

## Revelation 14 – The Reaping of God’s Judgment

### I. The True Lamb and His People (1-5)

#### A. The Lamb Appears With The Redeemed (1)

##### 1. The true lamb stands victoriously

- a. In chapter 13, we are given the false lamb (the 2<sup>nd</sup> beast that looks like a lamb and speaks like a dragon)
- b. In contrast to the religious system of the day, the true lamb stands on Mount Zion in the Father’s presence

##### i. Mount Zion is a common term in the OT

prophesying the Messiah and his remnant

- “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’” – Psalm 2:6-7
- The idea of Zion was where God himself was enthroned in Israel’s temple. The perfection which Jerusalem was supposed to be. It will now characterize the New Jerusalem.
- “*Mount Zion*’ [in the OT] appears to occur when emphasis is placed on the deliverance of a remnant *and* their protection in the mountain fortress.” – Greg Beale

##### ii. Mount Zion expresses the genuineness of this lamb over against the false lamb of chapter 13

##### 2. The true lamb stands with His people

- a. The 144,000 are mentioned again standing with the lamb

##### i. These are the same group we saw in chapter 7

##### ii. They have the name of the Father and the name of the Lamb upon their foreheads

- This describes their following of God and their belonging to God
- Notice that the Mark of the beast in ch. 13 was the “number of his name” – here the name on their forehead is not the beast’s, but the Father’s and the Lamb’s
- This seal (name) on their forehead is in opposition to the mark of the beast.

- b. The 144,00 are those who have been redeemed – the true people of God (see notes on Chapter 7)

#### B. The Victorious Song of the Redeemed (2-3)

##### 1. Violent Melodic Sounds are Heard From Heaven (2)

- a. The “voice” (or sound) from heaven sounds like many waters
  - b. The “voice” (or sound) sounds like thunder
  - c. The sound is like that of harpists playing on their harps
  - d. The same description is given to the praises of the redeemed as the harlot is judged in Rev. 19:6 – “ Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “**Hallelujah!** For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.”
2. The Sounds are the Praises of the Redeemed (3)
- a. They Sang a New Song –
    - i. In the OT the “new song” was always an expression of praise for God’s victory over the enemy, which sometimes included thanksgiving for his work of creation (Pss. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa. 42:10).
    - ii. This new song is the sound that is heard from heaven
  - b. The new song is sung in the presence of the throne, the elders, and four living creatures
    - i. Just as the false lamb exercise its authority in the presence of the beast, the true lamb and his worshipers exercise their praise in the presence of the throne.
    - ii. The new song cannot be stifled or shut out by anything on earth because it is sung from the very throne room of God.
  - c. The new song can only be sung by the redeemed
    - i. The song of the redeemed (praise to God) can only be learned by those who have been redeemed
    - ii. The angels cannot praise God for redemption
    - iii. Those who worship the beast do not have access to the Father to worship him.
- C. The Description of The Redeemed (4-5)
- 1. Chaste Virgins – This identification is debated
    - a. Some see it as literal –
      - i. they are celibate Christian men (some say men and women)
      - ii. they are end time national Israelites who are literal virgins
      - iii. they are Christians who have abstained from the sexual rites of the pagan temples
    - b. Some see it as figurative –

- i. The OT repeatedly calls for soldiers in God's army to preserve their ceremonial purity before battle - Deut. 23:9-10; 1 Sam. 21:5; 2 Sam. 11:8-11
  - ii. The OT repeatedly refers to idolatry as immorality and adultery. This remnant has not soiled themselves with the immoral adultery of worshiping the beast. (in v. 8 we will see that this "Babylon" has caused the nations to drink of the passion of her immorality)
  - iii. The ideal Israel was always called to be a chaste bride - Jeremiah 2:2-3 - Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord, I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, The love of your betrothals, Your following after Me in the wilderness, Through a land not sown. "Israel was holy to the Lord, The first of His harvest. All who ate of it became guilty; Evil came upon them," declares the Lord.'
  - iv. 2 Co. 11:2 - For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.
- 2. Followers of the Lamb - they are identified with Jesus
- 3. Purchased from men as "first fruits" to God and the Lamb
  - a. These have been redeemed by the blood of Christ which makes them part of the church, whether Jew or Gentile
  - b. They are first fruits, which militates against an end time interpretation
    - i. Whether they are taken as first century Jewish Christians or Christians in general - the letter was written to the first century audience
    - ii. There is no way any group can be called "first fruits" who are identified with the last part of history
    - iii. The first fruits in the OT were the offerings to God that foreshadowed the coming harvest -
    - iv. Paul also identified his first century readers in Rome as first fruits - Romans 8:23 - And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body
- 4. Blameless (5)
  - a. They are free from deceit - they worship and follow the Lamb openly and triumphantly

- b. They have been judicially forgiven of all their sin and are spotless and blameless before God.
- c. Christ's remnant are conformed to his image
  - i. Isa. 53:9 - His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.
  - ii. Zeph. 3:13 - "The remnant of Israel will do no wrong And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down With no one to make them tremble."

## II. The Proclamation of Judgment (6-11)

### A. The First Angel's Proclamation (6-7)

#### 1. The gospel goes to all people (6)

- a. The angel has an eternal gospel
  - i. Some have said because the definite article is missing from the gospel, it is not the gospel of Christ but the "good news" of God's judgment on the wicked
  - ii. The gospel is eternal in that it is the proclamation of the salvation and judgment of God throughout all time and eternity
- b. The angel is to preach this gospel (εὐαγγελίσαι) all people
  - i. The gospel goes to the "people who live in the land" = Israel and also the people of every nation
  - ii. The ESV does not translate the word "and" assuming that *Ge* means "earth." Therefore the translators see "every tribe, tongue, and nation" as descriptive of those who dwell in the earth [however, the word and (*kai*) is present.
  - iii. Some use this universal proclamation to say it must be speaking from an end time perspective, however the Apostle Paul would disagree
    - *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8, NASB95)*
    - *...because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it*

*and understood the grace of God in truth.... (Colossians 1:5–6, NASB95)*

- *...if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (Colossians 1:23, NASB95)*

2. The content of the proclamation is given (7)

- a. We are not told that this is the ONLY content of the angel's "gospel" but it is certainly included
  - i. Judgment of the wicked has always been part of the gospel
  - ii. God's wrath is real and it is the reason the good news is so good.
- b. Fear God and give Him glory...worship the creator
  - i. The call of the eternal gospel is for all men everywhere to repent
  - ii. Sinners are called to lay down their rebellion and turn to God in adoration and praise – this is the fundament call of the gospel
- c. Because the hour of judgment has come
  - i. Although it is possible that the gospel of Christ is given in v.7 in broad outline form, it is also true that the "good news" is that God will judge the wicked
  - ii. This is good news for those who are following the Lamb and being persecuted and oppressed by the wicked (notice that this is given as an exhortation for the endurance of the saints – see v. 12)

B. The Second Angel's Proclamation (8)

1. Babylon has fallen.

- a. The statement comes from Isa. 21:9 - "Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs. And one said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; And all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground."
  - i. The context is clearly the idolatrous system of the pagan Babylon which has oppressed God's people and brought them into captivity
- b. Babylon the Great comes from Daniel 4:30 where King Nebuchadnezzar surveys his city and acclaims its greatness as a monument to his own power. "Babylon the Great" occurs nowhere else in the OT.

- i. Dan. 4:30 - The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'
  - 2. Babylon has brought idolatry to the nations
    - a. Babylon has made all nations drink the wine of her immorality – we have already seen the adultery language associated with idolatry
    - b. This comes from the prophet Jeremiah 51:7-10- *Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; Wail over her! Bring balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed; Forsake her and let us each go to his own country, For her judgment has reached to heaven And towers up to the very skies. The LORD has brought about our vindication; Come and let us recount in Zion The work of the LORD our God!*
  - 3. There are usually two interpretations of the identity of this Babylon in Revelation – Rome or Jerusalem
    - a. To be fair – one can clearly see why Rome would be interpreted as Babylon
      - i. They infected the world with their idolatry and rule
      - ii. They oppressed all nations, including Israel
      - iii. They were irrefutably the world's greatest power of the first century
    - b. Jerusalem is much more likely
      - i. The identification of Babylon with the city of Jerusalem is expressed clearest in chapter 17 of Revelation – we will see it there
      - ii. In chapter 17 – we see a picture of a harlot riding the beast. She is called "Babylon the Great. The Mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth (land). - (17:5)
        - A much fuller description of this harlot is given in ch. 17 and each picture points to the Jerusalem cultic worship and the High Priest's garments.
        - This harlot will be riding the beast that can only be identified with Rome – Chapter 17 identifies the beast with the seven hills and seven kings of Rome.
- C. The Third Angel's Proclamation (9-11)
  - 1. Worshipers of the Beast will receive God's wrath (9-10a)

- a. Here is an example that the “mark” being synonymously identified with the worship of the beast (every time the mark is mentioned, worship will also be mentioned.)
  - b. This speaks of those who identify with the beast more than Christ in order to preserve economic or cultural prosperity. This isn’t a picture of just “devil-worshippers,” this is all those who sacrifice truth for worldly expediency.
  - c. Just as Babylon has caused them to drink from the cup of her passions, God will cause them to drink from the wine of His wrath.
- 2. The Application of God’s Wrath (10b-11)
  - a. Worshipers of the beast will be tormented eternally (10b-11a)
    - i. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone
      - Allusion to Genesis 19:24-25 - Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, 25 and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.
    - ii. They will be tormented in the presence of the Lamb
    - iii. They will be tormented in the presence of the Holy Angels.
  - b. Worshipers of the beast will never receive rest (11b)
    - i. Their torment will be eternal – day and night
    - ii. The smoke of their torment will go up forever (another picture of Sodom and Gomorrah)

### III. The Encouragement of the Church (12-13)

- A. The Call For the Church’s Endurance (12)
  - 1. The Saints Defined
    - a. Those who keep the commandments of God
    - b. Those who keep their faith in Jesus Christ
      - i. Can there be any doubt that we are talking about the church here?
      - ii. All those who trust in Christ are part of the body of Christ
  - 2. The true church is called to endure the temporary trials and sufferings – knowing they will receive their reward
  - 3. The present beast worshipers may seem like they are benefiting now, but they will reap the harvest of God’s wrath
- B. The Reward of The Faithful (13)
  - 1. Even those who die for the Lord are called blessed
  - 2. Those who hold fast are granted to rest from their labors

- a. They will not be tormented nor will they suffer in eternity
- b. They will be given rest because of their stand for Christ
- c. The deeds they have done in this life (keeping God's commandments and holding to their faith in Christ) will follow them into eternity and they will be rewarded in the presence of the Lamb.

#### IV. The Harvest of God's Wrath (14-20)

##### A. The Son of Man Reaps The Harvest (14-16)

##### 1. The Son of Man appears with a sickle (14)

- a. The Son of Man is the center of this vision (three angels have sounded before and three will sound after him)
- b. The Son of Man is a picture we have already seen in Revelation from Daniel chapter 7
- c. Though both beasts rage and attempt to do their worst, the son of Man is enthroned on the clouds – as in Daniel 7, he has received the kingdom from the Ancient of Days and now reigns.

##### 2. The Call is given to reap the harvest (15-16)

- a. Another angel from the temple calls for reaping (15a)
  - i. This angel appears from the heavenly Temple
  - ii. This angel gives the divine command from the throne room to reap because the hour has come.
  - iii. This "reaping" is the calling of the elect through the gospel
    - We must distinguish this reaping from the one mentioned next – John is not simply repeating himself saying another angel also comes out and reaps with a sickle
    - The angel that appears after the son of man with a sickle reaps the grapes into the winepress of God's wrath

##### b. The Harvest is ripe for reaping (15b)

- i. The language lines up closest to Mark 4:26-29 - And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."
- ii. Jesus also commanded the believers to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers because the fields are white



- iii. This also lines up with the fact that the 144,000 mentioned earlier in this chapter are called the “first fruits” of God’s harvest.
    - iv. John 4:35-38 - Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”
  - c. The land is reaped (16)
    - i. The gospel goes forth and God is gathering his people
- B. The Angels Reap The Harvest (17-20)
  - 1. The Angels Prepare for the Harvest (17-18)
    - a. Another angel appears from the temple with a sickle (17)
    - b. Another Angel appears from the altar (18a)
    - c. The Angel from the altar calls for the harvest (18b)
  - 2. The Harvest of God’s Wrath (19-20)
    - a. The Angel Harvests for God’s Wrath (19)
      - i. This image is taken from Joel 3:13 - Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.
      - ii. Also Isa. 63:2-6 - Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me. I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”
    - b. The Land Flows With the Blood of the Harvest (20)
      - i. 1600 stadia is approximately the length of the land of Israel from Tyre to Egypt. (1664 stadia)

- ii. The blood as high as a horse's bridle for 200 miles (1600 stadia) can't be literal. The picture is that the harvest is gathered into the winepress of God's wrath and the result of the press is so massive that it fills the land.