

BRINGING FORTH THE MANCHILD

David Baker, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 19 October 2025
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Good morning. It is great to be with you. I am going to be focusing on some of the content from the second chapter of *The throne of God and the Lamb*. We are going to look again at Revelation chapter 12 and the vision of the woman bringing forth the manchild. If you would like to turn to Revelation chapter 12, we will begin there in verse 1. We read, 'Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun [We will pick up these characteristics here as we begin], with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.' Many commentators will say this is a picture of the nation of Israel or a picture of Mary and, of course, they are working backwards saying, 'Well, the manchild must be Christ, so let us just interpret the woman that way then.' But we know it is not that. This woman is in heavenly places. This is a picture of the church - the corporate bride of Christ; but she is a *virgin* bride. She is betrothed to Christ but not yet presented to Christ in all her glory. We know that the consummation of the marriage between Christ and the church will not happen until the inauguration of the new heavens and the new earth. In fact, the consummation between Christ and the church cannot happen until the present order of marriage and procreation that belongs to a married couple comes to an end. There is no procreation in the new heavens and new earth. There is no being given in marriage in the new heavens and new earth. The multiplication of identities which is the fruit of the marriage between Christ and the *corporate* bride is a completely new offering mechanism which supersedes procreation. We are looking here at the *virgin* bride of Christ. It is a corporate bride. It is the virgin bride of Christ. The point I am making is that the manchild is not the fruit of the marriage between Christ and the church.

Let us have a look at this and pick up these characteristics as we begin. We know that she is clothed with the sun. That is because she reveals the glory of the Father. The sun here is representing the glory of the Father. The church reveals the glory of the Father because it is composed of godly families who are the context for the multiplication of sons of God. We know

that God is the Father. He is the God of all the families. We are talking families here now in this present order of creation. The church reveals the glory of the Father because it is composed of godly families who are the context for the multiplication of sons of God.

How does this happen? In this present age, the marriage of a man and a woman is by covenant. The covenant belongs to the Father. We have been learning that in this season, that it is His holy institution. He makes a man and a woman one for the purpose of bringing forth godly seed. Now the multiplication of godly seed happens in two steps.

The first step is to bring forth a new identity through procreation. This happens in the context of every marriage. Procreation is an amazing miracle. The fruit of the physical union of a man and a woman is a new spirit with eternal existence. That is an amazing thing. However, for this new identity to possess eternal life, it needs to be adopted by God and born of the divine nature from the seed of Christ as a son of God. This two-step process is the same for a child who receives the divine nature in the womb of their mother because of the faith of at least one of their parents. It is the same two steps that are necessary for a person who is born out in the world and then hears the gospel of God proclaimed to them and is then born as a son of God. This is why the church is clothed with the sun. We are looking at bringing forth sons of God.

I want to distinguish this from the manchild. Now the virgin bride of Christ also has the moon under her feet. In the same way that the sun is a symbol in relation to the Father, the moon is a symbol in relation to Christ. That is the moon that has turned to blood. The woman has the moon under her feet because she is standing upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the chosen and precious cornerstone who has been laid in Zion. Now this is an important one: the virgin bride of Christ (we are looking here at the church since the day of Pentecost) also has a garland of 12 stars upon her head. The 12 stars represent the 12 apostles who are also the foundation stones of the wall the heavenly

Jerusalem. This definitely connects it all the way back to the Day of Pentecost when the bride city is first seen coming down out of heaven from God and it lands on the foundation stones of the 12 apostles. The 12 stars are the symbol of authority upon the woman's head. Along with the prophets of old, the apostles delivered the written Scriptures to the church. What is our connection to that now? The apostles are all long deceased. In every generation the church maintains its connection to the headship of Christ under the lordship of the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the written Scriptures as a word of present truth spoken by the messengers of Christ. That is connecting us back to the 12 through the written Scriptures.

Let us continue here. Verse 2: 'Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth.' Now the fact that the woman is in travail and experiencing labour pains, that again emphasises that this is the virgin bride bringing something forth in this present age. There is no travail in the new heavens and the new earth. There is no time in the new heavens and new earth. There is no growth from immaturity to maturity in the new heavens and the new earth. Of course, there is no pain in the new heavens and the new earth. This is all happening now.

'Then being with child, she cried out in labour [or in travail] and in pain to give birth.' Now as I said before, the manchild is not the fruit of the marriage between Christ and the church in the new heavens and new earth. So we are not looking here at the sons of Jesus. The manchild is brought forth in this present age and belongs to God the Father. Now, we also note that the manchild is not the same as the sons of God who are brought forth in godly families through procreation and new birth. To make the point, when a child is born (picture the delivery ward for a moment) the doctor then delivers the child into the hands of the father. The father is looking at that child and rejoicing that that child (I am talking about a believing covenant family here) is a son of God and belongs to God the Father. The Father is not saying concerning that child, 'Behold, a manchild who is going to rule the nations with a rod of iron.' These are two different things.

Let us continue here. The vision in Revelation 12 describes the travail of the corporate bride of Christ. We are not talking about the travail of an individual family that belongs to the church now - bringing forth sons of God. This is the travail of the corporate bride of Christ during the reign... [I have said 'the church'. It is relevant for the whole of the church age in terms of this vision, but it is particularly relevant for the time of the seventh world kingdom. This is when the woman is in travail and in pain to bring something to birth.] ...The vision in Revelation 12 describes the travail of the corporate bride of Christ during the reign of the seventh world kingdom to bring forth the manchild. The manchild is the worldwide presbytery. We are sharpening the definition here on the manchild. You will be familiar in the last number of years, that we have been likening this to the great multitude that come in in the time of the end; but it is not that. It is specifically the worldwide presbytery that will be seated on the 24 thrones. The 24 thrones which are the administration of the throne of David will be established over the nations and they belong specifically to the dispensation of the Father in this present heavens and earth. The whole dispensation that belongs to this present creation belongs to the *Father*. This is an order that will reveal the name and the authority of the Father and its administration that belongs to His throne.

We know that these birth pains of the church happened during the seventh world kingdom because John continued in verse 3, 'And another sign appeared in heaven; behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.' This is the seventh world kingdom, and it is likened to a great, fiery red dragon because it is ruled by Satan. This is the pinnacle of his rulership over the nations. We read further down in Revelation chapter 12 (just so there is no confusion) that he is likened to a 'great dragon'. He is also called the 'serpent of old' and he is also called the 'Devil', and he is also called 'Satan'. We know exactly who we are talking about. He is the ruler of the seventh world kingdom. We know the seven world kingdoms that have ruled over the people of God are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and then the seventh world kingdom.

The seventh world kingdom is the United Nations which was established immediately after the end of the Second World War. We have had the seventh world kingdom now for 80 years. That is notable because elsewhere we read in the book of Revelation that it only lasts for a short time. It is only a short kingdom, but we have been living in that time for 80 years, and we are certainly in the latter phase of the seventh world kingdom now.

The seven heads represent the seven administrations that belong to the seventh world kingdom. These heads (or administrations) are represented by many international organisations. It is not just seven; but they are in seven areas. We have listed them as follows: finance and trade - that is one; law and human rights - that is two; health and science - that is three; sport and the arts is four; education is five; religion is six; international peacekeeping (which is the one that is particularly new in relation to the seventh world kingdom) is seven. That is our seven heads.

In addition to that, you have the mouth. The mouth belongs to all seven heads. The media is often used as the mouthpiece of the seventh world kingdom in all these areas to promote whatever the doctrine of Satan is. What is coming from the mouth is a river of lies and it is in direct opposition to the word of truth, which is the word of God the Father being proclaimed by the messengers of Christ with the Holy Spirit.

We have this seventh world kingdom. Almost the whole book of Revelation is set within the context of the seventh world kingdom. We know we have an eighth which is of the seventh but let us orientate that the major focus of the book of Revelation is what is happening during the seventh world kingdom. It is what is happening in our day *now*. We are right in this. The woman is in travail *now* to bring forth this manchild. The major point of conflict or warfare... (now we know that Satan is wanting to devour every son of God) ...but the major point of warfare, is that he is in direct opposition and the thing he would like to devour more than anything else is the presbytery that will be seated around the throne of the Father. That presbytery is going to shatter his kingdom when the gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed as a testimony in all nations. That is where the point of major warfare is. That is what

we are seeing in relation to the seven churches. We are seeing the restoration of a presbytery but at the same time the warfare with Satan himself.

We will continue to read. The ten horns we know represent the rulers of powerful nations or groups of nations during the latter phase of the seventh world kingdom. The sequence is important here as we are reading this. Revelation 12 verse 4 (to highlight where the warfare is and then where the falling of the stars is, or where it happens): 'His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born.' You see the manchild is not delivered yet in maturity. Satan is there and wanting to devour the child before it is born or as soon as it is born. This is where his tail is drawing a third of the stars and throwing them to the earth. Again, this puts us right where we are now in the phase of the restoration of lampstand churches.

These stars... (We know this does not refer to the 12 stars on the woman's head. We are not going from 12 to 8 stars on the woman's head.) ... This is talking about the stars in the right hand of Christ - the presbyteries of lampstand churches. This is where the point of warfare is. This falling away happens while the church is still in travail. It happens before the Father takes His seat and the manchild is caught up to God and to His throne.

We know there is another falling away, which Paul calls 'the great falling away'. We know that that happens before the physical return of Jesus Christ. He says there is going to be a great falling away and there is going to be the emergence of Antichrist. Antichrist will exalt himself above the fellowship of the presbytery and then he leads another thing, and he is cast as profane at the blowing of the third trumpet. We see him fall like a great star called 'Wormwood' and he makes a third of that waters bitter. We have the same percentage; we are still looking at a third; but that is the great falling away in relation to Antichrist.

What we are looking at here is the *tail* of the dragon. This is Satan causing a third of the stars to fall to the earth during the time of lampstand churches, before the Father takes His seat, just to distinguish those two things.

During the phase of the restoration of lampstand churches, it is the *tail* of the dragon that causes one third of the stars of heaven to fall. The tail of the dragon comprises false messengers who proclaim false gospels. Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 9 verse 15, 'The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail.' Jesus, when He admonishes the presbyteries of each lampstand church, is identifying the tail of the dragon that was among them when He is talking about those who hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. We have been considering what that looks like this year. Those who belong to the synagogue of Satan, and those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, and those who hold the doctrine of Jezebel. This is the tail of the dragon that is operative among lampstand churches.

The first characteristic of a fallen star is that they have fallen from the fellowship of first love that belongs to the heights of Zion. I will comment here on the pathway of restoration. When we are reading the seven letters, we know that they have been relevant for all lampstand churches for the entire church age. Of course, there have been overcomers in every generation. However, the specific application of the seven letters is the restoration of lampstand churches during the reign of the seventh world kingdom. I was reflecting on Jesus' statement to one of them that they were living where Satan's throne is - right there. It is particularly relevant for the restoration of lampstand churches during the reign of the seventh world kingdom before the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end. We know there have been seasons of revival and refreshing the whole way through the church age, but there is a season which Peter called 'the restoration of all things', when we see an administration brought forth which is suitable for the fullness of times. That is what we are looking at here.

This is the time when the church is in travail to bring forth the manchild which is the 'administration that is suitable for the fullness of times'. There is a progressive restoration of a presbytery and a progressive attainment of the promises. We know we are talking about a worldwide thing here which comprises the reward of Christ by an overcoming presbytery. Remember Jesus says, 'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me.' Rev 22:12. The reward of Christ is defined by the promise to the overcomers. There are all these various

dimensions to the reward. We know it is a progressive attainment because Jesus says to the second church (the presbytery in Smyrna), 'I will give you the crown of life.' Then He says to the sixth church (that is Philadelphia), 'See to it that no one take your crown.' We can identify all these things then in relation to the presbytery that is seated around the throne of the Father in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. We can see where they get their robes; where they get their crowns; all these different elements that we see there.

The pathway of restoration and attainment is from independent fallen stars. Think of it this way: from independent fallen stars, completely preoccupied being the local pastors of local congregations and all their own initiatives. It is from that, all the way to one worldwide presbytery that is seated with Christ on 24 thrones around the Father's throne in the heavenly places. That is quite a journey. That is the story of the seven churches. The first admonition to every presbytery is, 'I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works.' 'That means you need to become reconnected to the hand of Christ and start walking among all the congregations that belong to your lampstand church, and then from lampstand to lampstand.' That is the first admonition. Then it goes all the way to the final promise to every presbytery which is 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.'

We know that Christ Himself overcame on His offering journey and then when He committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He was received back to the Father's bosom and back to the Father's throne and now He is seated. He comes back then on the day of resurrection. He steps back into His immortal, incorruptible body which was lying in the tomb, and it is clothed with the glory of His heavenly body. He now possesses the spiritual body which is the substance of the resurrection body which we will all receive on the day of resurrection. He is now seated in that physical body in the third heaven at the right hand of God on His own intrinsic throne as Yahweh the Son. He is saying to the presbyteries, 'You will be seated with Me firstly around My throne.' His throne is at the right

hand of God. Then God the Father pulls His throne from 'before' (which is outside of time) and He places it *in* time in the third heaven on the top of Mount Zion, so that the 24 thrones are then around the Father's throne, and the Father will tabernacle and dwell with us. That is a massive shift. That is what initiates the time of the end, when the Father Himself places His throne in the middle of these 24 thrones.

We read from verse 5, 'She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up to God and His throne.' That happens when the Father places His throne in the middle of the 24 thrones. This whole administration is caught up now to God and *His* throne. We know that the manchild is the presbytery because the rod of iron is the fulfillment of the promise to the presbytery in Thyatira. This statement concerning the rod of iron is the key here in terms of knowing who the manchild is.

Jesus said in Revelation chapter 2 verse 26 to the presbytery in Thyatira, 'He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels - as I also received from My Father.' The presbytery will be caught up to God and to His throne when the Father takes His seat for the purpose of dwelling among His people in the heavenly Jerusalem. The presbytery is caught up to God and to His throne because this administration will reveal the Father and will exercise the authority of His throne over the nations in the time of the end. We know that the rod of iron firstly belongs to Christ and He will stand up at the right hand of God, and the time will come for Him to rule in the midst of His enemies. However, when the Father takes His seat and Christ stands up in heaven to rule in the midst of His enemies, the authority that belongs to the rod of iron will be expressed through the one worldwide presbytery on the earth.

After the Father has given the scroll with the seven seals to Christ (which He sealed on His offering journey and He delivered it to the Father), now the Father is giving it back to Christ, so that we will see revealed on the earth everything that Christ has already accomplished.

After the Father has given the scroll with the seven seals to Christ, the apostolic administration of Christ and the presbytery will sing a new song to the Lamb. We will read this verse here to support the point that we are making. This is Revelation 5 verses 9 and 10. This is talking about the apostolic administration. It is talking about the presbytery around the throne of the Father. 'And they sang a new song saying, "You are worthy [to the Lamb] to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nations, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." ' That is the song that belongs to the administration that has received the rod of iron. '...And we shall reign on the earth.' And the time came as we read in the book of Daniel 'for the saints to receive and to possess the kingdom'. Dan 7:18. From there the kingdom of God is established on the earth.

I want to go to the book of Micah. You will be very familiar with these passages that we are illustrating now. The prophets Isaiah and Micah were contemporaries. Certainly, when you read their prophecies, you note many similarities; but there is nothing to suggest that they ever met each other. I think Isaiah is prophesying up in the region of Jerusalem; whereas Micah, at the same time, is down in a rural town, a little village, about 40 kilometres away from Jerusalem; but they are prophesying exactly the same thing. In fact, word for word, the same thing. Again, all the commentators look at it and say, 'Well, who is copying who? Because it seems so inconceivable for some reason that they would have the same prophecy word for word.' What I think we do have (and we know we have) is that this word is *sure*. This word is certain, and it has been established in the mouth of two and three.

We read in Micah (we often read this from Isaiah chapter 2), but I am going to read it in Micah 4 because I want to go to Micah 5 then. As I said, you will know this. You could probably quote it word for word too. It says here in Micah 4 verses 1 to 3, 'Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the

Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the Law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [speaking about the heavenly Jerusalem].” He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.’ As I said, this is word for word - the same in Isaiah and in Micah.

Both of these prophets were particularly focused upon the birth of Christ. You will know this in terms of Isaiah and his prophecies concerning Immanuel, ‘God with us’; and they are also focused on the wounding events. You will be very familiar with that in Isaiah chapter 53 - all the wounding events. Then also (and this is particularly so in the book of Isaiah), they are focused on the time of the end when Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne to establish the Father’s kingdom on the earth. He stands up as a banner to all the nations.

We will go to Micah chapter 5, and I want to pick up some verses here and we will read them out of sequence. Micah is talking about the birth of Christ; he is talking about the wounding events of Christ; and he is talking about the time when the manchild will be brought forth and Christ will stand up - all in the passage of four verses here.

We will start with verse 2 and put them in sequence in terms of what is happening first. We start with the birth of Jesus. This is Micah chapter 5 verse 2. It says: ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be the Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.’ Now remember when the three wise men arrive in Jerusalem from the east (and we believe those three men to be Moses, Elijah and Enoch), they arrive in Jerusalem and they ask a very pointed question, ‘Where is the Messiah? We have come to worship Him. We have brought our gifts.’ Herod is greatly troubled by this, and he gets all the religious leaders in, and he says, ‘Where is the Messiah going to be born?’ And they quote this Scripture out of the book of Micah to substantiate

that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. This is definitely talking about the birth of Christ.

Then we go back to verse 1. This is now talking about the wounding events of Christ. We have a Ruler who is born. But then in verse 1, ‘Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; He has laid siege against us; they will strike the Judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.’ This is particularly talking about what happened to Christ. He is the Judge of Israel in the court of Caiaphas, where He was punched and slapped and hit and bruised for our iniquities; but He was also hit with rods on His back and around His face as we have read here — ‘chastened for our peace’. Right there is where He destroyed or ‘broke down the middle wall of partition’ and removed the enmity between Jew and Gentile and formed and fashioned one new Man in His physical body, and ‘He is our peace’. We know Paul says that in the book of Ephesians. He is pretty much quoting from the book of Micah here, down in verse 5 where Micah says, ‘This One shall be peace.’

In reading verse 1 and talking about the wounding events when the Jewish leaders rejected Christ and abused Him in the court of Caiaphas, God delivered them up to judgement - and it was the judgement of spiritual blindness. ‘Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in.’ Rom 11:25. Significantly, the prophet Micah declared that this judgement will continue until the time when the travailing church brings forth the manchild.

Let us go down to Micah 5 verse 3. It says, ‘Therefore He shall give them up [speaking about being given up to judgement], until the time that she who is in labour has given birth...’ I have read the other verses to show this is not the same as when Jesus is born from the womb of the virgin Mary. He has already been born, and He has already suffered on His offering journey. That has caused the judgement to be invoked on the nation, and the judgement will continue until the time when ‘she who is in labour has given birth’. This connects us directly to Revelation chapter 12. Micah 5 verse 3: ‘...And then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel, [meaning we will have one true Israel of God].’ This prophecy was not fulfilled when Christ was

born from the womb of the virgin Mary. It will be fulfilled when the church brings forth the manchild.

If we go back to Micah chapter 4 and verse 10, we read, 'Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.' We know that the church is in labour and the manchild will be brought forth while the church is still subject to the rulership of the administration of Babylon during the reign of the seventh world kingdom. After the Father has taken His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne at the right hand of God as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Let us just keep going in Micah chapter 5 verse 4 now. We have to put these verses in sequence. It says, 'He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide... [We connect that to teaching all nations what it means to abide in God; to be immersed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit] ...and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.' In the time of the end Jesus Christ will feed the entire flock. I am loving this picture of the flock - the entire flock that belongs to God the Father. Jesus Christ will feed the entire flock that belongs to His Father's kingdom through the word that will be proclaimed by the presbytery around the throne of the Father.

Let us go now to look at the 144,000, because I want to introduce another big point of clarification concerning the sealing of the 144,000. Then we will look very briefly at the characteristics. This is what the Lord is calling each and every one of us to be part of - to be part of this company, and to be sealed *now* in readiness for the time when the Father takes His seat. After the rod of iron has been given to the presbytery who will be around the throne of the Father, the presbytery will fulfil its mandate through the 144,000. The presbytery around the throne of the Father is not going out to all nations, but the mandate will be fulfilled. The arm of the presbytery (or the ministry arm, or the extension of the rod) will be through the 144,000.

The 144,000 will be the ministry arm of the presbytery throughout the earth. We could liken the 144,000 to the extension of the rod in the hand of the presbytery. The 144,000 will manifest the ministry of the seven Spirits of God and will shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom when they proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony in all nations. We are already in the season when the 144,000 are being sealed in preparation for the time when the Father takes His seat and Jesus Christ stands up from His throne to begin opening the seals. I will read in Revelation chapter 7 verse 1. It says (John is recounting another vision here), 'After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth [This is most likely the four living creatures - the apostolic administration of Christ], holding the four winds.' The four winds of heaven, these four angelic chariots that are ready to ride into all the earth, are holding them back. Remember, when the seals are opened, each of the horses goes forth at the command of the apostolic administration of Christ. They are holding them back, '... holding the four winds of the earth that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. [Verse 2] Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." '

The simple point I am making is that we are not waiting for something special, mystical or mysterious to happen after the Father takes His seat and Christ stands up. The 144,000 are being sealed now. The foundation of God stands firm. 'The Lord knows those who are His,' having this seal.

Let us dispel any kind of mystery around the 144,000. The Scripture gives us the characteristics of the 144,000. We will go to Revelation chapter 14 and nominate these things. I am sure as we talk about this, you will say, 'Yes, this is exactly where the Lord has been speaking to us and has been speaking to us now for quite some time. We believe this and we are laying hold of this.' Revelation chapter 14 verse 1: 'Then I looked and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him 144,000, having His Father's name

written on their foreheads.' That is the first characteristic. We have been encouraged in this season, and the Lord is saying to us, 'Pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that are coming on the earth.' Of course, that is talking about the judgement of God that will be manifest on the earth once Christ begins to open the seals. Jesus continues to say, 'Pray always that you may be counted worthy.' Our primary point of focus is not to escape the judgement. He then goes on to say, '...and to stand before the Son of Man.' This is the focus of our prayer as we are joining the intercession and travail of Christ and desiring to be those who are worthy. The focus is to be able to stand with Christ when He stands to open the seals.

They are standing with Him and then the apostle John observed seven characteristics that belong to the 144,000 who will stand with the Lamb of Mount Zion. I think this removes all the mystery here. We will just nominate these very briefly.

As I said, the first one is that they have the Father's name written on their foreheads. This is very straightforward. This means that they have been adopted by the Father, and they belong to the heavenly Jerusalem. They have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes into the spirit of a believer, He seals them, ratifying that they belong to God the Father and granting to them a title deed to an inheritance or a dwelling place in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is the seal of the living God. We are looking at sons of God.

Then verse 2, 'And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters [This is the voice of Christ], and like the voice of loud thunder... [All these things are significant. The voice like loud thunder is the voice of the apostolic administration which is proclaiming the word of the Father and revealing the authority of His throne. We have the voice of Christ, but then we have also got the voice of loud thunder] ... And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps... [That pulls in the 24 thrones around the throne of the Father as well. They have harps].' Verse 3: 'And they sang... [We are looking at the 144,000 here. The 144,000 then are singing] ... They sang a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no

one could learn that song except the 144,000 who were redeemed from the earth.' It is unique to them. The song is the fruit of their testimony. It belongs to their unique ministry among the nations in the time of the end. We are not yet *singing* this song to the nations, but I think we are *learning* this song now. There are many elements to it and a number of the psalms highlight this. I am going to read from Psalm 96 verse 1. This will give you a good feel of what this prophetic song will be when you read the whole of Psalm 96. It says, 'Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. [That is a great statement] Proclaim the good news [which is the gospel] of His salvation from day to day [because it is a daily reality]. Declare His glory among the nations [This is all revealing the glory of the Father], His wonders among all peoples.' Let us go down to verse 7: 'Give to the Lord [This is then instructing all the families of the earth what to bring to the Father for they belong to Him], O families of the peoples, give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due His name... [This is what is necessary to belong in the kingdom of the Father. He is the God of all the families]; ...Bring an offering and come into His courts. Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness This is sanctification! Tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations [This is the core message], "The Lord reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved... [there is no other agenda in the world that stands or prospers against this]; ...The Lord reigns. The world also is firmly established; it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously." ' It is worth reading the whole psalm, but we will go down to the last verse - verse 13. 'For He is coming, He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth.'

Now it is very interesting that that is pretty much word for word the song that David delivered to the chief singers when he set up the ark in the tent (or the tabernacle) on the top of Mount Zion in type. This is the song that belongs to the 144,000 which is part of the restoration of worship that belongs to the tabernacle of David, and it will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

It is proclaiming the sovereignty of God the Father over every family.

Verse 4 in Revelation 14 is the third characteristic. 'These are the ones who are not defiled with women, for they are virgins.' First read you think, 'Is this saying they are not married?' It is not saying that. This is not talking about the institution of marriage that belongs to the Father for the purpose of bringing forth godly seed. In this regard, Paul said that marriage is honourable among all and the bed undefiled. You are not defiled because you get married, that would be an obvious point to make. We are talking about a different kind of woman here. This is talking about the administration of Babylon, and she is the mother of harlots. There are many daughters of Babylon. This group here has not joined itself to that administration. 144,000 are chaste virgins who belong to the bride of Christ. Furthermore, they are wise virgins who have purchased a double portion of oil. The wise virgins have oil in their lamps and in their vessels. We have talked a lot about all these things. They possess a testimony of regeneration in relation to their humanity as sons of God who are being progressively conformed to the image of Christ.

The next one is number four - the same verse again. 'These are the ones who are not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.' They are being led by the Holy Spirit on the pathway that Jesus Christ Himself pioneered (or authored) on His offering journey. They are embracing their fellowship in His seven wounding events, and they are washing and making their robes white in that fellowship. This is all very straightforward.

Number five: they follow the lamb wherever he goes - same verse, 'These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.' They are firstfruits. We know when a worthy house is receiving the ministry of Christ and receiving His word and responding to His cleansing and sanctifying initiative - there is reformation in the house. Then as a firstfruits house, there is an overflow of ministry from house to house, and then into the community of the world.

Number six - verse 5: 'And in their mouth was found no deceit.' I will stop there. This means that they have been delivered from being Jacob to become Israel. I am hoping as we are reading this that you are inventorying in your own thinking, 'Yes, this is actually what the Holy Spirit has been talking to us about for quite some years.' We are Jacob, but like Jacob, we need to be delivered from being deceivers. Jacob was delivered and his name was changed when his nature was changed from being someone who was continually striving in the flesh. The Lord reaches out, touches his hip, weakens him in his flesh, he comes finally to a place of being poor or bankrupt in spirit. He is delivered from his carnality, and his name is changed from Jacob to Israel. We are all needing to come to that same place of being bankrupt or poor in spirit. This is where the gospel really begins, 'Blessed are those who are poor [in spirit] for theirs is the kingdom of God.'

When there is no deceit in the mouths of the 144,000 it means that they are not presuming to be the source of their own word. They are not presuming to be the source of their own word. They are connected to the word that is being proclaimed from the throne of God the Father. Equally, the word that they are proclaiming is completely commensurate with their own testimony because that is where the deceit is for all of us. It is when we are proclaiming something which is actually not true culturally for us in our own house. The Lord is wanting to deliver us from this deceit. That is what it means that there is no deceit in their mouth. They are actually proclaiming the word of truth, and it is true not only in Christ - it is also true in them and in their lives and in their houses.

Finally, '... for they are without fault before the throne of God.' This means that they are a blameless company. It does not mean that they have reached sinless perfection; we know that. A son of God is walking blamelessly when they continue to walk in the light of the word of present truth by responding to the conviction of the Holy Spirit with repentance and faith. A son of God who is walking blamelessly will be submitted to the lordship of Christ and will be bringing forth the fruit of sanctification in their own life, marriage and family.

I think you would agree, these are all pretty straightforward. The Lord has been speaking to us concerning all these things for quite some time. I will finish with just one final point of clarification. The 144,000 are not harvesting half of the world's population. The work of the 144,000 is to go and look for worthy houses in the same way that Jesus sent the 72 to go and look for worthy houses. He said, 'Pray the Lord of the harvest.' 'We need more labourers. Go and look for worthy houses.' The 144,000 are sent at the opening of the first seal, and we know we have this period of great tribulation from the second seal particularly through to the sixth seal. At the opening of the sixth seal, John sees this great multitude, and where have they come from? They have come out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is a great multitude of worthy houses, and they are like the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. That is our type. They are our exemplars of this kind of worthy house. Now those worthy houses then become the labourers who are bringing in over half the world's population during the following seven years when the mountain of the Lord's house is established over all the nations.

Hopefully that has been helpful for us today to orientate us in terms of the big picture, and we will look forward to continuing over the weekend.