

15. What was to be done to all who refused to worship the image - vs. 15?
16. Discuss the social and economic implications of the "mark of the beast" - vs. 17.
17. Though the person of vs. 18 cannot be infallibly identified, what do we know with certainty about this person - just from a study of this passage - without adding any speculation regarding the cryptogram?

Special Study: The Anti-Christ

Most men today deny that evil is sustained and carried on by personal forces which are seeking to dominate the spiritual world. But the Bible emphatically declares that the powers of darkness are personal in nature. We cannot here enter the debate with those who reject this particular biblical doctrine as primitive superstition. Those of us who believe that the scriptures are the Word of God cannot possibly deny a doctrine which our Lord and Savior taught with such penetrating clarity without repudiating His deity and therefore, His saving work on the cross.

We are not going to enter debate here as to whether Paul's "man of Sin," (II Thess. 2:3) or John's "dragon," and "anti-Christ" are to be equated. John uses the term anti-Christ in I John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3; and II John 7. He uses the imagery of the dragon and the two beasts in *The Revelation*. These fulfill the same spiritual function as the anti-Christ in the Epistles of John. Dr. G. Milligan's brief study (mentioned below in the note) is a distinct outline of the doctrine of anti-Christ. He traces the doctrine through the O.T. in general and specifically the apocalyptic sections of Daniel, Ezekiel, *et al.*, through the extra biblical Jewish literature, our Lord's teaching on the subject in the great eschatological discourses (Mk. 13:1ff; Matt. 24:1ff) and finally Paul and John's doctrine of the anti-Christian forces at work in the universe.

John's description without question covered the Roman Emperor cult, but his description is applicable wherever and whenever evil forces gain the upper hand in the world. Study and compare the following passages from John and Paul (Revelation 12:9, 13:1f, II Thess. 2:9f; Rev. 13:3ff, 14:11). Discuss these passages (also II Thess. 2:4, 9-12.) in view of the great evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian

evil which is now present in the world. The anti-Christian forces seem to dominate our world. How do we make Christ's victory over evil, and our Christian hope relevant to our age of advanced technology?

For those who care to scrutinize the many very difficult problems of evil from a Christian perspective see, Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil*, P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1963 (Catholic); the only comprehensive historical study of the problem (though not from a Christian view point) is Friedrich Billicsich, *Das Problem des Übels in der Philosophie des abendlandes* - (The Problem of Evil in Western Philosophy. The first 2 volumes cover up through Hegel; the third volume (not yet available) will bring the discussion up to the contemporary situation. For a discussion by men who believe the Bible to be the Word of God see Dr. M. Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Van Kampen Press, Ind., Wheaton, Illinois, 1952; Dr. G. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1952 - especially chp. 5. The Man of Sin, pp. 94; L. Boettner, *The Millennium*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1958, chp. 5, *The Anti-Christ* pp. 206; Dr. G. Milligin, *St. Paul's Epistles to The Thessalonians*, Eerdmans reprinted 1952; Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, T. & T. Clark has some excellent remarks on this general subject in this theological commentary of the first Epistle of John; though Millar Burrows is by no means a person who holds a high view of The Bible, but he does have a good discussion of The Anti-Christ in his *Outline of Biblical Theology*, Westminster Press, Phil. 1956, pp. 195.

These works will also provide other sources and problems involved in our general theme, so this brief list is given hoping that some profound, dedicated Christian will be able to give further analysis to the problem of evil, and specifically the personal nature of the evil ones mentioned in the Word of life.

SECTION 40

Text 14:1-5

1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

Initial Questions 14:1-5

1. Where was the Lamb standing according to vs. 1? Where is Mt. Zion?
2. Where have we read of the one hundred forty four thousand before in The Revelation?
3. What was the "new song" of vs. 3, and who alone could learn the song?
4. Discuss the real value of a vital, spiritual song service during worship hour in light of the fact that it is through song that redeemed shout the praises of God.
5. Does vs. 4 teach that a celibate life is a higher form of spiritual life than the marriage state (as according to Roman Catholic teaching)?
6. What spiritual or moral significance can the designation "virgin" have in vs. 4?
7. Does vs. 4 - "These were purchased from (*apo* away from, or out of) among men" stand in opposition to resurgent universalism (i.e., that everyone is going to be saved)? Does this phrase show that some men are not redeemed and why they are not?
8. What is the moral character of "those purchased" according to vs. 5?

The Vision of The 144,000 on Mount Zion Chapter 14:1-5 (Cf. 7:1-8)

Verse 1

John has now discussed the dragon, the beast of the sea, and the beast of the land or the false prophet. This "diabolical trinity" (John mentions it again in 16:3) is placed in the most radical tension with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The final sign in this series of scenes from the divine drama of redemption is the re-entry of the 144,000 (note that this would have been a large number to the 1st century church) discussed in chapter 7:4f. They are with the Lamb, with His seal (His name) on their foreheads. They are standing victoriously on Mt. Zion, the city of the great king. The king and His redeemed stand in an absolute contradiction to the beast and his fellow perveyors of darkness.