

Life Under The Reign of the Antichrist

I. Recap & Overview

- a. During the Great Tribulation (The Final 3 ½ years of this age), the Antichrist will emerge as a man of lawlessness (**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**) on the global stage and establish an evil empire empowered by Satan himself. **Revelation 6-9** detail the 7 seal judgments and first 6 trumpet judgments, which take place during the Great Tribulation. God directs these judgments at the Antichrist and his empire in order to cut off his resources and bring about salvation and righteousness on the earth.

(Isaiah 26:9 NASB) “At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; For when the earth experiences Your judgments, The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”

- b. **Revelation 7** puts the main storyline on pause and gives us a glimpse into God’s divine protection for the righteous in the midst of the severe global judgments. In this chapter, God seals 144,000 Jewish believers and along with a Great Multitude with the seal of God for divine protection. **Revelation 10 & 11** then put the main storyline on pause to explain some of the details related to the Great Tribulation. They explain how God will anoint forerunner messengers to function as prophetic leaders during the final years of this age by calling them to “eat the scroll (**Revelation 10:8-11**)”.

(Daniel 11:32b-33a NASB) “...but the people who know their God will be strong and take action. 33 And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many”

- c. **Revelation 11** ends by taking us back to the main storyline to explain the 7th trumpet judgment, which takes place at the end of the Great Tribulation, and includes the rapture of the church and Christ’s 2nd coming (**Revelation 11:15-19; Revelation 10:7; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**).
- d. Chapters **12-14** pause the main storyline again, to detail Satan’s rage against Jesus, Israel, and Gentile believers. **Revelation 12** tells of how Satan will wage war in the heavens against the angels but will lose that war and get cast down to earth where he will then wage war against Israel and the gentile believers. Then in **chapter 13**, we see the “beast from the sea (the antichrist)” emerge to make war with the saints (**Revelation 12:1-7**) for 42 months (3 ½ years).
- e. In this session, we’ll unpack the rest of **Revelation 13 & 14**, which explain how the beast (Antichrist) gains influence. These chapters also tell of what happens to those who follow after the beast. **Chapter 14** also speaks about the righteous remnant as well as the great harvest that takes place during the Great Tribulation.

II. The Beast From The Earth

(Revelation 13:11-18 NASB) “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who live on it worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of the sky to the earth in the presence of people. 14 And he deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause all who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

- a. This second beast is seen coming up from out of the earth (among the “earth-dwellers” – Those on the earth that are not Christians). He’s described as a beast because he is like the first beast, yet different than the first beast. His “two horns like a lamb” are a parody of Jesus who is the Worthy Lamb with

seven horns (**Revelation 5:6**). The horns speak of authority, meaning that this second beast has clear authority but not nearly as much as the antichrist's 10 horns (**Revelation 17:3**). He derives his authority from the first beast (**Revelation 13:12**). The second beast is later called, The false prophet (**Revelation 16:13;19:20; 20:10**).

- b. The false prophet has a unique relationship with the antichrist (first beast). The antichrist seems to be more of the *governmental and military figure*, while the false prophet seems to function as a *religious leader*. The primary role of the false prophet is to make people on the earth worship the antichrist (**Revelation 13:12**). The false prophet can call fire down from the sky and perform great signs that will deceive many people into antichrist worship. Paul also previously taught about the false miracles that would happen during the reign of the antichrist.

(2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 NASB) *“The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved.”*

- c. Jesus number one warning related to the events that take place at the end of the age was: do not be deceived. This teaching is imperative for the body of Christ, because if we pursue wisdom and understanding related to these end time events, we will not be deceived. Satan's ultimate goal isn't just to deceive people, but to use deception to get people to willingly reject God. The praying church at the end of the age that knows their God will not be deceived.

(Matthew 24:4-5 NASB) *“And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many people.”*

(Daniel 11:32b-33a NASB) *“...but the people who know their God will be strong and take action. 33 And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many”*

- d. The ministry of the false prophet essentially gives people two options: 1) worship the antichrist, 2) die. He will build an idol/image of the antichrist and command the people of the earth to build it as well. The false prophet also has authority to give “breath” to the image, and when he does, the “image” will speak and command all those who don't worship the beast to be killed. Simply put, the false prophet will be an effective evil evangelist that enforces the antichrist's worship movement.

III. The Mark of the Beast & Those Who Take It

(Revelation 13:16-18 NASB) *“And he causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17 and he decrees that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.”*

- a. It's important to remember **Revelation 7** describes how God commands an angel to seal the servants of God (on their foreheads) for divine protection during the Great Tribulation. The Old Testament also has examples of God marking His people for specific purposes. The “mark of the beast” should be seen as a “countermark” for those not marked with the seal of God.

(Exodus 13:3,8-9,16 NASB) *“And Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you departed from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the Lord brought you out from this place...8 And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt... 16 So it shall serve as a sign on your hand and as phylacteries [small leather box containing writings of the law] on your forehead, for with a powerful hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”*

(Deuteronomy 6:8-9 NASB) “You shall also tie them as a sign to your hand, and they shall be as frontlets [decorative ornament with scripture written on it] on your forehead. 9 You shall also write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

(Ezekiel 9:4-6 NASB) “And the Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and make a mark on the foreheads of the people who groan and sigh over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst [of Jerusalem].” 5 But to the others He said in my presence, “Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. 6 Utterly kill old men, young men, female virgins, little children, and women, but do not touch any person on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary.” So they started with the elders who were before the temple.”

- b. When the false prophet institutes the “mark of the beast”, it will be a worldwide system that will impact every person, regardless of his or her social class or status. Those who take the mark will be able to buy and sell but those who do not take the mark will not be able to buy or sell. This will dramatically increase the wealth of the antichrist’s economy and be one of the biggest hurdles the church will have to face. However, we can’t forget, God has His seal marking us for divine protection and provision.
- c. While it’s easy to get lost in the speculations related to what the mark of the beast could be (i.e. bar codes, credit cards, microchip, ex.), it’s important to examine a few absolutes 1) it requires wisdom to understand (**Revelation 13:18**) 2) it will include the name of the beast and/or the number of his name 3) Though it’s not clear exactly what is right now, it will be clear when it’s instituted 4) it will involve the “number of a man” 666. Throughout history, people who study the end-times have found clever ways to “calculate the number of his name” but with clever manipulation, there could be endless possibilities as to what the mark could be.
- d. Revelation 14 gives us more insight into the mark of the beast and is essential to study if we want more understanding. This scripture tells us that the mark of the beast is knit to the worship of the antichrist. The Greek term used here for worship, *proskyneō*, means to revere, kneel before (fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead), or to kiss the hand towards one in a token of reverence. The point here is, people who take the mark of the beast will not be tricked into doing so. Taking the mark will be an outward sign of their willing submission to the beast.

(Revelation 14:9 NASB) “Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand””

- e. Those who take the mark of the beast will drink of the wine of God’s wrath, meaning, they will suffer eternal punishment in the lake of fire. This tells us that people who take the mark will willfully reject God and choose to submit to the beast. Those who take the mark will not wish they had repented, their deception will lead to whole-hearted hatred and rejection of God.

(Revelation 14:10-11 NASB) “He also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

- f. **Revelation 14** then calls the saints to persevere despite the institution of the mark of the beast. I believe that means that the challenges that mark of the beast presents will be severe and require the saints to persevere despite difficulty. It is better to die than to take the mark of the beast.

(Revelation 14:12-13 NASB) “Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

IV. The 144,000 First Fruits & The Great Harvest

- a. As John sees the institution of the mark of the beast, he also sees visions of the righteous believers that are sealed by God and on the earth during the Great Tribulation. In *Revelation 14* John again sees the 144,000 Jewish believers that were described in *Revelation 7*. *Revelation 14* describes this 144,000 as “first fruits”, meaning a greater harvest is coming after them. *Chapter 14* also tells of their consecration; they pure and blameless, singing a unique and exclusive end-of-the-age song.

(Revelation 14:1-5 NASB) “Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000 who had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And 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. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song except the 144,000 who had been purchased from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are celibate. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from mankind as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”

- b. John also sees a great harvest take place. There’s two components to this harvest: 1) The harvest (that Jesus himself reaps) of the righteous, 2) The harvest of the unrighteous destined for wrath due their rejection of God. There will be a righteous remnant left on the earth at the hour of Jesus’ return and it will be a great harvest!

(Revelation 14:14-20 NASB) “Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, with a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, calling out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” 16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple, which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.” 19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trampled outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of 1,600 stadia [Just under 100 miles].”

Questions For Discussion

1. What was one thing that was highlighted to you or stuck out in tonight’s teaching?
2. Did this teaching bring clarity to a thought or question you had related to the end times?
3. How does this teaching mobilize you to pray? *(1 Peter 4:7 NASB) “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer”*