

**HEALING STREAM MINISTRIES presents...**

**THE UNDILUTED, FULL STRENGTH, THREE ANGELS MESSAGES**

with enough power to...

- **cleanse from all sin**
- **set us free from all bondage**
- **break all the power of the enemy over us**
- **restore us to total spiritual health**
- **develop immunity to all last-day deceptions**

**#76 – Buying, Selling and the Beast**

*“...that no one may buy or sell except the one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of His name” (Revelation 13:17).*

Though the birth of Jesus Christ should be the “reason for the season,” yet the year-end-bottom lines of many corporate financial statements seems to be a greater “reason for the season” than the person of Jesus Christ. A satirical version of one well-known Christmas carol goes like this, “*Angels we have heard on high, tell us to go out and buy.*” Buying and selling to provide for our daily necessities has always been part of life. But much Christmas buying and selling consists in the attempt to fill our personal empty love cups and leaking buckets of self-worth with a sense of personal significance.

According to Scripture, the financial systems of our world are all going to collapse just before the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ. “*And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her [Babylon], will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing and saying, “...for in one hour such great riches came to nothing” (Revelation 18:11,15,16).*

Do you ever make purchases of certain items in order to obtain a sense of self-worth? Are you perhaps in the pursuit of the accumulation of wealth to provide you with a security that is only transitory, make-believe, and that ultimately only comes from Jesus Christ? There is even a competitive element in all our buying and selling. Someone has noted that it is truly amazing how often *we buy things we don't need with money we can't afford in order to impress people we do not like.*

Do not just be alert to the end-time fulfillments of the prophecy about buying and selling. The enemy, Satan, is right now in the business of setting us up for that final end-time deception by causing us to believe his lie that real life consists in the abundance of material goods, “stuff.”

The pursuit of “stuff” can become a ‘beast’ that imprints us with its image, name, and number:

- Unbelief in God’s goodness and sufficiency causes us to reject Him as the source of all our needs. We engage in spiritual harlotry by looking for love in all the wrong places. (A violation of the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment)
- Image: Custom-design an idol (a beast) to meet your idolatrous expectations (a violation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment).
- Name: Make a name for yourself through this idol/beast. (A violation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment).
- Number: This idol (beast) cannot deliver what only God can. Your life will, therefore, be imprinted with the number of the beast – ‘6’ – heaven’s rating of our own man-made incompleteness; you will literally have “no rest day or night” as long as you worship your own beast. (A violation of the Sabbath rest principle as found in the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment).

Listen to the cry of the prophet Isaiah, echoing the pain in our heavenly Father’s heart, as he observed the vain pursuits of such buying and selling:

*Ho! Everyone who thirsts,  
Come to the waters:  
And you who have no money,  
Come buy and eat...  
Why do you spend money for what is not bread,  
and your wages for what does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,  
and let your soul delight itself in abundance.  
Incline your ear, and come to Me.  
Hear, and your soul shall live.  
(Isaiah 55:1-3)*

Then follows an appeal to depend on the covenant faithfulness of our God. Isaiah describes the performance of God’s covenant faithfulness like this -

*As the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven  
And water the earth... that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the  
eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish  
what I please, and it shall prosper  
in the thing for which I sent it.  
(Isaiah 55:10,11)*

Is your life currently filled with many anxious thoughts about your own self-worth – possibly based on dim prospects of a Christmas without a lot of gifts and consumer goods? If on Christmas morning there were no gifts under the tree and nothing in the stockings, would you still be able to praise God for His unspeakable gift in Jesus Christ?

Christmas is only for a few hours, but Jesus is for a lifetime. Learn this Christmas to delight yourself in the joy of knowing Jesus, and you will gain an impenetrable immunity to the last-day deception when *no man can buy or sell*. The joy of the Lord will be your strength, and the more joy you have the greater will be your strength to discern and resist the temptation of deriving love from sources that do not deliver.

*For you shall go out with joy,  
And be led forth with peace;  
The mountain and the hills shall break forth into singing...  
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*  
(Isaiah 55:12)

Our joy in the Lord will choke out all the weeds, briars and thorns in our lives – the lies that our self-worth comes from the accumulation of “stuff.”

*Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree,  
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;  
And it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting  
sign that shall not be cut off.*  
(Isaiah 55:13)

Genuine self-worth comes from the One in whom all worth resides, because He is worthy of all our worship.

*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!*  
(Revelation 5:12)