

November 30, 2010

The Mark of the Beast VS. The Mark of the Lamb

Revelation 14:1-5

¹Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.

- 1 Mount Zion- historically: the Temple location, theologically: the presence of God with his people.
The Lamb- last seen at his coronation in chapter 5
144,000- remind ourselves what this number represents (Rev 7:4)
"who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." Reminding us of what?
- 2 A voice like..."- it has been very common in Revelation to see John focusing on the voices/noises
- 3 "singing a new song"- Church Triumphant sings a heavenly hymn as the Church Militant listens before the throne, 4 living creatures, & elders- voice is sounding in God's heavenly throne room
"no one could learn that song"- this song about the Lamb is incomprehensible to unbelievers
- 4 "not defiled themselves with women, for they are (male) virgins"- The Church a la Eph 5:25-27
"firstfruits of God and the Lamb"- strong OT offering connotations, the saints on earth are an offering to God for the sake of the mission of Christ Jesus. (Rom 12:1)

Compare the 144,000 sealed with God's name and the people from chapter 13 who were marked with the Beast's name.

The Defeat of the Anti-Trinity

Revelation 14:6-13

⁶Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

These verses are the Epistle lesson for Reformation Sunday. Many people, even during Luther's lifetime, felt these verses were about the reformer. Thoughts?

- 6 "eternal Gospel"- the message is not changing; Can we call the message the follows "Gospel?"
Nation, tribe, language, and people- fourfold reference to the inhabitants of the earth
- 7 The eternal gospel moves people to fear, glorify and worship God in view of the coming judgment

⁸Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

"Babylon the Great"- in OT, Babylon was the world power that ransacked Jerusalem, in 90AD, it's Rome, throughout the history of the Church it is any evil enemy of Christ's Church on Earth.

⁹And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

- 9 “receives a mark on his forehead/hand”- contrasts the seal of God on the 144,000
 10 wine of God’s wrath in a cup of his anger- what a terrible concoction!
 “in the presence of the holy angels and... the Lamb”- the final judgment will be public
 11 “the smoke of their torment”- the incense of justice being served on those who assailed the Church
 “they have no rest”- No Sabbath rest for them. The 144,000 find rest in the Lamb (Mt 11:28, Col
 2:16-17, Heb 4:9-10)

¹²Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

¹³And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

- 12 “Here is a call...”- compare with 13:10.
 “who keep the commandments of God & their faith in Jesus”- law & gospel, plain and simple
 13 “Blessed are the dead...”- this is the 2nd of the 7 “beatitudes in Revelation (1:3 was the first)
 - During the End Times before Judgment Day, the dead in the Lord are called blessed
 “for their deeds follow them!”- What kind of deeds? Is this works righteousness?

Son of Man Swings a Sickle on the Last Day

Revelation 14:14-20

¹⁴Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." ¹⁶So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- 14 white cloud, Son of Man- (Rev 1:13; Dan 7:13) Jesus as Lamb for whom? Son of Man for whom?
 “Golden crown on his head”- crown of thorns (Mk 15:17) has been replaced with a victor’s crown
 “a sharp sickle in his hand”- time for righteous retribution; cut it down, separate wheat from chaff
 15 “reap for the hour to reap has come”- the Father has issued the command (Mk 13:32)
 “the harvest of the earth is fully ripe”- parallel way of saying the previous statement
 16 Jesus as the Son of Man, coming in judgment

¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse’s bridle, for 1,600 stadia.

- 17 Why the second harvest? The harvest of grain under the Son of Man is for all men, this grape harvest under the angels is the gathering and judgment against the unbelievers who worshiped the beast and its image (14:9-11).
 18 “angel who has authority over the fire”- administer of the incense altar seen in heaven
 “grapes are ripe”- the grapes now symbolize the unbelievers, their sinfulness is at its fullest
 19 “great winepress of the wrath of God”- God will trample these enemies underfoot (1 Kings 5:3)
 20 “blood flowed from the winepress”- blood of grapes is the blood of the beast’s followers
 “as high as a horse’s bridle”- unthinkable amount of blood, symbolizes the horror (1 Enoch 100:3)
 1,600 stadia- another Numeric Symbol $4^2 \times 10^2$, so what does it mean?
 (Isaiah 63:1-6)