



But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. – Matthew 15:9

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## The Language of Thousands

Yes, it's been a while since I've posted anything here. My apologies for that. If you aren't already aware, we've been doing live-streaming every Friday evening at 6:30 U.S. Central Time. Elkanah teaches while I sit off to the side adding comments. In no way are we formal about this. For several years we've hosted a Friday night Bible study in our home and with the entrance of covid we began live-streaming and anyone who has access to Facebook is welcome to join us. You can do a search for the group called "In Vain Do They Worship Me."

Several years ago I came upon the realization that satan has acted to confuse our language. Anything good that pertains to God satan has acted to change the meaning of the words that describe this good thing.

You may have read in earlier blogs on this website that I've stated I want to go to hell. It's a shocking proclamation from someone who loves and promotes the God of Creation. I want to be in hell?

My late father-in-law was sitting at the dinner table along with my husband's cousin and me. Elkanah and his 2 sisters were working in the kitchen trying to get lunch brought to the table. I wanted to offer water to anyone who wanted it and began asking by telling a story of a man I had met years earlier. He was a copy machine repairman and I let him in to the church to repair the copy machine. We talked while he worked and he told me that one Sabbath he had invited a stranger to his home for lunch after church. This stranger proceeded to condemn him to hell because he drank water with his meals.

As I finished telling the story I announced that I want to go to hell, would anyone

like some water? My father-in-law was a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister. This announcement of mine was too much for him. His mouth dropped open and called me by name with a big question in his word. The cousin looked at me like I had lost my mind.

The three who were in the kitchen walked in at that time and I began to get up and go get some water. As I was getting up I looked my father-in-law in his eyes and repeated, "I want to go to hell."

He was speechless, not knowing what to say so I kept talking.

"Just think about it for a moment. Is there anything good about God that Satan hasn't twisted to make us think it means something other than what it is? God dwells in the fire not out and since we want to be with God we should want to be in the fire with him."

I finished speaking just as I was leaving the room. Before I completely exited I heard the cousin speak up and say, "I agree with Hannah" then he gave a quick text to back it up. Elkanah also spoke up and provided more evidence that we should want to be in the fire rather than out.

Not long before he died, my father-in-law was again sitting at our dining room table along with a friend from church and me. Again we were talking while waiting on Elkanah and his 2 sisters to bring in lunch.

This friend began talking about hell and what a terrible place it will be and how we need to do everything we can to stay out of it. I tried to speak up and tell him what I had told the others but he wouldn't listen. He kept talking over me. So my father-in-law spoke up and gave this man a brief study on why we should strive to be in the fire rather than fear it.

If you're wondering why I was sitting at the table rather than helping with lunch the answer is something I'm not going to go into. Simply, I was misdiagnosed and placed on dangerous drugs then threatened if I didn't take them. The drugs left me permanently disabled. Walking is difficult for me but I refuse to use a wheelchair or walker unless I'm not at home and in a place where I need help with ambulation.

The reason I mentioned that is to say that I spend a lot of my time sitting at the computer listening to different Bible studies by various teachers. Recently I've begun hearing people make various statements that the devil has confounded our language and we need to get into the culture and search the Scriptures to

find how the Bible writers had intended the words to be used. The fear of being in the fire is just one of those many things that has been twisted to mean something other than what it really is.

In St. Paul, MN there is a man named Paul Eddy who has a Ph. D. after his name. I'm not exactly sure what his field of study is, sometimes I think that he's a psychologist. But he uses that degree to teach theology at Bethel University (or it may be Bethel College). He is one of the teaching pastors at the Woodland Hills Church.

Located somewhere in the vast library of archived sermons on the Woodland Hills Church website, is a sermon where Dr. Eddy mentions one of these words that has been misunderstood and he explains what the word actually means. If you want to find where he made the comment you can find a link to the website on the home page of this website. I'm thinking his comment was made during a Q&A session.

It's been a long while since I heard Dr. Eddy's comment and my memory can be faulty. His comment was something that had some meaning for me and I went straight to Elkanah to tell him what I had just heard. So, I'm passing along to you information that came from Dr. Eddy.

I'm thinking that Dr. Eddy was talking about the 1000 years mentioned in the book of Revelation (Revelation 20:1-7). Elkanah and I had both been taught that this 1000 years is a literal 1000 years. The redeemed will go to heaven for 1000 literal years where they will study the lives of those who didn't make it into heaven then pass judgment and sentence the wicked to death. While they are busy finding out what scumbags their friends and loved ones were, satan is forced to walk the earth and come to terms with the damage he has been responsible for. When the literal thousand years end then Jesus returns bringing his city with him and will then set fire to the place while those who were redeemed watch and approve.

If you actually read that I hope you felt some disenchantment with this theology. This is not a picture of an act of Love, therefore something is wrong with it and it needs to be restudied. And actually, when you do study it you will find it full of gaping holes. Hopefully someday I will be able to sit and write out a better teaching and you can decide for yourselves which you prefer. But to do that now would be to get off the topic and take too much time and effort.

As for Dr. Eddy, I don't really remember what his explanation was of what would happen during this 1000 year period. But what I do remember is his explanation

of the 1000 years. It was an explanation that I liked because it made sense and I adopted it as my mode of thinking when studying the Bible. Elkanah also accepted his explanation and it has changed a lot about how we view things that we find in the Bible.

According to Dr. Eddy, the term thousand does not mean a literal number, it means a huge, uncountable number. Think of it this way. When we see a large amount of something and we wonder how many but realize it's too many to count, we will call it a bazillion or a gazillion. In the ancient days a thousand was an amount too large for them to comprehend so they would say a thousand when they were unsure what the actual very-large number was.

In the church system Elkanah and I grew up in we were taught that if the Bible teaches something and you can understand it literally then it should be accepted as a literal teaching. But if you can't understand it then you should accept that it is symbolic of something and either accept what the church says it means or just stuff your question and move along to something else.

That leads to an interesting conundrum. The book of Revelation is a book of symbolism so should it not be read in it's entirety as symbolic rather than literal?

There's another place in Revelation where the term thousand is used only it's an even bigger number and this one has caused much discussion and disagreement over what it actually means. That would be who are the 144,000?

There are four different views about this number that I'm aware of. Some people say that only 144,000 will be allowed entry into heaven. And there is something about the way I just worded that that gives me a disturbed pause. Being allowed to enter heaven? Allowed? The invitation is there for all of us and all would be welcome there but the problem is that people wont want to be there and that's another blog for another time. For those who believe that only 144,000 will be allowed into heaven you need to be prepared to live in isolation. That isn't a lot of people when you're trying to populate a planet. But God created us to need the company of others and to serve those who are in need. How can we be with and serve others when there just aren't enough people to fill that need?

Another view that I'm familiar with is that the 144,000 are those who died in a condition that allowed God to raise them back to life at the first resurrection. They will arise to meet Jesus in the air BEFORE those who never saw death. Again, if this is a literal number then this really sucks. Were there really only 144,000 throughout the history of the earth who were willing to become friends with their Creator? If only 144,000 made it through that grave experience, how

many will be able to survive never seeing death? It would be an extremely low number.

The third explanation that I've heard is essentially that Jesus took this 144,000 to heaven with him after he resurrected and went back to heaven. They are his first fruits. They are the ones who were resurrected at the time of his death. That would mean the vast, unnumbered throng that Revelation mentions is those whom Jesus plans to rescue when he returns to get his people.

Fourth we have the interpretation of the denomination in which I grew up. They hold that the 144,000 are those who will be ready when Jesus comes and go to heaven without dying.

So, those are the four theories that I'm familiar with regarding the 144,000 and I'm sure there are many more that I've never heard of. Now let me throw another theory at you and that is to apply Dr. Eddy's teaching of what 1000 means, that it isn't an actual number but instead is a number that is so big it can't be counted. Now take that uncountable number and multiply it by 144,000 and what kind of number do you have? Our feeble brains can't comprehend a number this large.

So, let's look at a couple passages and I'm using the NIV:

### The Thousand Years

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Satan will have been locked away for a very long stretch of time. A stretch of time so long it cannot be given an accurate length of years. When Satan is released from his confinement he will be free for a short time. That might be a length of time we can understand but the exact amount of days has been withheld from us.

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of

the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

What is this mark of the beast? If the seal of God is to have allowed the Holy Spirit to work within us to create a Christlike character, then it should be reasonable to think that the mark of the beast would be to have satanic characteristics.

There are people who will sit on thrones who have been given authority to judge. Who was on trial? It couldn't be people who were on trial because we were all born in a condition incompatible with life. Our only hope of salvation is to allow the Holy Spirit to heal our characters. Those who are healed gladly enter heaven and those who reject the healing have also rejected heaven. They have already passed sentence upon themselves. So, again, who is on trial?

It is God that is on trial. We have been told that he has an evil side to him and we are now sitting in judgment of God. Do we believe Him or do we believe the deceiver? We get to choose.

At the first resurrection those who have chosen life get to reign with Christ for an extremely long period of time. When he was physically living here among us, Jesus showed us by example what it means to reign with him. He selflessly served others. This kinda makes me think that for a very long period of time we will be selflessly serving others. Now I can't prove it from the Bible, but I'm wondering if we are so misinformed and damaged it may take an extremely long period of time for us to fully heal. And the best way to heal is to take the focus off ourselves and act to help others.

### The Judgment of Satan

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and

devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Here we find that when the extremely long period of time has ended satan is released from his prison and then he does what he does best. He starts spreading lies and deceiving those who are willing to follow him. Notice that it doesn't exactly state that these people are those who chose to reject the healing of their characters, but because I have a finite mind and can think of no other explanation of who these people are, I will have to go with the idea that these people are those who have chosen to follow satan. Their lives were inundated with his lies and it is easy now for them to continue to believe him. Why? Because in God's camp are people who aren't interested in what's in it for themselves, they are interested in how they can help others. They have lost their self-focus and the wicked utterly reject that. They want to cling to their selfishness.

Fire comes from heaven and devours the people. If you've read earlier blogs then you'll know that I believe the fire from heaven cleanses us from sin. God dwells in that fire. That fire destroys sin and if we don't allow the Holy Spirit to work with us and gradually heal us, when the time comes that God withdraws his protection and allows the wicked to fully understand what they have done and chosen for themselves they will have a major meltdown that will destroy them.

The devil, beast, and false prophet are also cast into this lake of fire which Revelation says (in the next paragraph) is the second death.

### The Judgment of the Dead

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. –  
Revelation 20

Who is being judged here? It isn't the saved, it's the wicked. And in what condition are they? They're dead. They have already experienced the cleansing fire from heaven and didn't survive. They're dead. They are thrown into the lake of fire which is the second death.

Will God torch them? He may burn the earth and all the pollution in the air and water. There is even debris in space. It needs to be cleaned up. As for those who were "judged" they will have already received the reward they had demanded which was to separate from the Giver and Sustainer of Life. We cannot live without God and God will give us what we want. The wicked want to be without God so God withdraws his presence which causes them to face the reality of what they have become and then they have that massive meltdown and die. After they are dead God will send a cleansing fire to clean the earth and remove all traces of evil. The only thing remaining will be the scars in the "palms" of Jesus. We'll also have our memories but we'll choose to not remember.

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### The Lamb and the 144,000

Then I looked, and 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 and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

Now we have Jesus standing on Mt. Zion (whatever that symbolizes) and the extremely large, uncountable mass of people who chose to follow him. In ancient days a name was based upon a person's character. These people with



Jesus have received his seal, that is they have allowed the Holy Spirit to work within them to develop a Christlike character.

The song of the 144,000 that nobody else can sing is the song of their experience. Among the vastness of God's creation, only they know what it means to have lived a life of self-focus and acting in ways that are harmful to themselves and to others. More than anything they want to be with Jesus and follow him wherever he goes.

### The Three Angels

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

Who is being judged? God is the one on trial and we are judging whether he is right or is he what satan has claimed. The eternal gospel would be to choose life and follow the one who truly Loves us.

A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

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.

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

## Harvesting the Earth and Trampling the Winepress

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia. –  
Revelation 14

Notice here who it is that will be harvested. It has to be the wicked. They are thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath. If you've read earlier blogs then you'll know that God's wrath is the act of giving up and letting go. He lets you have what you want. These people that will be harvested are those who have chosen to separate from the Sustainer of life. How sad that will be.

As we move forward in these perilous times, keep your focus on Jesus and trust in him for all your needs. May God bless you all.

Lots of love,

Hannah

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