

The mark of the Lamb

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] Would it be possible for the microphone to share it on the stage?

Anyway, use your imagination. It's not essential to be able to see the board. So just thinking of the structure of the book, the book of Revelation is, as a piece of literature, very carefully crafted. It has sevens in it. It has seven blessings. And we read blessing number two in chapter... I've got to have this in front of me because otherwise I can't do it.

And 14 verse 13 was blessing number two. What was blessing number one? You know this because you made a point of it. Blessing number one was...

Thank you. It was the blessing of those who read the word of God and take to heart what's said. So we all had that blessing of being able to read what the text says.

[1 : 22] And there are seven blessings. There are, I can't remember offhand, like seven uses of the word Christ or 14 uses of the word lamb or so on. So it's very carefully crafted.

And not only on the sort of micro level like that. It's crafted carefully in terms of the structure of the whole book. So perhaps it would be helpful just to remind ourselves there are sevens.

It's in sevens. And the first seven is what? Seven churches. Seven churches. And the order of the churches goes round in a circle in the order that a messenger would go if a messenger was taking this document round to the churches.

I don't know if it's that way or the other way. But it's in order. And being a letter, the nature of a letter is to have relevance to the people to whom it's written.

And in a sense, the fact that the seven churches right at the beginning, that's the application point. That's saying the things that these churches should be taking on board, that's the point of the book.

[2 : 29] And one of the things that it says is, to him who overcomes, I will give a crown of life or whatever. And in a way, you could say the book is all about overcoming and overcoming in the face of conflict.

And then the book unwraps what that conflict is and what is the nature of the overcoming and what happens when you have overcome. So seven churches. And then there was a scene in heaven. And the next seven was what? Seven somethings. Seven seals. So not seals as in marine animals. But if you imagine a scroll sealed with seven seals.

And someone undoes the... There is an issue first. Is anybody qualified to unwrap those seals? And the good news is...

The lamb has prevailed, has overcome, and is able to open the seven seals. And I would say they're the seven seals of world history.

[3 : 36] And we get various events during the opening of those seven seals. That has a structure of its own. And then we get... I think it's pretty clear to the end of history.

So we've gone all through history up to the very end. Now then, there's another seven. I'm just trying to think. Well, there are seven angels. But this one is...

There's seven trumpets. And so we get seven trumpets sounding and various things happening during the seven trumpets sounding. And the particular point that's made is, as these trumpets sound, people do or do not.

Something beginning with R. Yeah. There are seven trumpets for repentance. And if you look at the book, that's what it's saying.

Each of these trumpets, things like disasters, problems with the ecosystem, diseases, oppression, even satanic oppression.

[4 : 39] These are all designed to say to people, your world is not right. You are not right. Repent. C.S. Lewis said something like, God...

What does it say? Whispers to us... Talks... Whispers to us in our comforts, talks to us in our life, but shouts to us in our suffering.

And suffering, said C.S. Lewis, is God's megaphone to rouse a sleeping world. So we had seven trumpets for repentance. After the section that we are in, there is another seven.

Would you just like to look ahead and see what the next seven is? I think that's in chapter 15. Bows or seven plagues. Seven? Seven. Seven plagues. Yes, are they seven bowls that gets poured out? Yeah. Seven angels with seven... Does it say seven plagues? Yes. Okay. And the seven plagues puts us...

[5 : 43] Just reminds us of another thing. One of the things we're trying to do is pick up John's accent. Because if you don't listen to somebody's accent, you can mistake what they're saying.

So one of the dear ladies who was with us in this past week for the events week said, that's a keet dishwasher. And I couldn't work out what she was saying.

It's a keet dishwasher. And then I realised that she was saying cute with a particular accent. It's a keet dishwasher. So I had to pick up her accent.

Otherwise, I couldn't work out what she was saying. So his accent, things the way he speaks. He uses a lot of Bible. So seven plagues would remind us of what?

What bit of Bible? Exodus. Yeah. And he also... One of the things he does is use symbolic numbers. So any particular numbers that you've noticed so far?

[6 : 46] Seven. And the seven seems to... I mean, if you listen to the way he uses it, it seems to mean the complete thing. So when he talks about the seven churches, in a way he's saying the whole church is symbolised by these particular seven.

And you also get the seven spirits of God before the throne or the sevenfold spirits of God, which I think is his way of saying the complete operations of the Holy Spirit, all the different ministries of the Holy Spirit, which are very many and varied.

So I'm just saying there's things about his accent that we can pick up. So that just sort of gives us a little bit of a preparation as to how to listen to this book.

And I'm going to not use the board anymore. That was just to sort of get us going. I will take it out of the way. Yes. You did say before that you kept it in the rewind.

I did. Yeah, thank you. That's the age of the first one. The age of the world. Thank you very much. He hits the rewind button.

[7 : 55] You go back to the beginning and go to the end of history. And the same thing with the plagues. And what I'd like to say, so thank you very much for pointing that out. In the bit that we're doing, which is this, I think we get to the end of history, just looked at from another point of view yet again.

So I'll see if I can persuade you of that as we go through. Right, looking up on the screen. This is a book in the Bible for our edification, for our survival and progress as Christians.

It's an unveiling. It's telling us the truth, the reality behind the appearance, like taking away a veil. Lord, help us to see the reality behind the appearance and live accordingly.

It's in the form of a letter. So it has, to the seven churches, it has relevance to them. And we must remember that as we go all the way through. There's a relevance to it. It's not only just for the far distant future.

It's in the form of a prophecy. Prophecies do look at the big picture. It tells them what's shortly going to happen. And it gives them behavioral implications of the big picture, which we will see in what we're looking at.

[9 : 12] So there's some of the things sort of pictorially of visual images that are presented in the book. There's the lamb, the four horsemen, the throne, the lampstands, the city.

Which city is that with a tall tower? Babylon, yeah. And there's a woman associated with Babylon. And this city here? Jerusalem or Zion. And Zion also has a woman associated, so the bride.

And it's all about conflict. It's about he who overcomes, as we've already said. So seven churches addressed with current issues, calls to repent, future warnings, future promises.

We saw the scene in heaven, the seven seals, the seven trumpets. And we have been looking at, it would be nice to say seven visions.

I'm not really persuaded that there are seven visions, but they're things that he sees. So chapter 12, verse 1, a great sign appeared.

[10 : 13] So this is something that he sees with significance. And let me just, 13, verse 1.

And I saw. And there's lots of and I saws. 13, verse 11, and I saw. And 14, verse 1, although it's translated, then I looked.

I did check. It says, and I saw. And there's also a behold in there, which doesn't come across in the translations. Chapter 14, verse 6, then I saw.

Chapter 14, verse 14, I looked, which is actually and I saw all over again. So there's things that he sees. Chapter 15, verse 1, I saw in heaven. So let's have a look at chapter 14.

Can we get to that? We saw in chapter 13 three main characters. The dragon. Well, is that three? It's really four, isn't it? The dragon, beast number one, beast number two, and the image of the beast.

[11:18] So I think, have I got, they're not good up here. And I said that chapter 13, that wasn't the only thing. Because if you go on into chapter 14, you also have the lamb and the 144,000.

We had three angels. Did you notice three angels at the beginning of it? It says, if you have an NIV, chapter 14, verse 6, three angels. And they say things, which we'll look at in detail in a moment.

Give God glory. Babylon has fallen. There's torment for the beast worshippers. And then there's three more angels. And there's something of reaping, like reaping grain.

And reaping, like reaping grapes. Yes. So, let's see if we've got any of these pictures coming up. What does not have God?

You haven't got to fear God. Fear God and give him glory. Yeah, I just tried to abbreviate it slightly so that I could fit it all on. So I think we've got nearly everything coming up there.

[12:30] Yeah. So those are the sort of visual images of what's happening in chapters 13 and 14. And this evening we're going to concentrate on chapter 14. And my arrow is meant to show that this, too, takes us all the way through history up to the final end.

That's what I'd like to persuade us. And there's an hourglass signifying time running out up to a final point. Right. Let's look a little bit more closely.

So it starts off saying, Then I looked, and behold, there before me was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000, who had his name and his father's name written on their foreheads.

And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters, like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps.

The actual instrument is a kithera. I don't know whether that is really a harp. It sounds a little bit like guitar, doesn't it? Kithera. Perhaps they were playing guitars.

[13:43] And they sang a new song before the throne and before the living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.

And then it says these are those in four different ways. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

These are those who were purchased from among mankind and offered us, and these are those who were offered us first fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths, for they are blameless.

So let's look at these. So it's got a lamb. Why does it have a lamb and not a badger? Why, what does the lamb represent? It's Jesus because he is a sacrificial animal.

The lamb is a sacrificial animal. So we've got the lamb. And where is his headquarters? Mount Zion. Yeah. So the heavenly Jerusalem.

[14:47] It's worth stopping and thinking about this. Some Christians are very focused on Jerusalem, the current day Jerusalem, in the Middle East.

But I don't think God is focusing his purposes there. That headquarters used to be his headquarters, but is no longer his headquarters.

And we have a reference for this. Galatians 4, verse 25. Galatians 4, verse 25. Galatians 4, verse 25.

And this is in the middle of a different argument about the gospel and where the gospel is really. And Galatians 4, he's talking about where the gospel is really at.

And going back to how things started with Abraham and the sons he had by Sarah, which was a miraculous birth, and the son he had by a Hagar, which was a sort of normal flesh-powered birth.

[16:08] Could Rosemary read us Galatians 4, 21-26?

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.

His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. These things are being taken figuratively.

The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves. This is Hagar. Now, Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem because she is in slavery with her children.

But the Jerusalem that is above is free and she is our mother. Thank you very much. I don't want to go into the complexities of that argument, but I think you can see on the surface of it, he does talk about Jerusalem and he says the earthly city of Jerusalem is now in the same spiritual condition as Arabs.

[17 : 36] That's where the present earthly city is. That's not where we belong.

We belong with the Jerusalem above, which is free, which is the new covenant city, which is the faith city, which is the spirit-empowered city.

That's where we belong.

We're just repeating it. Yeah. Twelve times twelve. Twelve times twelve. Twelve times twelve is 144. And then we've got another thousand, haven't we?

So, why? We've got two twelves. Why might we have two twelves? It's representing the totality of the church. So, the twelve tribes of Israel plus the entire church of the Gentile church.

[18 : 59] That's what I think. Yeah. I mean, he does things with numbers. And the symbolic number of twelve. So, twelve tribes, twelve apostles, Old Testament, New Testament.

You combine them. In this case, they're combined by multiplication. And the thousand makes it a big number. And we did the 144,000 in an earlier chapter.

And I don't want to go back over this. But we learned some new things about the 144,000. I hope I persuaded you. I hope Valerie persuaded you that it does represent the entire church, Old Testament, New Testament.

I'm not going to stop and go over that. But we can see some things about these people from this bit of the text. What? Would you like to just have a word with your next door neighbor?

There's about seven things. That would be quite neat, wouldn't it? Characteristics of this 144,000. And have a two-minute chat with your neighbor. And see if you can work out something like seven attributes.

[20 : 02] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[22 : 27] We'll come back to that. But is this only referring to men? So is 144,000 only men? Because there is that description.

And I would like to say, I don't think that's the way it's using the expression. It is using one particular aspect to represent the whole. So it's taking one particular characteristic to represent a whole lot of characteristics.

So I thought of two examples for this. One was rude, but the other one I think I can say. So if in a fairy tale or whatever it is, the prince asks the king for the princess's hand in marriage, he doesn't just want her hand, does she?

Yeah, you know, there's your hand. I wasn't really meaning, when I said the hand in marriage, I meant the whole of her. And I was using the hand as one part to represent the whole.

And I think that he's doing the same sort of thing here. He's taking one aspect to represent the whole of a much wider idea.

[23 : 35] Thank you. Well, let's see. Yeah, Steve. I don't know if you're going to come back to it, but isn't it actually referring to those who have not committed adultery with Babylon? Well, yeah, indeed.

That's where I was going to go with that. But I just wanted to rule out the idea that it was a subset of people as we start.

So what did you come up with as characteristics? Anybody like to call something out? Yeah, they got marks on their foreheads. Now then, we did do that.

He's referring back to something he said before. Can anybody like to tell us about marks on foreheads? That's a different mark.

Yes. There's a mark and a countermark, if you like. So we looked at the mark of the beast, which marks the people who are worshippers of the beast.

[24 : 37] And life was very difficult for them unless they carried that mark. But the counterpart of that is a mark on the forehead of the sealed.

Yeah, the sealed. I mean, do you want to look back at it? It's in chapter 7. Chapter 7, verse 3. Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.

And then this is chapter 7, verse 3 and verse 4. And this is the number of those who were sealed. And he's referring back to something. I think it's in Ezekiel where God judges the city.

He sends an angel to devastate the city and to kill people left, right and center. But he says, oh, hold on. Send somebody else to put a mark on the foreheads of the genuine, believing, spiritual people.

Don't wipe them out. So the mark sort of saves them from judgment. So that's what he's picking up on. And so they have this mark.

[25 : 48] They have his name and the Father's name written on their foreheads. So that's the sort of mark of salvation. I don't think we take it literally. I mean, let's just look around. Anybody? I can't see any particular marks.

This is sort of using, this is in a symbolic way, isn't it? We might say it's like being sealed with the Holy Spirit. That marks us out as the people of God.

Okay, Mark. Yeah, anything else? Next thing. They know a song, don't they? What's special about this song?

No one else can learn it. No one else can learn it. Yes. Now then, there is a thing, a question, which always comes up at Christmas as to whether angels can sing.

Because it actually says, the angels say. And I find it quite an attractive thought that only human beings can sing. It's a particular gift to humankind.

[26 : 48] One could debate that. But I find it quite an attractive idea that something particular about the image of God in human beings that we can sing. But it goes a step further here, isn't it?

Only the redeemed can sing this song. I think that's rather fantastic. That there's a song that only redeemed people can sing.

When the praise of heaven I hear, loud as thunders to the ear, loud as many waters' noise, sweet as harp's melodious voice, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then how much I owe.

The song of heaven, sung by the redeemed, because only the redeemed can say, no condemnation now I dread.

Jesus and all in him is mine. Alive in him my living head, and clothed in righteousness divine. Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown through Christ my own.

[27 : 55] Angels can't sing that, because they've never experienced that. The living creatures, I would say, can't sing that. Certainly, the unredeemed can't sing it.

But only we can sing, no condemnation now I dread. Jesus and all in him is mine. Oh, the blood, his blood was shed for me.

What's that song by Graham Kendrick? Somebody think of it. Float for me, amazing love.

Oh, what sacrifice. The Son of God died for me. His death. And my death he died.

That I might live. That I might live.

[29 : 03] The angels can't sing that. Only the redeemed can sing that one. So, a tremendous song. Right, any other things about the 144,000?

Thank you very much. They've been redeemed from the earth. Yeah, thank you. Purchased.

Thank you very much. Which earth are you getting purchased from? Four. Four. They were purchased. Yeah, thank you very much. They were purchased. They did not defile themselves with women and remained virgins.

Yes, this is that verse. They did not defile themselves with women for they remained virgins. And I think I'm going to come back to that. Let's just see. No, I'm not. So, it talks about their sexual purity. And it puts it in a specifically male way, doesn't it? But it's not this sort of standing for a wider thing. So, is he talking about sexual purity at large?

[30 : 21] Or as Steve was intimating, is he saying they haven't committed adultery with Babylon? Because Babylon is the seducing force, agency, which we'll later see.

It's there, isn't it? In verse 8. The maddening wine of her adulteries. And if you'd like to look at 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2, Paul has a similar thought.

2 Corinthians 11, verse 2. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2.

Could you read that one for us, please? 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2. Let's hold on. We're not there yet.

So, 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2 says, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promise you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

[31 : 33] Thank you very much. Yeah, so it's using that language, but it's meaning an exclusive devotion. I want these people to be exclusively devoted to Jesus Christ.

They're not a bit of this and a bit of that. They're certainly not worshipping the beast. Their hearts are set on the Lord Jesus. And even though they stumble and fall, even though they get in a mess and mixed up in their heart of hearts, they belong to the Lord Jesus.

And that characterises these people. So, I think that's perhaps what he's getting at. Let's go back to Revelation chapter 14.

So, any other characteristics of these people? Thank you. Yeah, thank you. There's no lie found in their mouths.

And again, the lie terminology, if you look back at it, is often used for idolatry. What is an idol?

[32 : 48] It is a huge lie. It is a statement that this represents the creator God in all his magnificence and depth and wisdom and power.

And that's a lie. We should not think that God is like items of wood or stone made by the wisdom of men. Even idols of gold, which is the best that humans can come up with, that's still an insult to God.

It's a lie. And we don't perhaps see it so much in our culture here in the West. But Aswin is nodding vigorously because in an Indian culture, there's lies all over the place about who God is and what the truth is behind this universe.

Okay, anything else? They follow the lamb wherever he goes. That's a rather lovely picture, isn't it? Follow the lamb wherever he goes.

I think that's a description of discipleship. We talk about walking with the Lord. They follow the lamb wherever he goes. I suppose usually you follow the shepherd wherever he goes.

[34 : 02] Yeah, that's right. Usually sheep follow the shepherd, don't they? But here it's we're following the lamb. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. But there is a following, isn't there? I suppose God does turn the world upside down.

Yeah. Yes. These are the people who've turned the world upside down. It says somewhere in Acts, I think. Yeah. Yes. And I think there's a rather lovely description there.

I mean, what's a Christian? A Christian is somebody who follows the lamb. And how much, I mean, we're not saying we've finished the journey today. What we've done today is just follow him one more step.

We've followed him as far as he's taken us today. And by God's grace, tomorrow we'll follow him as far as he takes us tomorrow. These are those who follow the lamb. And I suppose our aim is to stay close, isn't it?

Because we don't want him to be miles up there and we're miles down here. We want to follow him wherever he goes. And I think that's a lovely description there. Anything else from the text?

[35 : 07] Where have we got everything? Purchased. Purchased. Yeah. Purchased. Purchased. Sorry? Purchased. Purchased. Purchased. Purchased.

Yeah. Thank you. Purchased. Purchased. Purchased. Purchased. Purchased. I'm going to come back to that in the next slide, I think. No lie, no idle, blameless. Ephesians 5.27 tells us, what does it say?

Yeah, this is, again, a sort of bride type metaphor.

Ephesians 5. 25 to 27. Could Julie read us that if she had the microphone, please? Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you very much.

[36 : 30] So the ultimate aim of Christ to have a bride, even though he's found her very, what does it say?

Does it say wrinkled, stained, blemished? That's how he finds her. But he works so that she becomes beautiful, spotless, without stain or wrinkle, but holy and blameless.

That's what Christ does in redeeming us. When he finds us, when he finds us, we were obnoxious. And now he makes us his beautiful bride and presents us to himself, holy and blameless in his sight, which is a wonderful thing to think of, isn't it?

And here are these people, blameless. So this is the final assembly. Do you know the jazz song, when the saints go marching in?

That's what this is about. This is what that's about. When the saints go marching in, when the saints go marching in, I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in.

[37 : 52] And I can ask that question, do you want to be in this number? Yes. Yeah. I mean, what a thing to hold before us. There is the redeemed church of Jesus Christ with all these beautiful descriptions.

And the question, do you want to be there? Are you looking forward to being there? Wouldn't that be great to be there? Isn't that something to fire our hearts and our imaginations?

At the end of the second Pilgrim's Progress, it says, the hope of heaven, it says something like this, has previously fired my heart like a coal burning within me.

But now all the things I have hoped for turn into sight. Everything I have journeyed towards becomes where I arrive. And when the saints go marching in, by God's grace, we will be among that number.

And we will be there in the holy city with the lamb on Mount Zion as one of the 144,000. And it's a figurative number.

[38 : 58] It's not just saying that there will only be 144,000 people in heaven. It's just saying everybody will be there. And God knows exactly the number. And he's already, if you're a believer, he's already booked you a place.

You will be there. Yeah. Precise numbering. There we are. I've done the numbers. Just one thing about the first fruits.

Because it nagged at me to say, well, hang on a minute. Is this right that this is the entire number? Because it says the first fruits. Does that mean that it is only a partial group and there's more to come?

And let's look, because I think my nagging doubts can be put to rest with this.

So let's look at James 1, verse 18. James 1, verse 18.

[39 : 58] And could Maria read us this, please? He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

Okay. This is James 1, verse 18. Still trying to find where it is. So who is he referring to in that verse? What does he say?

To give us birth through the word of truth. Us. Us. He chose us. And what experience do we have? It says in the text, James 1, verse 18. As a kind of first fruits. Wait a minute. Hold on. I'm going to come to that. Oh. Sorry, what word did we get to?

Birth? Birth. He chose to give us birth. So we talk about the new birth through the word of truth. And it says that we might be a kind of first fruits of all that he had created.

[41 : 15] So there is first fruits there. But he doesn't say the first fruits, the first sample to be followed by more believers being converted.

The first fruits of what? Of all he created. Of all that he created. So he's not saying that there's a first fruits. You know, we believing people are the first fruits.

And there's more believing people. He says we the first fruits. We the believing people are the first fruits. And the completion of it. The hint is here. Of all that he created. So there's people saved.

And his ultimate aim is to save a whole creation. The people first and then the environment second. That's what that verse hints at.

What about Colossians 1, 15 to 20? Colossians 1, 15 to 20.

[42 : 17] Could our summary that for us, please? The sun is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn over all creation.

For in him all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth. Visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things. And in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything he might have supremacy.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. And through him to reconcile himself to all things. Whether things on earth or things in heaven.

[43 : 16] By making peace through his blood. And he is the head of the body. Shed on the cross. Thank you very much. And that might be quite a bit to take in. But he does talk about people in verse 18.

He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. So in that case, Christ is the first group. He's the first one to be raised from the dead.

And then his believing people will be raised from the dead. But it goes further than that, doesn't it? What's the next stage, if you like? Or what's the completion of that process?

Thank you. To reconcile to himself, verse 20, all things. Whether things on earth or things in heaven. By making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

So the cross has its ultimate aim. Aim, not just the redemption of people, the first fruits, if you like. But all things. A complete new heaven and earth.

[44 : 16] A complete new cosmos. The renewal of everything. That's a huge aim, isn't it? And if I'm taking us in the right direction, that's where the first fruits in Revelation takes our thoughts.

The first fruits of people. But with a huge aim of redeeming the world. The cosmos. Okay. I'm looking at the clock. And I've got loads more material. Let's just see. Let's just see where we're going to go.

I think what I'll do is try and jump us to verse 13.

And we'll come back to these other bits in perhaps next time. So let's just take a very quick helicopter trip over verse 6 and onwards.

[45 : 19] We thought of the 144,000 and the redeemed in heaven. And then there's angels. So angel number one flies in midair and says something in a loud voice, which I guess we'll do next week.

Verse 8, a second angel says, fallen is Babylon the great. And this is what John does. He introduces something and then picks it up again later.

So Babylon is something we come to later. Verse 9, a third angel talks about what it is to worship the beast and what comes after that. And let's try and pick it up in verse 12.

So the upshot of this, and what's the this? This is the bliss and the glory of Christ's church in heaven.

And the awfulness, the terribleness, the unspeakable horribleness of what it is to not be in heaven. Yeah? That's what the two pictures we're getting here, sort of heaven and hell.

[46 : 30] And he says, seeing as that's where the world is headed, this is, you know, what's the impact on us today? And in verse 12, he says, this calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

Now, let me just flick on through. It's going to take me a moment to, because of all this, we will do another time. Yeah.

So having heard the three angels, the upshot is a call for endurance. And the people he's speaking to in verse 12, the people, and the translation I had said, those keeping the commands of God, those keeping the faith of Jesus, and the call for them is endurance, patient endurance.

And let's just sort of begin to land ourselves here. What is the upshot of this? It's saying, Christian people, you need to persist, you need to keep going, you need to endure, and that is the call on you, that you should be on Mount Zion in the end.

The mark of the elect is that they believe the promises and heed the warnings. The elect people don't just say, oh, well, I'm chosen, it said that, I can live any old how.

[48 : 16] No, no, no, no, don't say that. The mark of the elect is they believe the promises and they heed the warnings. And if you're one of the elect people, you're hearing it, I need to patiently endure.

And let me just make this point about Christian virtues. What what is what does the Bible say is a Christian virtue?

And I mean, enthusiasm is great. Being passionate is great. But what the Bible says here is long term. Persevere.

Keep going. I think of the people that I was with in the Christian Union back in the day in medieval times. And how many of them are still going on with the Lord?

Not all of them. And the aim of ministry should be to say, look, you believed in the Lord Jesus. That's great.

[49 : 21] But the next thing is now is to patiently endure. to keep on going. And let me tell you, there are obstacles. We have an enemy. Things will get you down.

You probably don't even realise the fickleness of your own heart yet. But with all those things you need to keep going.

You need patient endurance. This calls for patient endurance on the people who keep his commands and are faithful to Jesus. And that's our call to be faithful not just on a Sunday but on a Monday and on a Tuesday and on a Wednesday and on a Thursday and a Friday and not just in 2025 but in 2026 and in 2027 and all the years up until the Lord takes us.

A call for faithful endurance. and let's just take that next little bit. Verse 13 I heard a voice from heaven say write this blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.

That's a verse that gets used at funerals and the spirit says yes they will rest from their labour for their deeds will follow them.

[50 : 43] The rest in verse 13 corresponds to in verse 11 there will be no rest day and night for those who worship the beast but the believers look forward as it says in Hebrews to a rest of blessedness to joining in God's blessedness in heaven.

They will rest from their labour and their deeds will follow them. I just wanted to pick up on that their deeds will follow them. In the seven churches Jesus often says I know your deeds.

There's something about the heart but there's something about the continuity between what's in the heart and what comes out of the life. I know your deeds.

You could put it this way as perhaps a helpful way. If it was a crime to be a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you? Has it changed your life so that you become a fountain of good deeds?

We're not saved by our deeds but if we are saved it will surely show in the deeds that come out of our lives. Their works follow them and I've just put there let's look at these references deeds matter to God and let's look at them.

[52 : 07] So Matthew 6 verse 6. Who's got the microphone?

Okay. Could you read us Matthew 6 verse 6 please? Yeah. But when you pray go into your room close the door and pray to your father who is unseen then your father who sees what he's done in secret will reward you.

Thank you very much. So there's something perhaps secret that God sees but it says he will reward you. That matters to him. He thinks that's a precious thing and in this case it was somebody praying.

10 42. Could Steve read this one please Matthew 10 42. If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple truly I tell you that person will certainly not lose their reward.

Thank you very much. It's interesting isn't it? Something done for Christ that maybe other people didn't see but the Lord says I value that and I will I will crystallise or express how much I value it by rewarding that.

[53 : 44] I value that little deed done because of me. A deed of kindness to another disciple in this case. A little bit like the woman who put her mite into the temple and the Lord Jesus I can see Elon Musk putting his thousands of pounds in there.

I know his heart is not in it so I don't even count those thousands of pounds but here is a woman who has just put 50p and that was all she had to live on and that is something I do value.

Deeds done for Christ and let's do the 1 Corinthians 15 shall we? 1 I'm going to skip over that because of time 1 Corinthians 15 verse 58 could Brenda read that please?

Therefore my dear brothers and sisters stand firm let nothing move you always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Thank you. That's a fantastic verse because it comes off this huge theology of resurrection and the world to come and being raised incorruptible and he says because of that give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord stand firm if you are on the rotor to clean the toilets next week you clean the toilets if you're on the rotor!

[55 : 25] to do children's work you do that if you're making food for the Christian union you do that all yourself give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the

Lord is not in vain your deeds are precious to him even if it was a cup of cold water even if it was moving the chairs!

whatever it is because of heaven and hell because of let's sing something and then we'll close I wanted to sing oh I can't remember what it was um aren't I silly