus christ

is the messiah this is another group altogether this is from the church this is what the book of revelation calls the overcomers you read off in revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 he who overcomes he who overcomes he who overcomes this is the group spoken of there and the characteristic is they reflect the nature of the lamb and of the father and that's a good question to ask ourselves in our attitude towards other people do i reflect the nature of the lamb who when he was sheared kept his mouth shut who when he was slaughtered was silent who could see people taking away his rights tripping him and be silent i'll tell you some people say you mean to say it's such a small number over overcomers i ask you this question how many believers have you seen in your life who never lose their

temper who can learn to keep quiet under provocation i tell you it's a pretty small number who know how to follow the lamb in being silent when deprived of one's rights who know how what it is to take up the cross and die there are not many but here are those who wholeheartedly followed and who have now that nature which they inwardly acquired has begun to shine through their personality in their face and it says the nature of his father that is god's desire for every one of us that we grow up to maturity where we can be like fathers towards other people god is training us we start off as children we grow up to be sons we read that in one john two and then we grow up to be fathers towards other people denying ourselves to serve them longing to lead others onto maturity his nature the

nature of the lamb and the nature of the father brothers and sisters this should be our passion that the nature of the lamb of god and the nature of the father should become ours so completely that it begins to be reflected through our personality blessed are those who take that seriously i believe with all my heart i don't have a shadow doubt in my mind that these are the overcomers and it says here in verse two and three i heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder and the voice which i heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps that's the music of heaven it's a music full of praise worship joy ecstatic joy in the presence of the father and it says here there were certain people on earth who learned this while they were on

earth these are the ones who stood on mount zion now mount zion mentioned in verse one is just another name for the heavenly jerusalem and if you turn back to revelation three i want to tell you who's who has got the name of jerusalem written on them revelation 3:12 we consider that when we studied revelation 3 but just to refresh our memory so that we understand it clearly he who overcomes not everyone but he who overcomes i will make him a pillar in the temple of my god says the lord jesus and he will not go out from it anymore and look at the names that are going to be written on the forehead of whom of the overcomers i will write upon them him the name of my god what is the name of god that jesus revealed to us what is it father that's right i have revealed your name to them jesus said

in john 17 that's the name of father and he's going to write that name on the forehead not of everyone but the overcomers and the name of the city of my god the new jerusalem that is the bride of christ now that verse clearly teaches that it is the overcomers who constitute the bride of christ which comes down out of heaven from my god and my name the name of the lamb notice that the name of the father the name of

the lamb and the name of the new jerusalem that's what we see in revelation 14 they stand on mount zion which is the heavenly jerusalem and his name and the name of his father so when you put revelation 312 into revelation 14 1 it's pretty clear that this is referring to the overcomers we've only got to compare scripture with scripture get rid of our preconceived ideas and

traditions and we understand it clearly and they learned that they sang a new song it says in verse 3 these overcomers they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders and listen to this revelation 14 3 no one could learn the song except the 144 000 who had been purchased from the earth now this is quite significant why is it that no one else could learn the song is it because these people were musically minded it's got nothing to do with being musically minded i'll tell you that there are a lot of people in the devil's camp who are musically minded i mean the film songs teach you that it's not a question of being musically minded it's a question of having a heart to learn this new song what is this new song the new song is as we know from

revelation 5 9 thou art worthy to receive praise and honor and glory and dominion and power it is a song which doesn't have a smell of complaining or grumbling or murmuring in it 11 how many of us have learned it do you know that god gives us an earthly lifetime to learn that song the song of heaven a song of praise and thanksgiving completely free from even a smell or trace of grumbling murmuring and complaining 12 how many believers are there who have learned to be 100 free from grumbling and complaining when they miss the train when the food is not up to the mark when somebody who promised to do something for them does not do it somebody takes away their rights somebody does some terrible evil to them or to their children perhaps somebody speaks evil perhaps of them or their children

what a lot of opportunities we have to follow jesus taking up the cross and to learn that new song it is impossible to learn that song unless we are willing to take up the cross and die to our own rights and to our honor and to our own self that's how we learn the new song and so it says here there's a small group of people who fulfill the word of god which says in philippians 2 13 14 do all things without grumbling and complaining all things who fulfill the word of god in one thessalonians 5 18 which says in everything give thanks they learned it they learned it in their earthly lifetime and the word learn teaches us that it is an education the word learn is a word from the field of education it's something i have to go through in this earth and educate myself in i have to learn how to

sing this song i don't know it enough to start with this is being spiritually musically minded to take up the cross and to learn that song no one could learn that song except these why because the others heard about taking up the cross but in the moment of temptation they didn't take up the cross and so they never learned that song and what a sad thing it is when a man's been a believer for 20 30 40 50 years and he still hasn't got victory over murmuring over a bad temper over grumbling and complaining and bitter words and backbiting words i tell you that's a great grief to god and it's a sad thing that in 30 years on earth this person who claimed to be a believer never seriously took the matter of denying himself and taking up the cross and dying to himself and learning that new song he

just sat there thinking i've accepted christ everything's all right with me and lived under that world of delusion well i don't believe such a person's ever going to be in this number because it says these people learned that new song and it says here they were purchased from the earth notice in the book of revelation there's a phrase we considered we saw coming often called earth dwellers now this is the opposite of that these were people who were not earth dwellers they were freed from the earth they were not occupied with the things of earth their mind was set like it says in colossians 3 on the things that were above where

christ sits at the right hand of the father they were not thinking where can i make the most money and still go to heaven when i die where can i live a comfortable

life as a christian and go to heaven when i die these are the earth dwellers these people were thinking how can i fulfill the will of god and fulfill his purposes forget about comfort and money making where can i fulfill god's will before i leave this earth their mind was set on the things above they were not this compromising half-hearted wishy-washy worldly type of people who call themselves believers and christians these days no sir they were quite of a different category they were redeemed from the earth their mind was not set on earthly comfort or earthly wealth or earthly honor the honor of men their song is not you know how worthy we are their song is thou art worthy oh lord those who are wondering uh do other people think we are worthy they don't belong in this category the people

who are seeking the honor of men they don't belong in this category these are people who have learned the new song we are not worthy we are not worthy he alone is worthy how many believers have learned that who are who have not the slightest desire for the honor of a human being i tell you there are very few people the number of things that believers do to get the honor of men the approval of men the approval of their fellow believers shows very clearly that they just don't belong in this category no here are people who have learned that song thou art worthy not us oh lord not unto us oh lord be the glory but unto thee alone and who don't have the slightest desire for the honor of any human being any fellow believer any religious leader any christian leader or any such thing they consider

it all garbage the opinion in the honor of men they sang a new song and no one could learn it except these people who had been purchased from the earth and that's pretty clear unless i'm freed from the earth i can't learn the song if i love material things i love earthly comfort i cannot learn this song it says in verse four further about them they were not defiled with women for they are virgins now if you look at the first half of the verse you'll think it's all men they were not defiled with women and if you look at the second part of that sentence you'll think it's all women because it says they are virgins what's the answer they're both men and women it's not referring to physical virginity it's not referring to physical harlotry later on in the book of revelation chapter 17 you read

of verse 5 of babylon the great the mother of harlots mother of many many harlots spiritual harlotry and those are the women referred to in verse 4 here were people who were not defiled with spiritual adultery they were virgins men and women spiritually keeping themselves undefiled in the in terms of spiritual adultery with the flesh and with the world you remember what james says james 4 4 you adulteresses know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with god it's that type of adultery spoken off here friendship with the world adultery with the flesh in the moment of temptation these are the ones who kept themselves from that who were faithful in the moment of temptation who kept themselves from worldliness they are virgins they follow the lamb wherever he goes in other words

they take up the cross and notice another phrase here they are purchased from among men they are freed from the earth verse 3 and they are freed from men and men's opinions as well and as a result they are first fruits to god and to the lamb first fruits means those fruits that ripen first of all you look at a mango tree and a few among all the green mangoes here and there you see some that are yellow that are ripe we call them the first fruits and here are those who responded correctly and rightly to the holy spirit and ripened in the time that god gave them on earth they didn't waste their life they didn't waste the opportunities that god gave them to take up the cross they didn't waste the opportunities they got to follow the lamb they took every opportunity that came their way to die

and to follow jesus to obey the leading of the holy spirit and the result is they became right quickly they are the first fruits now i just want to say in james chapter 1 it says that god 118 in the exercise of his will he brought us forth that means he brought us to birth by the word of truth so that we might be as it were the first fruits of all his creation but not everybody necessarily is going to respond to god in the right way that's pretty clear but there are those who are going to respond and to me it doesn't matter whether the number 144 000 is literal or symbolic one thing is pretty clear to me it's a small number and the way to life is narrow jesus said and few there be that find it there are going to be many people in the presence of god who are going a great multitude which

no man can number as we read in revelation 7 who say we are saved because of the blood of the lamb i think many of them will be babies who died before they came to the age of understanding babies of people of all religions and that's why there'll be millions of africans and asians babies who have died before they reach the age of accountability who are justified by the blood of christ but they had no opportunity to become overcomers they are saved all right great multitude of millions of people and many others but those who have chosen that narrow way that leads to life are few jesus said that few there be that find it here are the few who chose that way you take matthew chapter 5 6 and 7 for example and here are the people who took matthew 5 6 and 7 seriously we have the opportunity

today we can hear the word of god but whether we take it seriously in our daily life is another question they follow the lamb they are first fruits to god into the lamb no lie was found in their mouth don't you believe the number is few when you put this as a qualification no lie they had so cleansed themselves from lying that they were pure in this area and i'll tell you this lying is one of the sins that goes most slowly out of us we are born telling lies children babies before they can speak they lie to their parents crying pretending something's wrong with them when all they want is a little thing picked up and patted around it begins there and it develops into all forms of lying deception giving people wrong impression adding something in our sentence so that they get a particular

impression and not saying something so that they don't get the correct impression adding something in our letters so that they get this particular impression oh what a lot of hypocrisy and lying there is i'm talking about believers you think believers are free from all this how many people take it seriously to cleanse out lying from their life to speak the truth that their yes is yes their no is no and to cleanse out all lying from their life so that there is no lie found in their mouth i tell you i'd be surprised if there were 144 000 in the history of the human race who took this seriously but i tell you that's our calling brothers and sisters to follow the lamb wherever he went do we see any footstep of the lamb where he told a lie no that's where we are called to follow let your yes

be yes and let your no be no when we come to christ we are not like that when we are born again we are not like that we are full of and now the holy spirit comes to transform us into the image of jesus who never spoke a lie who could say i am the truth and he transforms us into that image and if we cooperate we can find our place in that number no lie was found in their mouth notice again the emphasis on the mouth we consider that in our last study the mouth the mouth of the antichrist and here is the mouth again of the overcomers oh what a tremendous importance the new testament gives to speech by your speech jesus said in matthew 12 37 you will be justified by your speech you will be condemned by our speech we manifest whether it is the spirit of christ that rules in our hearts or the

spirit of the antichrist in their mouth there was no lie found therefore they are blameless blameless what a calling to be blameless before the father we can be in that number if we take it seriously brothers and

sisters verse six and i saw another angel flying in midheaven having an eternal gospel to preach to whom to those who are not purchased from the earth to those who and it's in the margin it says here the literal word there is those who sit on the earth in other words those who have made this earth their dwelling place the comforts of this earth the money of this earth the honor of this earth the pleasures of this earth are why where they have decided to settle down in every nation tribe and tongue and people and he speaks with a loud voice fear god that's a gospel did you know

that fear god is a gospel it says that here it says it's the eternal gospel that's the gospel in the old testament too fear god is the gospel in the new covenant it's going to be the gospel at the end of time fear god that is an essential constituent of the true gospel given glory that's part of the true gospel give him the glory don't touch it yourself don't take one bit of it to yourself give him the glory and the hour of his judgment has come is that good news it is if we understand it right the time has come peter said that judgment must begin where at the house of god with me with you first then for the world because much is given to us much will be required from us blessed are those who hear that to judge myself is a gospel worship him that's a gospel who made the heaven and the

earth and the sea and the springs of waters the creator because man would not give him the glory as creator therefore man goes down into the pit of darkness we read that in romans 1 verse 20 and 21 they saw the glory of god in creation and they were not thankful they did not fear him they did not give glory to him they did not worship him therefore they sunk into sin and i wanted to notice another thing here notice this phrase the hour of his judgment you remember when we considered isaiah 61 free isaiah 61 2 sorry it says there that jesus said the spirit of the lord has anointed me to preach the gospel to proclaim the acceptable year of the lord and then he stopped because in isaiah 61 2 the next phrase is the day of vengeance of our god the acceptable year and the day of vengeance we

saw that that grace extends over a period of a whole year vengeance over one day god is as it were saying i would rather act 365 days in grace and one day in judgment that's my nature now notice the same contrast here the hour of judgment in second corinthians 6 2 we are called we are told this is the day of salvation the day of salvation and the hour of judgment that means god would much rather act in salvation and grace rather than in judgment now i want to say something from that for our own nature you know brothers and sisters our own adamic nature would much rather act in judgment rather than in grace towards other people for the race of adam it is the day of judgment and the hour of grace you see that in the garden of eden as soon as adam was caught by god he pointed at his wife the

day of judgment had begun this my wife she's the cause of all the problem and now the lord is trying to convert us from that wretched nature that would rather judge others criticize others find fault with others and once in a while act in grace to his nature which is exactly the opposite he would rather act in grace than only when stretched to the utmost limit he finally acts in judgment and he's communicating to us that nature of mercy that's just in passing the hour of his judgment has come verse 8 another angel the second one followed saying fallen fallen is babylon the great this refers to the mother of all the harlots mentioned in verse 4 the women who tried to tempt the overcomers this is the mother babylon harlot christianity the counterfeit church that pretended to follow jesus

but lived for itself for the world and for its own lust and passion fallen because she has made all the nations in every country you find this harlot church made them drink of the wine of the passion of her spiritual immorality we'll deal with that more when we come to chapter 17 and 18 we read in verse 9 another angel a third one followed them saying if anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a

mark on his forehead or upon his hand he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of god in other words verse 8 the last part if you drink of the wine of babylon then verse 10 you have to drink also of the wine of the wrath of god you can't drink one and escape the other what you drink in verse 8 will lead you to be compelled to drink the wine of the wrath of god mentioned in verse 10

and it says something about the wrath of god in verse 10 it is mixed in full strength without mixture you know what that means it means without mercy he who has shown no mercy to others james 2 13 will be judged without mercy in the final day he who has never understood to be merciful to other people who have harmed him and cheated him and robbed him and done evil things will in that day receive a judgment without mercy from the hand of god that's why if we don't want to get judgment without mercy we've got to be merciful to other people today and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb that's judgment and the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever this is eternal judgment for those who have not responded to

god's call of grace they have no rest day and night those who worship the beast and his image when we consider chapter 4 we saw there in verse 8 that the living creatures don't have any rest day and night because they're always worshiping god here is a similar phrase they don't have any rest day and night because they are tormented because they worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name and here again that sentence comes here is the perseverance of the who keep the commandments of god and their faith in jesus the call to endure and notice the two things mentioned there obedience and faith and in the amplified bible it says those who habitually obey the commandment i hope we are in that number of those who habitually obey the commandments of jesus and about

commandments of god and have a strong faith in jesus these are the two most important requirements as we approach the end of time faith in the lord and a habitual obedience to the commandments of jesus then we shall endure as we approach the end of time

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