

## Revelation 14 – Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

The last 3 vs of ch13 have been the genesis for a lot of wild speculation, sci-fi, & horror movies.

As we mentioned 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 recently what we find here could be fulfilled **literally**.

While many gave elaborate & spiritualized interpretations to these vs in the past,

- Those *few* who kept a commitment to a *literal understanding* of the text, simply said there'd come a day when the world would be united in 1 economic system somehow tied to a marketplace by some unknown technology.
- That day has arrived!

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
- - The Motorola e-tattoo

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 & go from there.

### CHAPTER 13

<sup>16</sup> He [**the false prophet**] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup>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.

Last week we saw that the false prophet leads the world in the worship of the antichrist.

He enforces the antichrist's hegemony by making it mandatory all be branded with a distinctive mark of loyalty.

In the last part of v17, John says this mark will be the *name* of the antichrist, or the *number* of his name.

The word "or" here doesn't mean **alternative**, as though people can choose 3 different things for their mark.

The mark **is** the antichrist's **name**, rendered as a **number**.

We get why the mark is the antichrist's name.

It's all part of his longing to be like God.

And God will write His name on the foreheads of His 144,000 servants as we read about in Ch7 & will see again in a moment in v1 of ch14.

Less clear is how his name **is also a number**. A lesson from history clears it up.

Most modern languages use distinct symbols for numbers.

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

Many ancient languages didn't have special number symbols.

Their letters doubled as numbers.

Both Greek & Hebrews are the primary languages used in recording the Scriptures.

Both alphabets pulled double-duty as letters & numbers..

The 1<sup>st</sup> letter of the alphabet equals 1, the 2<sup>nd</sup> = 2, & so forth, up to a certain base number, then there 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

DADDY = 4+1+4+4+10,000 = 10,013 = YJC

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

We have plenty of evidence of this in the writing 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 v18 -

<sup>18</sup> 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, the A/C is, by figuring out the numerical value of a name and seeing if it adds up to 666?

Using this method, **many** candidates for A/C have been suggested thru the ages.

Martin Luther said it was the **Pope**.

The Pope said it was **Martin Luther**.

Others figured out it was **Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini & Stalin**

Some **commentators** contend by using 666, John coded the name of **Nero**, the crazy megalomaniacal Roman Emperor who delighted in torturing and killing Christians.

But this was written well **after** Nero's death!

In more recent times, some have proposed Henry Kissinger, Nikita Khrushchev, even Mikhail Gorbachev as the A/C.

To do this, they have to convert the person's name into Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, then alter it to fit the calculations.

Let me show how this is done, & 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 = 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 w/enough time & motive, you can make almost anyone into the A/C if you're willing to fiddle w/the details enough.

But our text **doesn't allow** this!

John begins w/the qualifier – “Here is wisdom.”

In other words, this is something that requires the enabling of the Spirit to discern.

Then John issues an invitation to those w/*understanding* to figure out the number of the A/C.

It's the **number of a man!**

Categorical proof the A/C is a **literal individual**, not merely some general last days influence, philosophy of humanism or world system – as some have proposed.

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

BUT – & here's what we need to take ultra careful note of – John's invoking of wisdom and invitation to *people of understanding* to calculate the number of the beast indicate he DOES NOT MEAN **we** ought to **SPECULATE** on who the A/C is!

Rather, who the A/C 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 witness all this.

This is similar to what we read at the end of the Book of Daniel where the prophet has a vision but is told to seal it up because it wouldn't be understandable until the last days when knowledge had increased. (12:4)

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

Though he is in all likelihood alive today, his career **as the A/C** 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 2 chs. he sees the ***main players*** on Earth during the Trib, ending w/the world dictator and his chief religious crony.

And though the A/C has managed to make war with the Trib saints & overcome them, God doesn’t want to leave John w/the impression the A/C is victorious; so we press on to ch14.

## CHAPTER 14

<sup>1</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, & w/Him 144,000, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads.

In ch7 when we 1<sup>st</sup> encountered this group, we were told they were sealed w/the seal of God & *exempted* from the judgments that fell on Earth.

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

Ch7 presents them as a mighty army of Jewish evangelists who’ve come to faith in Christ & then are protected & used by God to lead countless others to the Faith.

Here we see that the seal of God has been reliable & carried them safely thru the Trib to stand w/Jesus on Mt. Zion.

Mt. Zion is used repeatedly in Scripture to refer to Jerusalem & the center of the Messiah’s Earthly kingdom during the Millennium.

Don’t miss the ***contrast*** John is confronted by.

Ch12 showed the Israel being chased out of its God-given land by the armies of the A/C.

In ch13 he sees the last day’s world dictator & false prophet concocting plans for world domination, with Jerusalem at the ctr of it all.

Crucial to the A/C’s plan is to mark his followers just as God has mark his.

But when all is said & done, it’s *Jesus & His own who* stand in Jerusalem, not the A/C & his cronies.

In ch13, John saw a dangerous wild beast. Here he sees a Lamb.

But Who’s stronger? – The Lamb!

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

<sup>2</sup> & I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, & like the voice of loud thunder. & I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps [***lit = lyres***] . <sup>3</sup> They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the 4 living creatures, & the elders; & no 1 could learn that song except the 144,000 who were redeemed from the earth.

Heaven rejoices at the victory of the Lamb & His sheep over the evil, elaborate, & age-old plans of the devil.

It’s a ***victory song***.

Like the 1 you hear at ballparks when 1 team is decidedly the winner & the fans are gloating in the triumph of their team – “Na na naha! Na na naha! Hey, hey, hey! Goodbye!”

The angelic chorus plays the heavenly instruments to accompany the 144,000.

They’re the only ones capable of singing this tune because it’s theirs & only their testimony.

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

In v1, John sees the 144,000 w/the Lamb ***on Earth***.

But in v3, their worship is before the throne of God in heaven.

It is the same with us! God is in heaven. We’re on Earth.

But our worship ***ascends*** before God’s throne & the angels as a thing of great beauty when it’s offered in sincerity w/clean hands & pure hearts.

John now goes on to give more detail abt the 144,000 -

<sup>4</sup> These 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 & to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> & in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

It’s clear in ch7 that these guys are Jewish.

Here they’re called the first-fruits, meaning God has fulfilled His promise to lift blindness from national Israel & reveal Himself.

These were the ***first*** to be converted, & were then used by God in a dramatic & supernatural way to reap a

huge harvest of converts, first from their fellow Jews, then from Gentiles as well.

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

**Triple** that number, make them invincible, & cover them with a mantle of anointing that sets them apart as obvious men of God, & 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've gone proclaiming the Gospel.

Then, at the conclusion of the Trib, they're gathered back to Jerusalem.

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

They've remained virgins throughout their mission.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, encouraging them that in light of coming persecution, it would be better if those who were single didn't marry since marriage would complicate an already difficult time.

Being single will mean the 144,000 aren't bound to a wife & will be more free to go wherever the Spirit sends them.

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

They're identified as **not having defiled themselves** w/women.

Heb 13:4 says marital sexual intimacy is a **holy thing** before God.

So the virginity of these 144,000 means they will be utterly sexually pure.

Not only will they be single, they'll abstain from **all** sex.

This will stand in stark contrast to the spirit of the world in the last days.

It may be a part of the FP's corrupt religious system to make provision for immorality.

And once again we see how our time sets the stage for this.

Once conservative denominations have changed their views of sexual morality; accepting all kinds of things the Bible bans.

When the salt & light of the True Church is removed in the Rapture, a floodgate for 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 won't take a dip.

<sup>6</sup> 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—<sup>7</sup> saying w/a loud voice, “Fear God & give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; & worship Him who made heaven & earth, the sea & springs of water.”

You all know the story of the frog in the kettle.

Drop a frog in boiling water, it'll jump out.

But if you put it in cool water then slowly turn the up the heat, it'll eventually cook & you can enjoy some 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 sharp contrast to the status quo.

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

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

The advance of evil will be so obvious, in response, God will turn up things & even send angels to fly over the earth proclaiming His message.

The 1<sup>st</sup> angel proclaims the Gospel.

By doing so, it verifies the message the 144,000 have preached.

Added to the Gospel is a qualifier it's a **limited time offer**; & the expiration time's almost up.

The angel will tell people they must choose who they'll worship; God or A/C.

Some people like to identify their ministry or some technology w/this angel.

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 18<sup>th</sup> C said, “The vision seems truly descriptive of ... *The British & Foreign Bible Society*, whose object it is to print & circulate the Scriptures of the Old & New Testaments, thru all the habitable world, & in all the languages spoken on the face of the Earth.”

**John Trapp**, writing in the late 17<sup>th</sup> C, saw another fulfillment: “This is held to be John Wycliff, who wrote more than 200 volumes against the pope, & 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.

<sup>8</sup> And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

This 2<sup>nd</sup> angel declares the end of the A/C’s system of economic & religious control.

That system is here referred to as **Babylon**.

We’ll get in to a lot more depth on this when we get n to chs 17-19.

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

<sup>9</sup> Then a 3<sup>rd</sup> angel followed them, saying w/a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast & his image, & receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he 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 w/fire & brimstone in the presence of the holy angels & in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> & the smoke of their torment ascends forever & ever; & they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast & his image, & whoever receives the mark of his name.”

This 3<sup>rd</sup> angel makes it clear **to all** taking the mark of the beast **seals their fate**.

Understand what this means.

Just as Repentance & Faith brings Salvation, the devil **counterfeits conversion** by calling the earth-dwellers to make a **similar commitment to him**.

The 144,000 & angels call people to faith in Christ.

The False Prophet calls them to faith in the A/C.

In light of this, it’s likely the very verse **we use** to urge people to make a public profession of faith in Jesus **will be twisted** & used by the FP in calling people to a public confession of the A/C.

Matt 10:32-33 • “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father.

The Father here would be satan.

So this 3<sup>rd</sup> angel makes it clear Taking the mark of the beast results in **eternal damnation**.

In v10, God’s righteous anger is spoken of as **a cup of wine**.

The wine is **God’s wrath**; the cup **His indignation**.

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

We get the word “**thermos**” from it.

It’s God’s anger when it **flashes out**.

Thumos is used 11 times in the NT to describe God’s anger.

10 of those 11 times are in Rev. for it is here we see God’s anger finally taking form.

**Indignation** is the Greek word **ogre** & means a **settled disposition of animosity**.

It means to **take a determined posture of hostile resistance**.

This angel makes it crystal God **hates sin** & is **angry** at it 24/7.

But those who take the mark of the beast are going to experience 1<sup>st</sup>-hand what that anger tastes like.

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

It’s strong & makes them stagger under the weight of His judgment That judgment is hell!

These vs present a vivid picture of hell.

No matter how uncomfortable the idea makes us, how much public opinion finds hell distasteful, no matter that liberal scholars deny it, & cults redefine it as **annihilation** -

The Bible speaks of a place of **eternal torment** where those who reject Christ are destined, as it says here, “**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 of Love.

But let's think about this.

It's precisely **because** God loves & honors the choices we make, hell exists.

The torment of hell does not come from demons stoking some massive furnace.

It comes from people's **rejection of God**.

Take careful note what the angel says in v10 –

He shall be tormented w/fire & brimstone in the presence of the holy angels & 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 & as such will be permeated by the presence of God because He's **omnipresent**.

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

Imagine the terror of God's presence **without any grace**; not a single shred of favor or good will.

**Heaven** is the place of **unrestricted grace, goodness & blessing**.

Earth, this life, is a **measure** of all that.

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

But hell; hell is the **total absence of grace**.

**Not a particle of goodness.**

**The withdrawal of blessing!**

Imagine suffocating for all eternity.

Or having the capacity to see but no light.

Imagine, if you can, existing forever & ever without a single companion.

No 1 to talk to. Nothing to do.

Eternal existence with no purpose or meaning.

And the realization it's going to be like that – FOREVER!

The idea hell is 1 long beer-fest & rave party is way off.

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

Hell is eternal existence w/nothing to do except be!

Utter, complete piercing BOREDOM.

Hell is nothing more nor less than God giving the lost what they've made clear they want; existence without Him.

Think of it like a loving parent and a wayward, rebellious child.

The parent loves and provides for the child when it's young.

Even when the kid's being a brat & undeserving, the parent still gives it a home, clothes, & food.

And at any time, if the child will just quit its foolish rebellion, he/she can enjoy an amazing close intimate relationship with that loving parent.

It never does.

Finally, it's no longer a child.

It's gone through hard years of teenage rebellion when it made it clear it wanted nothing to do with that parent, even though the parent patiently waited and hoped things would change.

Now it's an adult. And as an adult it's no longer under the parent's authority.

So it moves out and makes it clear it wants the parent to leave it alone.

The parent must honor that & stops providing a house, clothes & food.

When the kid gets arrested, the parent doesn't bail it out.

That young adult is experiencing the result of its long held desire & choice = **Alienation** from love.

That's hell = Eternal Self-Inflicted Alienation from Love & the benefits it brings.

Because God is omnipresent, He can't withdraw His presence from hell.

But He **will withdraw His grace** & leave nothing but His righteous indignation.

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

Of all the physical sensations **common to all**, nothing is more painful than 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.

<sup>12</sup> Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God & the faith of Jesus. <sup>13</sup>

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, & their works follow them.”

In contrast to those who follow the A/C & end up in hell are those who die in faith in Christ.

They’ll enjoy the opposite of what the earth-dwellers get.

If **hell** is the **absence** of grace; **heaven** is its **consummation**.

Every breath = a renewal of life.

Our **eyes** will see all the colors.

Our **ears** will hear all sound.

Our **mouths** will enjoy every flavor.

Our **sense of smell** will be filled w/the sweet perfume of God’s own presence!

And **touch** will thrill at every contact.

We’ll have full use of our **brains**.

And we’ll have perfect communion w/every creature we meet.

Those who go to hell reap the bitterness of rejecting Christ.

Those who go to heaven reap a sweet harvest in Him.

<sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, & on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, & in His hand a sharp sickle. <sup>15</sup> & another angel came out of the temple, crying w/a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle & reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” <sup>16</sup> So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, & the earth was reaped. This is it: The end of John’s behind the scenes visions as he’s now turned back to a more chronological report of the Last Days.

The time’s come for the **last judgments** to be poured out on earth.

It begins w/Jesus coming on a cloud w/a **sickle**; a symbol of harvest.

These vs are my message on the 28<sup>th</sup>. So I’ll leave further comment till then.

<sup>17</sup> Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> & another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, & he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle & gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” <sup>19</sup> So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth & gathered the vine of the earth, & threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> & the winepress was trampled outside the city, & blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for 1,600 furlongs.

This is 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 the time is “ripe.”

2 words are used here.

In v15 the **earth is ripe**.

The word means **over-ripe** = **rotten**. // It’s been on the vine too long.

You’ve seen fruit like that. It’s gooey & bugs have made it wormy.

The angel says Earth is **more than ready for judgment**.

In v18 the angel says the fruit of the vine is **fully ripe**.

It’s the **premier time to harvest**.

This fruit comes from the **vine of the earth** it says in v19. This is evil fruit.

We’re familiar w/the idea of **fruitfulness** in the Christian life.

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

Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23.

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

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions,

dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup>envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, & 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 a sin-cursed earth.  
John sees that harvest here.

God's mercy has delayed it & now it's **overdue**. There comes a point when it will fall.  
How are we to understand this **winepress**?

Is it a spiritual idiom for the **time** of judgment, or does John see the final judgment itself?  
Well, first off, notice its **location**. It's outside a City.

Since Jerusalem has been the only city referred to in Rev. so far, that's it. (11:1-2 14:1)  
The word translated **furlong** here is the Grk **stadia**.

1,600 stadia is just shy of 200 miles. So that also tips us to thinking this must be a **location**.  
A clue to what John sees is given in **Joel 3:12-16**.

"Let the nations be wakened, & 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 & moon will grow dark, & the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, & utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens & earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, & the strength of the children of Israel.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is the **Kidron Valley**, on the E of Jerusalem.

It becomes the scene of God's final judgment.  
This is most likely a preview of the Battle of Armageddon we'll see more of later.

The nations of the earth are gathered into the Holy Land like a vine is harvested & thrown into a winepress.

Then they're stomped, as the ripe grapes of v18.

There will be so much blood it will splatter as high as 4 ft.; the height of a horse's bridle.  
In 19:15 we're told 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. Isa 63:2-6  
"Why is Your apparel red, & Your garments like 1 who treads in the winepress?" The LORD replies, "I have trodden the winepress alone, & from the peoples no 1 was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, & trampled them In My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, & I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, & the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no 1 to help, & I wondered that there was no 1 to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; & My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, & brought down their strength to the earth."

For those of us raised on the image and idea of Jesus as benevolent Savior, this may be hard to hear.

We like the Jesus Who kneels and little children swarm Him, not the blood-stained Jesus.

We like a shepherd's staff in His right hand and a lamb in the right.

Not a sickle & sword.

This is why the message on the 28<sup>th</sup> is important. **We need our vision of Jesus filled out.**

For the Jesus Who Saves also Judges.

The nail pierced feet will tread the winepress of God's Wrath.

Our faith isn't mere sophistry mouthing pretty platitudes.

To be blunt, **Christianity isn't pretty**.

Our Savior shed His blood in a brutal butchery called the Crucifixion to save lost humanity.

Those who refuse Him will know God's Wrath.

No: Christianity isn't pretty - **but it is true & tells the truth**.

The power of the Gospel isn't in high sounding words, but in its cure for sin.

Some are offended by the Gospel.

They consider 'blood' & 'sacrifice' **scandalous** ideas.

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

You know what? They're right – somewhat.

It's not backward but it is **barbarous**.

But 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 & ugliness of sin.

And that cross stands as the eternal dividing line between forgiveness & 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, & child, it's either the blood of the Cross or the Winepress.