

6

# The Temple of God



“Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle” (Revelation 14:17).



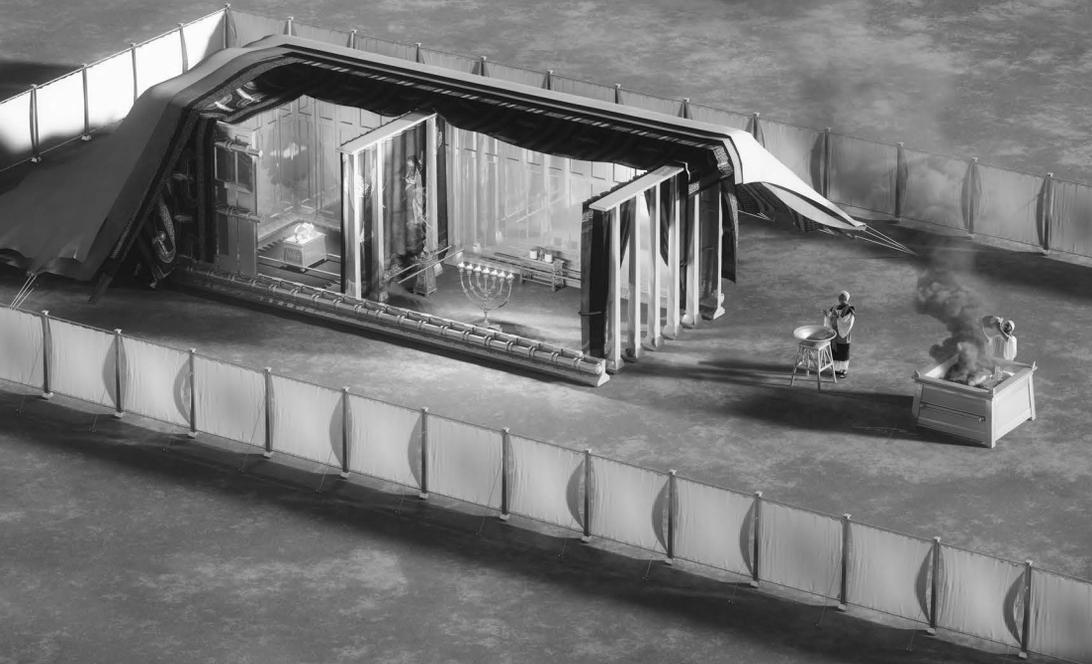
**An Amazing Fact:** Matchbox toy cars, which have been selling around the world for more than 70 years, are known for being meticulous replicas of their life-size counterparts, from a 1956 Ford station wagon to Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation coach. Today, popular models are made by measuring full-size cars with a laser and then reducing dimensions to 1/64th of the original.

When Jacob, who was also named Israel, first led his family into Egypt to escape a severe famine, they were little more than a sizeable clan. But while in Egypt, they multiplied rapidly into a mighty nation, which was eventually enslaved by the Egyptians.

After God miraculously delivered the children of Israel from Egypt through His prophet Moses, He began leading them to Canaan, the Promised Land. But the journey was arduous. Years of slavery in a pagan nation had stripped the Hebrews of their identity and knowledge of the true God. Thus, the Lord led His people into the wilderness to teach the fledgling nation civil and religious laws and to restore their understanding of God.

At Mount Sinai, again through Moses, God also presented detailed blueprints for a unique type of temple, which would serve as a focal point of His teachings. The Israelites used this temple system for 560 years after entering the Promised Land. It was eventually replaced by a permanent structure under King Solomon, but it was destroyed by the Babylonians some 400 years later—and then rebuilt during the reign of the Medo-Persians. All three temples were constructed in accordance with God’s same plan.

Why was this unique, distinctive sanctuary plan so important—and what significance does it carry in our lives today? Let’s find out ...





*When you see a blank, look up the passage in your Bible and write in the missing word.*

1. What did God ask Moses to build, and why?

**Exodus 25:8.** *And let them make Me a \_\_\_\_\_, that I may \_\_\_\_\_ among them.*

**ANSWER:** In the Bible, the sanctuary is alternately called “the tabernacle” (Exodus 25:9), “the temple” (Ezra 4:1), and “the house of God” (1 Chronicles 28:21). God is a present and personal God; He wants to be among His people.

The sanctuary built by Moses and the children of Israel was portable. The structure itself was enclosed in a **courtyard** about 150 feet long and 75 feet wide (Exodus 27:18). It was a kind of portable tent (26:14),

measuring approximately 18 feet by 55 feet (vv. 15–28) and divided into two rooms: **the holy place** and **the most holy place** (v. 33).

Along with the blueprint for its construction, God also gave Moses an interior design plan (25–27; 30; 36–39) and guidelines for ceremonies and services—to be administered by priests (Deuteronomy 10:8) and held both daily and annually in the sanctuary (Leviticus 1–9; 16; 23).

2. From where did these sanctuary blueprints originate?

**Exodus 25:40.** *And see to it that you make them according to the \_\_\_\_\_ which was shown you on the mountain.*

**Hebrews 8:4, 5.** *There are priests ... who serve the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”*

**Revelation 14:17.** *Then another angel came out of the \_\_\_\_\_ which is in \_\_\_\_\_, he also having a sharp sickle.*

**ANSWER:** God gave Moses the blueprints, modeled after the original sanctuary in heaven—“the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Hebrews 8:2), “the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (9:11). Revelation 14 confirms that the temple is in heaven and, moreover, that it is the center of operations for the final events of Earth’s history.

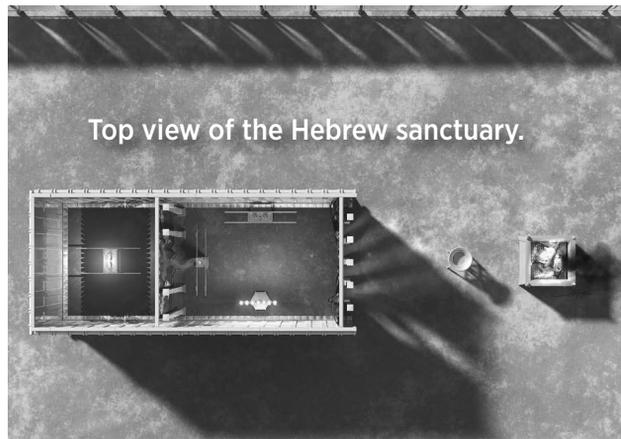
### 3. What did God teach through the sanctuary?

**Psalm 77:13.** *Your way, O God, is in the \_\_\_\_\_.*

**ANSWER:** Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). God’s way is “the path of life” for all humanity (Psalm 16:11). That is, the sanctuary revealed the plan of salvation.

Every detail of the plan had a meaning and purpose. For instance, God’s plan denoted only one path through the sanctuary: first the courtyard, then the holy place, and finally, the most holy place (Exodus 26:33, 36; 27:13–16). So it is with the path of salvation: Jesus Christ is the only way in which we can be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

This small-scale model was, in essence, an interactive, 3D object lesson of the different steps Jesus would take to save people from their sins. In the following questions, we will learn how this earthly sanctuary foreshadowed Jesus’ ministry and how we can walk the path of salvation He forged.



### 4. What were the objects in the courtyard?

**Exodus 29:18.** *And you shall burn the whole ram on the \_\_\_\_\_.  
It is a \_\_\_\_\_ to the LORD.*

**Exodus 30:18.** *You shall also make a \_\_\_\_\_ of bronze ... for washing. ... And you shall put water in it.*

**ANSWER:** In each of the three areas of the sanctuary were placed specific items. The courtyard held the **altar of sacrifice** and the **laver**.

Upon first entering the courtyard, one came to the altar of sacrifice (Exodus 27:1-8), where people brought certain types of animals to be offered to God. This sacrificial service occurred multiple times a day for various reasons. A priest was responsible for administering the sacrifice upon the altar. (For example, see Leviticus 1:5-9.)



After the altar of sacrifice and before entering the sanctuary building was the laver, a bronze basin in which the priests washed before offering a sacrifice or moving into the holy place (Exodus 30:17-21).

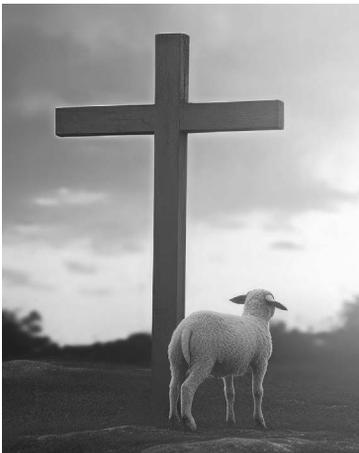
#### 5. What sanctuary symbol did Jesus fulfill in the altar of sacrifice?

**1 Corinthians 5:7.** For indeed Christ, our Passover, was \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

**John 1:29.** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The \_\_\_\_\_ of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

**ANSWER:** When a sinner brought his own sacrificial animal, he placed his hands on its head and confessed his sins, symbolically transferring his sins onto the animal; then, the sinner slew the animal with his own hand (Leviticus 1:3-5). This shocking ritual impressed upon people the solemn truth that forgiveness, or “remission,” for their sins required innocent blood to be spilt (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus Christ fulfilled the symbolic role of that sacrificial animal (v. 26; 10:4). The altar of sacrifice represents the cross upon which He, the innocent Lamb of God, was sacrificed for all our sins (Matthew 26:28). Significantly, the animal sacrifice had to be “without blemish” (Exodus 12:5), just as Christ is “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).



The Passover was a feast day, an annual sanctuary ceremony. On that day, each family sacrificed a lamb and smeared its blood over their door to be delivered from death (Exodus 12:3–14). Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover (John 19:14) so that all who accept His blood to cover their sins will be delivered from eternal death.

### 6. What does the laver represent?

**Acts 22:16.** Arise and be \_\_\_\_\_, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

**Romans 6:3, 4.** Or do you not know that as many of us as were \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ Jesus were \_\_\_\_\_ into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through \_\_\_\_\_ into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**ANSWER:** The laver represents Christ's death and resurrection, which is encapsulated in the rite of baptism. Through baptism, wherein a person is "buried" beneath the water and then raised up out of it, we acknowledge that we have died to our old life of sin and have been resurrected to a new life given to us by Christ. Our sins are washed away by the blood of His sacrifice, and we drink freely of Him, the Water of Life (John 7:37, 38). (See also Romans 5:10.) Jesus even showed us how to walk this path by being baptized in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13–16).



### 7. What were the items in the holy place?

**Numbers 4:7.** On the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the pitchers for pouring; and the \_\_\_\_\_ shall be on it.

**Numbers 8:2.** When you arrange the \_\_\_\_\_, the seven \_\_\_\_\_ shall give light in front of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exodus 30:1.** You shall make an \_\_\_\_\_ to burn \_\_\_\_\_ on.

**ANSWER:** On the north side of the holy place was the **table of showbread** (Exodus 25:23–30; 40:22), upon which sat two piles of bread with six cakes each (Leviticus 24:5–7). The bread was changed weekly and eaten by the priests (vv. 8, 9).



On the south side was the **seven-branch candlestick** (Exodus 25:31–39; 40:24), which the priests kept lit using olive oil (Leviticus 24:1–4). As the sanctuary had no windows, this lamp was the only natural light in the temple.

On the west side, before the veiled entrance to the most holy place, was the **altar of incense** (Exodus 30:1–8; 40:26). God directed that a unique type of incense be made solely for use on this altar (30:34–38).

Additionally, depending on the sacrifice, the priest put blood on the altar of incense and in front of the veil (Leviticus 4:5–7), or on the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard (v. 25); this act represented the transferring of the sins from the people to the sanctuary itself. Symbolically, it meant that even though these sins were forgiven, there still remained a record of them in the sanctuary.

All these duties illustrated that the priest mediated and interceded on behalf of the people.



**8. Where did Jesus go after His resurrection?**

**Hebrews 9:24.** Christ has not entered the \_\_\_\_\_ made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into \_\_\_\_\_ itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

**Hebrews 9:11.** Christ came as \_\_\_\_\_ of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

**ANSWER:** After Christ’s resurrection, He appeared to His disciples before ascending to heaven (Acts 1:1–3, 9–11) and continuing into the holy place—not the compartment in the earthly sanctuary but the original holy place in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 4:14; 10:12). Having fulfilled His role as the Lamb, Christ then took up His duties as our true High Priest, “not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood” (9:12).

**9. How do the three items in the holy place relate to the plan of salvation?**

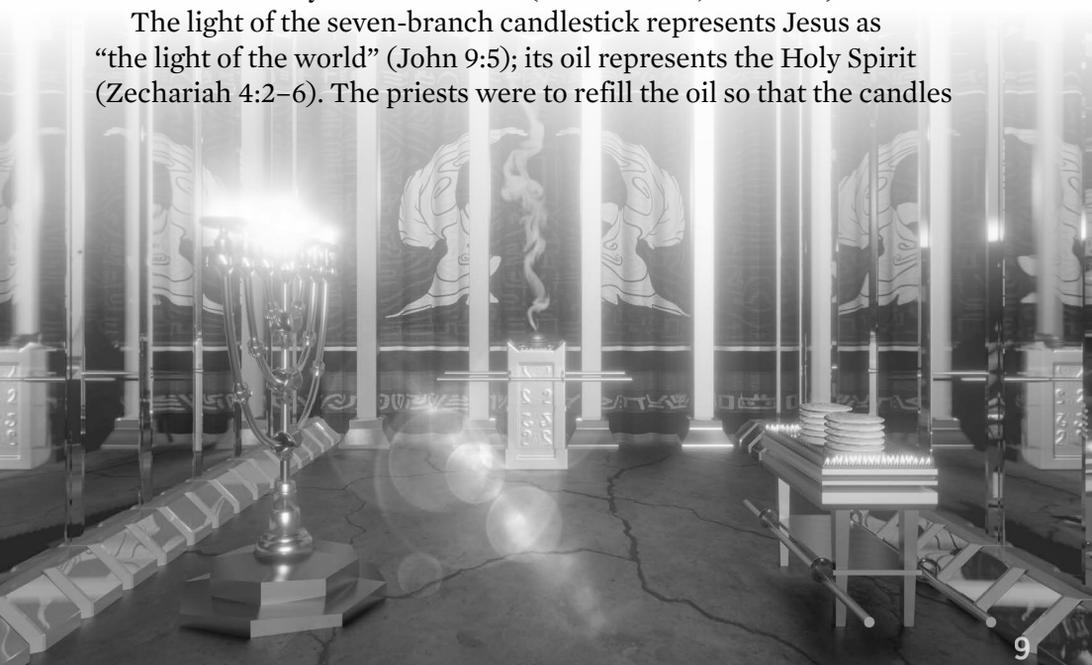
**John 1:14.** The \_\_\_\_\_ became flesh and dwelt among us.

**John 1:9.** That was the true \_\_\_\_\_ which gives light to every man coming into the world.

**Hebrews 7:25.** Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make \_\_\_\_\_ for them.

**ANSWER:** The table of showbread represents Jesus as “the living bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:51). The showbread was to sit there “always” (Exodus 25:30). Likewise, God has given us the Scriptures to be studied daily for our survival (Matthew 4:4; Acts 17:11).

The light of the seven-branch candlestick represents Jesus as “the light of the world” (John 9:5); its oil represents the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:2–6). The priests were to refill the oil so that the candles



would “burn continually” (Exodus 27:20), just as God’s people are to be powered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17; 1 John 4:13). (See also 1 Corinthians 3:16.) We thus become “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), faithful witnesses of Christ’s love for humanity (v. 16).

The altar of incense represents the prayers of God’s people (Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4). On this golden altar was to be “a perpetual incense before the LORD” (Exodus 30:8). Similarly, we are to have constant communion with God through prayer by continually lifting up our petitions to Him (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17) so that He may intercede on our behalf.

As Christ began His ministry in the holy place in heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples to empower them to take the gospel to the world as His witnesses (Matthew 24:14; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit:

1. Illuminates our study of God’s Word (John 14:26; 16:13).
2. Empowers our witness (15:26, 27).
3. Aids our prayers (Romans 8:26).

Christ gave us the exact three tools symbolized by the items in the holy place—Bible study, witnessing, and prayer. It is through these that the Holy Spirit changes us into the image of Christ. Without Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, we are unable to walk the path of salvation.



10. What special article was situated in the most holy place?

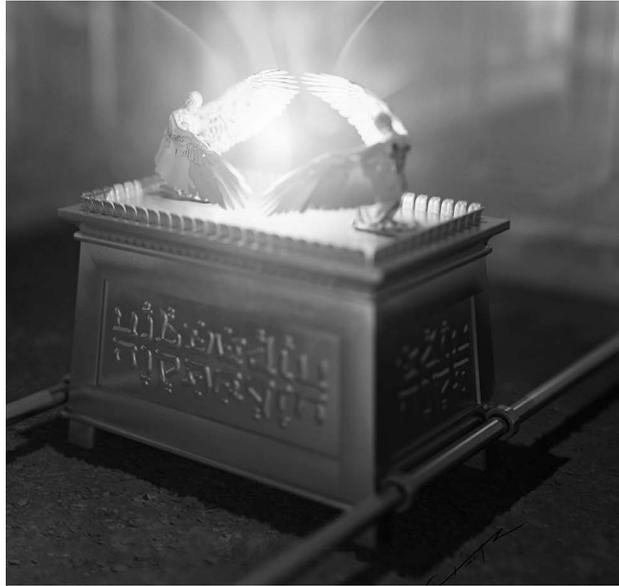
**Exodus 26:34.** *You shall put the mercy seat upon the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Most Holy.*

**ANSWER:** The only article of furniture in the most holy place was the **ark of the covenant** (Exodus 25:10–22; 1 Kings 6:19), a golden chest containing the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:4, 5). The ark’s lid is called the mercy seat, where God dwelt in the earthly tabernacle. It had two golden angels, each one facing inward from opposite ends, “covering the mercy seat with their wings” (Exodus 25:20).

Significantly, no one but the high priest went into the most holy place, and this occurred only once a year on one of the annual feasts called the Day of Atonement. (See “The Day of Atonement” at the end of this lesson.)

11. What does the ark of the covenant signify?

**Hebrews 4:16.** *Let us therefore come boldly to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*



**ANSWER:** The ark of the covenant signifies God’s throne in heaven, the “seat” of His government (Psalm 99:1; Isaiah 37:16). Notice that God’s government is founded upon His law, which is covered by His mercy. This is an exact illustration of the everlasting gospel. It is only through Christ’s mercy that the law is upheld: At the cross “mercy and truth ... met together; righteousness and peace ... kissed” (Psalm 85:10).

Interestingly, the two angel figurines on the mercy seat are representations of real angels who guard God’s throne in heaven (Isaiah 6:1, 2). In fact, we’ve learned who one of these covering cherubs used to be—Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:14, 15; Isaiah 14:12), who betrayed his King and is now bent on perverting the law he had been charged to protect.



The most holy place represents the last step in the plan of salvation. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, we may pass through the veil into the throne room of God; through His grace, we will have God's law written on our hearts and minds (Hebrews 10:14-17; Jude 24). We will be the living gospel by sharing this message with others (Revelation 14:6).

12. Are you willing to follow Christ's plan of salvation, as symbolized by the path through the sanctuary?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Lesson 6 Supplemental Material***

### **The Day of Atonement**

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Leviticus 17:11).

The Day of Atonement was the annual day of judgment in which the people were urged to confess and forsake every sin before the high priest completed cleansing the earthly sanctuary (Leviticus 23:27). Those who refused were “cut off” from the camp (v. 29). “Atonement” means to “make reconciliation”—literally, “to cover over.” Leviticus 16:30 states, “For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” Christ’s blood covers—*cleanses*—our sins.

It happened like this: Two goats were selected, the Lord’s goat, which represents Jesus, and “the scapegoat,” which represents Satan (vv. 7, 8). The Lord’s goat was sacrificed for the people’s sins (v. 9), after which the high priest took its blood into the most holy place—for the first and only time that year—and sprinkled some on and in front of the mercy seat (v. 15). He then moved through the sanctuary, putting blood also on the altars in the holy place and the courtyard (vv. 16–20). In this way, he cleansed the sanctuary from the record of people’s sins placed there throughout the year.

Symbolically, at that point, all the sins confessed by the people were transferred from the sanctuary to the high priest, who then transferred them to the scapegoat, which was led into the wilderness and abandoned (vv. 20–22). In the true day of atonement, the final judgment soon to come, Satan, the originator of sin, will ultimately be judged for all sin (Revelation 20:10).

There is a question remaining, however. Has Christ our High Priest moved into the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary? Has the real day of judgment begun? We’ll find out in a future lesson!

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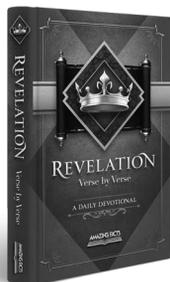
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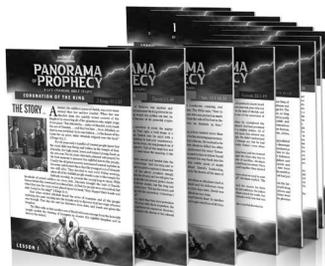


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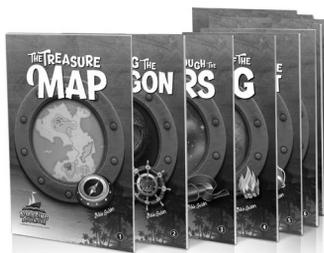
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Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:6–12

