

Revelation 14 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

The last three verses of ch. 13 have been the genesis for a lot of wild speculation, sci-fi literature, and horror movies.

As we mentioned on Sunday, they've also proven to be the cause for a lot of strange interpretations throughout most of church history because it wasn't until modern times that what we find here could be fulfilled *literally*.

It's interesting to see how while most Bible teachers have given strange and elaborate interpretations to these verse throughout the generations,

- those *few* who maintained a steadfast commitment to a *literal & straightforward understanding* of the text,
- simply said that there would come a day when the whole world would be united in one economic system that would somehow be tied to making payments via some new way unknown to them at that time.
- As we saw so clearly on Sunday, that day has arrived in spades!

In fact, I thought you might like to see some visuals of a few of the things we talked about Sunday.

- Omni article
- Dr. Kevin Warwick & The Jacobs
- The Verichip & Digital Angel
- Hitachi's mu chip

We only managed to get through v. 16 & the first half of v. 17 on Sunday, so let's pick it up at that point again and proceed from there.

CHAPTER 13

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, **17**and 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.

The "he" here is the false prophet who leads the world in the worship of the antichrist.

He helps enforce the antichrist's hegemony in the realm of economic control by making it mandatory that all be branded with a distinctive mark of loyalty to the antichrist.

The word John uses for "mark" is the Greek word 'charagma' and refers to a *scratching* or *etching* that places an *identifying* feature on someone.

Without the mark, no one may buy or sell; they are frozen out of the world's economic system.

In the last part of v. 17, John says this mark will be the *name* of the antichrist, or the *number* of his name.

The word "or" doesn't signify an *alternative*, as though people will have a choice of 3 various marks to take.

"Yes, I'd like the generic mark. No, make it the name, not wait; give me the number."

The idea is that the mark *is* the antichrist's name which *is* some number.

And here's where it gets a little fuzzy and gives us one more clue that what we're seeing here is a modern technology at work unheard of in prior times.

We can easily understand why the mark is the antichrist's name; after all, this mark is a satanic imitation of the seal of God on the foreheads of the 144,000 that we read about in ch. 7 and will see again in just a moment in ch. 14.

What's less clear is how this name is also a number.

But a simple lesson from history helps clear it up.

Today, modern languages use distinct symbols for numbers.

We have the alphabet for our letters and completely different symbols for our numbers.

Many ancient languages did not enjoy this luxury and used their letters to double as numbers.

Both Greek & Hebrews, the primary languages used in recording the scriptures, were 2 such languages.

The first letter of each alphabet equaled 1, the second letter equaled 2, and so forth, up to a certain base number, then they were multiples of that base.

That meant every word had a *numerical* equivalent.

A=1 B=2 C=3 D=4 . . . J=10 K=50 L = 100 M = 500 . . .
Y=10,000

$$\text{DADDY} = 4+1+4+4+10,000 = 10,013 = \text{YJC}$$

This meant each person's name had a numerical equivalent which could then be re-written as a kind of code.

We have plenty of evidence of this in the writing that has come to us from that time.

For instance, in some graffiti in the ruins of ancient Pompeii there are the words "I love her whose number is 545."

John goes on to give us a bit more insight in v. 18 -

18 Here 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.

Does this tell us who the beast is, by figuring out the numerical value

of a name and seeing if it adds up to 666? ^[1]

Using this method, many candidates for Antichrist have been suggested through the ages

Martin Luther said it was the Pope

The Pope said it was Martin Luther

Other figured out it was Napoleon or Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin

Some modern day commentators say John was coding the name of Nero, but how could he have been; this was written well after Nero's death?

In more recent times, some have proposed the name of Henry Kissinger, Nikita Krushchev, and even Mikhail Gorbachev.

Of course in order to do this, they have to convert the person's name they want to turn in to the antichrist into Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin and then alter it somewhat to fit the calculations.

Let me show you how this is done – and by so doing, prove categorically WHO the antichrist is.

What do we know about the popular children's TV character Barney?

He is a cute purple dinosaur! (BARNEY = CUTE PURPLE DINOSAUR)

If we convert these letters to their Latin equivalents we have this = CVTE PVRPLE DINOSAVR.

Now, extract the Roman Numerals we have = C V V L D I V

Their decimal equivalents = 100, 5, 5, 50, 500, 1, 5

The sum of those numbers = 666

Coincidence? I think not!

Barney IS the antichrist, as not a few poor parents would heartily agree.

You get the point – Left with enough time and motive, you can make almost anyone into the antichrist if you're willing to play with the details enough.

But our text doesn't allow this!

John begins with the qualifier – “Here is wisdom.”

In other words, this is something that's a deeper insight and requires the enabling of the Spirit of God to discern.

Then John issues the invitation to his readers *who possess understanding* to figure out the number of the antichrist.

It's the number of a man – which is categorical proof that the antichrist is a literal individual and not merely some general last days influence, philosophy of humanism or world system – as some interpreters have proposed.

John means us to understand that the antichrist is a *literal person* with a *specific name* which in some way or another will be able to be coded numerically.

BUT – and here's what we need to take critical note of – John's invoking of wisdom and initiation to *people of understanding* to calculate the number of the beast indicate he DOES NOT MEAN we ought to SPECULATE on who the antichrist is!

Rather, who the antichrist is *will be abundantly clear*, not by calculating his name, but by the other things the Bible has told us will mark his career.

Calculating his name will simply be the final

CONFIRMATION of who he is.

This means the only people who possess *the requisite wisdom and understanding* to do this will be those *who are alive during the Tribulation* and who witness all this.

This is similar to what we read at the end of the Book of Daniel where Daniel sees some stuff and then is told to seal it up because it wouldn't be understandable until the last days when knowledge had increased. (Daniel 12:4)

The same thing applies here. It's foolish for us to try to fit anyone today into the role of the antichrist.

Though in all likelihood he is alive today, his career as the

antichrist won't begin until after the Church has been raptured
– as Paul makes clear in 2 Thess. 2.

In chs. 12 & 13, John has had some *behind the scene* visions of the age old struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan and how it will come to a climax in the last half of the Tribulation – what's known as the Great Tribulation.

In these two chs. he sees the main players on earth during the Tribulation, ending with the world dictator and his chief religious crony.

And though the antichrist has managed to make war with the Tribulation saints and overcome them, God doesn't want to leave John with the impression that the antichrist is victorious – so we press on to ch. 14.

CHAPTER 14

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.

In ch. 7 when we first encountered this group of 144,000, we were told they were sealed with the seal of God and so *exempted* from the judgments that would fall on the earth.

It's not that they wouldn't suffer to some degree, but that ultimately they wouldn't be *overcome* by them.

Ch. 7 presents them as a mighty army of Jewish evangelists who have come to faith in Jesus Christ and who then are used and protected by God to lead countless others to faith in Christ.

Here we see that the seal of God has proven reliable and carried them safely through the entire Tribulation to stand with Jesus on Mt. Zion.

Mt. Zion is used repeated in scripture to refer to the City of Jerusalem and the center of the Messiah's earthly kingdom during the Millennium. (Psalm 48, Isaiah 24:23, Joel 2:32, Obadiah 17 and 21, Micah 4:1, 4:7)

Don't miss the contrast John is seeing in all this.

Ch 12 showed the nation of Israel being chased out of its God given land by the armies of the antichrist.

In ch. 13 we see the last day's would-be world dictator and false prophet concocting a plan for world domination, which other passages tells us they center in the City of Jerusalem.

Crucial to the antichrist's plan is to mark his followers just as God has sealed his.

But when all is said and done, it's *Jesus and His sealed* we find standing in Jerusalem, not the antichrist and his cronies.

In ch. 13, John saw a dangerous wild beast – here in ch. 14, he sees a Lamb.

But which one has proven the stronger? – The Lamb!

There's another idea for a bumper stick – “Beware the Lamb!”

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.

This is simply a picture of heaven's rejoicing at the victory of the Lamb and His sheep over the evil, elaborate, and age-old plans of the devil.

It's a victory song – kind of like that one you hear at ballparks when one team is decidedly the winner and the fans are not gloating in the triumph of their team – “Na na naha! Na na naha! Hey, hey, hey! Goodbye!”

The angelic chorus plays the heavenly instruments (the word for ‘harp’ here is lyre) to accompany the singing of the 144,000 who are the only ones capable of singing the tune because it's theirs and only their testimony.

There's a great picture of worship here we shouldn't miss.

In v. 1, John sees the 144,000 with the Lamb on earth.

But in v. 3, their worship is before the throne of God.

It is precisely the same with us!

He is God in heaven, and here we are on earth.

But our worship ascends before the throne of God and before the angels as a thing of great beauty when it is offered in sincerity with clean hands and hearts.

John now goes on to give us more details about the 144,000 -

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.

Ch. 7 made it crystal clear they are Jewish.

Here they are called the first-fruits of the redeemed from among men, meaning God has fulfilled His promise to lift the blindness from national Israel and reveal Himself to them.

These were the first to be converted, and were then used by God in a dramatic and supernatural way to reap a huge harvest of converts, first from their fellow Jews, and then from the Gentile nations as well.

Right now, there are about 50,000 missionaries around the world.

Triple that number, make them invincible, and cover them with a mantle of anointing that sets them apart as obvious men of God, and it's not hard to see how effective this group will be at leading people to faith in Christ.

They follow the Lamb where ever he goes, meaning, wherever the Spirit of the Lord has taken them around the world, they have gone proclaiming their message of salvation.

Then, at the conclusion of the Tribulation, they are gathered back to Jerusalem.

Because of the challenging nature of their calling and the trouble that will mark those days, they have followed the Apostle Paul's instructions in 1 Cor. 7 and *not married*.

They've remained virgins throughout the time of the Tribulation. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and encouraged them that in light of the coming persecution the Holy Spirit had been warning would soon descend on the early church, it would be better if those who were single did not marry since this would add an extra burden on each of them.

Being single meant the 144,000 were not bound to a wife and so were more free to follow the Lord where ever He directed them.

But there's more here to their virginity than just staying single.

They are identified as not having defiled themselves with women. Heb 13:4 says that marital intimacy is a holy thing before the Lord so the virginity of the 144,000 extended to their being utterly sexually pure!

Not only were they single, they abstained from all sexual activity. No doubt this will stand in stark contrast to the spirit of the world in the last days.

It may very well be a part of the antichrist and false prophet's corrupt religious system to embrace sexual immorality as an accepted tenet of faith.

And once again we see how our own day is setting the stage for this very thing.

Christian denominations are redefining their views of acceptable sexual morality; accepting all kinds of things the Bible places a ban on.

Why it has even gotten to the place now where the government is moving in to the realm of telling the church what it has to approve of in terms of sexual orientation and practice.

When the salt & light of the Church is removed in the rapture, what kind of a floodgate to evil will open?

Whatever else is released, you can be sure the realm of sexual immorality will become a nasty, stinky cesspool of moral filth the whole world will swim in

But the 144,000 will not take a dip.

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—⁷saying 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.”

I'm sure you've heard the story of the frog in the kettle.

If you drop a frog in boiling water, it'll jump right out.

But if you put it in cool water and then slowly turn the heat up, it'll eventually cook and you can enjoy some nice frog's legs.

The moral of the story is if someone drops a dramatic change on you,

you're likely to object simply because it stands in such sharp contrast to the status quo.

But if change comes slowly and by degrees over a long time, people end up in a place they never would have allowed originally.

The things that will come down during the Tribulation, and specifically in the last half of the Tribulation will be so big, so mind-numbing in scope and frequency that the human race will be just that – numb!

The advance of evil will be so obvious that in response, God will turn up things and even send angels to fly back and forth over the earth proclaiming a message of warning.

The first angel proclaims the gospel – and by doing so, verifies the message the 144,000 have been preaching all along.

Added to the gospel will be a qualifier that it's a *limited time offer* – and the expiration date is almost up.

The angel will tell people they must choose between who they will worship – the God of heaven, or the antichrist on earth.

Some today like to identify their ministry or technology with this angel. [\[2\]](#)

A Christian television network named their satellite “Angel One” claiming it was a fulfillment of this verse.

The desire to connect contemporary technology or events with this angel is nothing new.

Adam Clarke, writing in the late 18th century said, “The vision seems truly descriptive of . . . *The British & Foreign Bible Society*, whose object it is to print and circulate the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through all the habitable world, and in all the languages spoken on the face of the earth.”

John Trapp, writing in the late 17th century, saw another fulfillment: “This is held to be John Wycliff, who wrote more than two hundred volumes against the pope, and was a means of much good to many.”

It's best to take what John saw here as literal – this was an angel; a supernatural messenger of God who will counter the supernatural feats of the devil and his servants.

8And 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.”

The second angel that flies around the earth declares the end of the antichrist’s system of economic and religious control.

That system is here referred to as the city of Babylon.

We’ll get in to a lot more depth on this when we get n to chapters 17, 18, & 19.

For now, let’s just understand Babylon as standing as a symbol of the kingdoms of this world which are inspired by the devil.

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.”

This third angel makes it clear to the people of the earth that taking the mark of the beast is the definitive act that seals their fate.

You see what this means?

Just as repentance of sin and believing in Christ leads to salvation, so the devil counterfeits conversion by calling the earth-dwellers to make a similar commitment to him.

The 144,000 and the angels will be calling people to faith in Christ – the false prophet will be calling people to faith in the antichrist.

And I’ll bet you the very verse we use to urge people to make a public profession of faith in Jesus will be twisted and used by the false prophet in calling people to a public confession of the beast. (Matthew 10)

32“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him

I will also confess before My Father. ³³But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father.

Of course the Father he'll be referring to is satan.
This angel makes it clear – to accept the mark of the beast is to be *eternally damned*.

In v. 10, God's righteous anger is spoken of as a cup of wine.

Actually, the wine is *wrath*, and the cup is *indignation*.

Wrath is the Greek word *thumos* and refers to passionate, hot anger.

We get our word "*thermos*" from it.

It's a picture of God's anger when it flashes out.

Thumos is only used 11 times in the NT to describe God's anger and 10 of those 11 times are in Revelation for it is here that we see the wrath of God finally taking form in the last days.

Indignation is the Greek word *ogre* and refers to a settled disposition of animosity and resistance.

The picture painted by this angel is that God hates sin and is angry at it 24/7.

But those who take the mark of the beast are going to experience first-hand what that anger tastes like.

God will bring a cup to their lips and make them drink.

It will be strong drink that will make them stagger under the weight of His judgment.

And that judgment is hell!

These verses present a vivid picture of hell.

No matter how uncomfortable the idea might make us, no matter how much public opinion finds hell distasteful, no matter how much liberal bible scholars might deny it, and no matter how many cults redefine it as annihilation -

We must admit that the Bible speaks of a place of eternal torment where those who reject Christ are destined, as it says here, "forever and ever."

Now catch this – it's highly technical – you know what the phrase in Greek means for "forever and ever?" FOREVER & EVER!

Hell is real - and many will end up there.

Some reject the idea of hell because they think it incompatible with a God who is all-loving.

But let's think about it - it's precisely *because* God is loving and honors the choices we make, that hell exists!

You see, the torment of hell does not come from demons stoking the furnace.

The torment comes from people's rejection of God & His grace. Take careful note of what the angel says in v. 10 –

He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

It's popular to describe hell as a place *devoid of the presence of God*, but that's not accurate.

Hell is a created place and as such will be permeated by the presence of God because He is omnipresent.

What's missing from heaven, what makes it a place of torment is the absence of grace.

Imagine the terror of God's presence without any grace – not one shred of favor or good will.

Heaven is the place of unrestricted grace and blessing.

Earth, this life, is a measure of grace and blessing.

As scripture says our breath, the sun and rain, are all manifestations of the general grace of God (Matt. 5:45)

But hell; hell is the total absence of grace and blessing!

Imagine suffocating for all eternity.

Imagine having the capacity to see but there is no light.

Imagine, if you can, existing forever and ever without one shred of companionship.

No one to talk to, nothing to do.

This idea that hell is one long beer brawl and rave party is totally goofy.

Those who say they want to go to hell because that's where all their friends are have no clue.

Imagine having a brain, but no input from your senses so that all that is left for you is the thoughts already in your head – and the endless haunting scenario of your life and how you were a total fool in not responding to the gospel when you had a chance.

Hell is eternal existence with nothing to do – literally!

You see, hell is nothing more nor less than God answering the desire of people to exist apart from Him.

God by His very nature cannot withdraw his presence – but He will withdraw His grace and leaving nothing left but His righteous indignation.

This is why we read of hell in terms of burning torment.

There is no physical sensation more painful than that of being burned.

So that image is employed in describing hell – but make no mistake, the real thing will be far worse than being burned alive!

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

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

In contrast to those who follow the antichrist and end up in hell are those who die in faith in Christ.

They will enjoy the very opposite of what the earth-dwellers will get.

If hell is the complete absence of grace – heaven is the complete fulfillment and enjoyment of it.

Every breath will be a renewal of life.

Our eyes will see things as they really are.

Our ears will hear true music.

Our mouths will taste real food.

Our noses will be filled with the sweet perfume of God’s own presence!

And even our sense of touch will thrill to every contact.

We’ll have full use of our brains.

And we’ll have perfect communion with each and every creature we meet.

Those who go to hell are *punished* – reaping the bitter fruit of their rejection of Christ.

Those who go to heaven also reap – but their harvest is one of the sweet fruit of reward.

14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the

cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

This is it –the end of John’s behind the scenes visions as he is now turned back to a more *chronological* report of the end times. The time has come for the last judgments to be poured out on earth.

It begins with Jesus coming on a cloud with a sickle – symbolic of harvest.

These verses are the basis of my message Sunday so I’ll leave further comment till then.

17Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” ¹⁹So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

These verses are the basis for the words of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword
His truth is marching on!

Twice in vs. 14-20 we read that the time is “ripe.”

Two different words are used here.

In v.15 we read the earth is ripe.

The word means ripe to the point of rottenness; over-ripe
It's been on the vine too long.

You've seen fruit like that – it's gooey and bugs have
burrowed into it and made it wormy.

The angel is saying the earth is *more than ready for
judgment*; judgment is overdue.

In v. 18 the angel says the fruit of the vine is fully ripe.

In other words – this is the premier time to harvest.

But this fruit comes from the *vine of the earth*.

This is the harvest of evil fruit, not good.

We're well acquainted with the idea of fruitfulness in the Christian
life.

Jesus called us to bear fruit to the glory of God in John 15.

Paul listed the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 - Love, joy, peace,
longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,
self-control.

But just prior to that list he wrote of the works of the flesh –

19Now the works of the flesh are evident, which
are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,
lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred,
contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath,
selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,
²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and
the like

These are the fruits of unrighteousness - anti-fruit, if you will. (Matt
7:17-18 12:33 Rom. 6:21 7:5)

One day, God is going to harvest the evil vine of this earth.

John sees that harvest here.

The earth is *overdue* for judgment and the wickedness of the
people of the earth is fairly bursting it is so ripe.

How are we to understand this *winepress*?

Is this merely some spiritual idiom for the *time* of judgment, or is
John seeing a symbolic figure of the final judgment itself?

Well, first off, notice its *location*.

It's mentioned as being outside the city.

In light of what we have been reading up to this point, we have to conclude this means Jerusalem. (11:1-2 14:1)

The reference to 1600 furlongs, actually the word is *stadia*, also points to the conclusion this is a literal, geographical event being described.

1600 furlongs is about 200 miles.

A clue to what John is seeing here is given in Joel 3:12-16.

“Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

The *Valley of Jehoshaphat* is the *Kidron Valley*, which lies on the east of Jerusalem.

It becomes the scene of God's final judgment.

More than likely this is a preview of the Battle of Armageddon that we'll see more of later.

The nations of the earth are gathered into the Holy Land just as a vine is harvested and thrown into a winepress.

Then they are stomped, and just as the super ripe grapes described in v. 18, each time the foot comes down, they pop, descriptive of the blood that will flow in that last great battle.

In fact, there will be so much blood it will splatter up as high as 4 ft. – the height of a horse's bridle.

In 19:15 we're told that it's Jesus who treads this winepress.

And when He does, the blood of the battle will stain His garment.

Listen as the prophet Isaiah describes this future judgment. Isaiah 63:2-6

“Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who

treads in the winepress?" The LORD replies, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them In My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments. and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance Is In My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth."

This may be hard to hear - to think of Jesus with blood-stained clothes, blood from the enemies He's trampled in judgment, but it's more than merely crude poetry – it's the righteous expression of a holy God in His anger at sin.

Our faith is not some mere sophistry which mouths pretty platitudes. To be blunt, Christianity is not *pretty* - but it is *true* and deals with life as it is.

This world is not pretty either – it's haunted by fear and wracked by sin and perversion.

The power of Christianity is not in its prettiness or high sounding words, but in it's cure for sin.

I've met people who are offended by the Christian message; I'm sure you have too.

They consider 'blood' and 'sacrifice' scandalous concepts.

They think the message of a *crucified Savior* is barbarous and backward.

You know what? They're partly right!

It's not backward but it is barbarous.

What's barbarous is the sin that demands such a heavy price be paid.

The Cross of Jesus Christ is an eternal sign pointing to the evil and ugliness of sin.

And that cross stands as the eternal dividing line between forgiveness and condemnation.

As far as sin is concerned – blood must be shed to deal with it one way or the other; either in forgiveness or condemnation.

For every man woman and child, it's either about the blood shed
on the cross or the blood that flows from the winepress of
God's wrath.

[1] *Guzik, David* On-Line Commentary

[2] *ibid.*