

THE 3RD ANGEL'S MESSAGE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

The three angel's messages of Revelation 14 are powerful messages for us today. In this lesson, we'll take a look at the message that the 3rd angel brings. Here's what the angels says:

Revelation 14:9-12: "A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name." This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus."

The third angel's message can be broken into three parts, worship of the beast and receiving his mark, the wine of God's wrath, and a call for endurance on the part of the people of God. We will be looking at each part in detail.

The Beast and its Image

In order to understand the third angel's message, we need to correctly identify "the beast and its image." (Rev 14:9). The third angel is pointing us back to Revelation 13 where two beasts, a sea beast and earth beast, arise. Read Revelation 13:1-10 and write down the description and actions of the sea beast.

Now that we have seen the description and actions of this sea beast, compare the sea beast with these next passages that will show us exactly what this sea beast could be.

Daniel 7:4-8, 11, 17, 23-25; Revelation 17:9-10, 15, Revelation 12:6, 9.

Seeing these verses and seeing how they shed better light on who this sea beast could help us arrive at the only conclusion. This sea beast can be no other than papal Rome. It aligns perfectly with the description and actions of the sea beast. Even fitting within the prophetic timeline of 1260 years (Revelation 12:6; Ezekiel 4:6). This thought may bring initial discomfort labeling a religious system as something that is in cahoots with Satan, however this is great news, because it allows us to see that God isn't tied to the horrific actions brought about by papal Rome but in fact truly is a God of love.

Before we can begin looking at the mark of this beast, it is important to take some time to investigate the earth beast that follows the sea beast. Read Revelation 13:11-18 and write down the description and actions of the earth beast.

By reading this passage, we can see that the earth beast sets up an image after the sea beast and "causes those who would not worship the image to be slain. This beast also "causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead" (Revelation 13:16). The only nation-like kingdom that could be this beast is none other than the United States of America. Where the sea beast had 10 horns and 10 crowns, this earth beast has two horns with no crowns indicating a nation with no king. The major power that arose towards the end of the 1260-year reign of papal Rome was America!

Another major clue that gives confidence in identifying that the United States is this nation prophesied in this message is simply this. In Bible prophecy, when we talk about the "sea," it represents people. This nation in the third angel's message that worships the beast comes up from the earth. It comes out of the land, NOT the sea, which helps us connect the dots as America rose from a handful of people coming to a new land.

The Mark of the Beast

Now that we have seen and understand the beginning of the third angels message, let's look at the mark of the beast. There have been many who have speculated the meaning of the mark of the beast. From implanted computer chips to Identification badges, many have sought to explain what exactly this mark could be. There are two key points to consider.

1. Forced Worship

"If anyone _____ the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand..." (Rev 14:9)

"Also it _____ all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, "to be marked on the right hand or the forehead." (Rev 13:17)

The beast wants to force us to worship. This makes sense since we have seen the beast to be a religious-political power that seeks to rule in ways counter to God's love.

2. The Forehead and Hand

Have you ever wondered why the mark is on the forehead and hand? Why not the foot or behind the ear? That's because John the Revelator is pointing us back to the seal of God mentioned in the Old Testament to show us how to not receive the mark. Look at how these verses clarify the meaning behind the forehead and the hand.

BASIC POINT

The 3rd Angel's Message calls us to worship the God of Heaven, a God filled with Love.

Revelation 7:2-3: “Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the _____ of the servants of our God.”

Deuteronomy 6:1-9: “These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your _____ and bind them on your _____. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

Song of Solomon 8:6-7:

“Place me like a _____ over your heart,
like a _____ on your arm;
for love is as strong as death,
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.
It burns like blazing fire,
like a mighty flame.
Many waters cannot quench love;
rivers cannot sweep it away.
If one were to give
all the wealth of one’s house for love,
it would be utterly scorned.”

After reading these verses, we can see that the seal of God is concerning His law of love being written on our hearts and acted out through our worship, whereas the mark (seal) of the beast is a false forced worship that is anti-love. Therefore the third angel’s message points to a time where a religious political power will enforce a false worship where the penalties for non-compliance will be terrible.

A Call for Endurance

This is why the essence of the third angel’s message is one of perseverance.

Revelation 14:12: “Here is the perseverance of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

The third angel points to a people who have been liberated by the everlasting gospel, they have seen that Babylon has fallen and therefore refuse to accept a false form of worship. They keep the commandments of God and their faith in Christ’s faithfulness. This is why they will be able to persevere even through a time where religious political powers seek to force people, even unknowingly, into falsely worshiping a false god who proclaims to be the way to the true God.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What is your reaction to this third angel’s message?
2. What were you unclear about?
3. What does this message mean to you and your life?

