

Revelation 14

Introduction:

This chapter is of great importance to our perspective of the events that will occur in the coming Tribulation. It is a contrast to the dark statements of the previous chapter.

In Revelation 13 we see the Beast reigning over the earth, but in this chapter we see the Lamb reigning. In Revelation 13 we see how the worshippers of the Beast receive his mark in their foreheads, but in this chapter we see the servants of God have the Father's Name written on theirs. There is also a contrast between the worshippers of the Beast and the followers of the Lamb – see vs 9-13.

This chapter is going to give us a preview of what's yet to come. Chapters 12-13 give us the characters of the Tribulation, but chapter 14 relates the contents of this period. We read of the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, the fall of Babylon, and the last great battle.

Finally, this chapter is notable for the mention of six angels who act as the instruments of God.

I. The Vision of Assurance – vs. 1-5

In what will be the darkest days of human history, the Lord reminds His people of His ultimate victory.

a. The Lamb on Mt Zion – vs. 1

This is a Millennial vision

John is given a preview of Christ reigning in the Millennium. See: Ps 2:6; Is. 24:23; Ps 48:2; Zech 14:4

This is an Earthly vision

We need to distinguish between the heavenly Mt Zion (Hebrews 12:22) and the earthly Mt Zion. This scene takes place on earth because in Rev 7:3 the Lord seals the 144,000 Jews for the duration of the Tribulation and they will enter the Millennial Kingdom.

b. The 144,000 Jews – vs. 1

These are the same 144,000 Jews who were sealed at the beginning of the Tribulation in Rev 7:3-8. Now at the beginning of the Millennium they are all still there – God takes care of His own! What an assurance!

c. The Heavenly song of the Redeemed – vs. 2-3

In praise of this promised victory and triumph, a heavenly choir breaks forth into song. In Rev 5:8, we see saints singing a 'new song'. (In Rev 5:9 it is the four beast and the 24 elders who sing that song.) Here is another group, no doubt the Tribulation saints in heaven. Rev 7:9-12.

We are told this song could only be learned by the 144,000. Only those who passed through the Tribulation could sing this song of victory. Rev 7:10

d. The Description of the 144,000 Jews – vs. 3-5

i. Their position – vs. 3

These are redeemed, saved Jews. They are God's remnant in this Tribulation period. – Romans 11:1-5.

ii. Their purity – vs. 4

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They are referred to as “virgins” which is a symbolic name of purity. Because the religious system of the Antichrist is called a ‘Harlot’ (Rev 17:5), this statement may imply that they remained separate in this area.

iii. Their purpose – vs. 4

They are the “followers of the Lamb” in this special period of history.

iv. Their precedence – vs. 4

They are called ‘firstfruits’ which implies more to come. At the second coming of Jesus Christ, Jews which have survived the Tribulation will turn to Christ and join this remnant. See: Romans 11:25-27; Zech 12:9-11; 13:1.

v. Their piety – vs. 5

See: Zech 3:1-5

II. The Vision of the Angel with the Everlasting Gospel – vs. 6-7

We read about the first of the six angels mentioned in this chapter.

a. The Messenger – vs. 6

The use of the word “another” takes us back to Rev 11:15, and shows that the details of chapters 12-14 do not give a ‘straight-line’ advancement of the narrative.

i. A miraculous contrast

In Rev 13:14, the False Prophet uses deceptive miracles to persuade men to turn to Satan. Here, God uses a supernatural method of persuading men to turn to Him.

ii. We are to preach the Gospel in this age

In this age of Grace, the Lord uses people and His churches to preach the Gospel – I Cor 1:21; Mark. 16:15

iii. Gospel preaching during the Tribulation

There are 3 ways the Lord has the Gospel preached in this dark period:

- The 144,000 Jewish witnesses – divinely protected
- The 2 witnesses – divinely returned
- The angel – divinely sent

The fact that God could use an angel to do this is suggested in Gal 1:8. God used angels before in giving His Word to men. – Heb 2:2

b. The Everlasting Gospel – vs. 6

This is the same Gospel that is found throughout the Bible – Salvation through the shedding of blood. It was first preached through demonstration when God covered Adam and Eve with the skins of innocent animals (Gen 3:21). It was preached with the sacrifices of animals. It is the message we preach today. It is the way of salvation in the Tribulation, Rev 7:4.

c. The Worldwide Proclamation of the Gospel – vs. 6

Even in a time of rebellion, the gracious Lord gives man an opportunity to be saved. Matthew 24:14.

d. The Call for Repentance and Faith – vs. 7

Some have supposed this ‘everlasting Gospel’ is some different Gospel, based upon the words of the angel here. But in reality, this is the same invitation we extend to the lost today – judgment is coming, turn from your sins, turn to God.

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III. The Visions of Doom – vs. 8-11

a. The Doom of Babylon – vs. 8

A actual account of this preview is found in Rev 17:16-18 where religious Babylon is destroyed by the Antichrist, and in Rev 18:2-24 where the city of Babylon is destroyed. See: Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:7-8

b. The Doom of those who worship the Beast – vs. 9-11

i. This doom is self-inflicted

Significantly, it comes after the proclamation of the Gospel. People will make a personal choice during the Tribulation, and it seems there will be 3 types of people:

Those who enter the Tribulation as Christ Rejectors

According to II Thess 2:10-12, these cannot be saved for they have made their choice.

Those who hear the Gospel, but decide or are intimidated into receiving the Antichrist.

It seems many will understand exactly what the Gospel is all about.

Those who hear the Gospel and trust Christ

This will most certainly be a fatal decision, but one of eternal joy. Rev 7:14; 13:10; 14:13; 20:4

ii. This doom is selective – vs.9

It only concerns those who cast their lot in with the Antichrist. Receiving the mark = rejecting Christ.

iii. This doom is severe – vs. 10

The 'wine of wrath' in the 'cup of indignation' and undiluted. Ps 75:8

iv. This doom is eternal suffering – vs. 10-11

Isaiah 34:8-10

Note: This verse is a great answer to those who teach the doctrine of annihilation – that the wicked dead are completely annihilated and are no more after the judgment – there is no such place as hell or an everlasting lake of fire.

But notice:

- Those referred to here, are clearly men and women.
- The smoke of their torment keeps on ascending FOREVER!
- They have NO REST, thus no annihilation!

IV. The Vision of Victory for the Saints – vs. 12-13

Again the Lord brings a word of comfort in the midst of some horrific scenes. Those who turn to Christ are contrasted to those who follow Antichrist.

a. The Patience of the Saints – vs. 12

This is a promise given to those who will be saved during the Tribulation period. The word 'patience' signifies enduring or waiting for the blessed reward of faith. Patience is a fruit of tribulation, Rom 5:3; James 1:3; cf. Rev 6:9-11; 13:10.

b. The "Saints" Defined – vs. 12

They keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ.

c. The Message of Blessing – vs. 13

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There is a special relief in martyrdom during the terrible 1,260 days when Antichrist shall reign in terror. The blessing comes in the form of REST.

d. The Works of the Tribulation Saints – vs. 13

These are said to follow them. That is, these dear believers will be rewarded for their faithful service to Christ. Cf. II Cor 5:10

V. The Vision of the Final Battle – vs. 14-20

a. The Ripeness of the Harvest – vs. 14-16

i. The vision of Christ – vs. 14-16

The Lord Jesus seated upon a cloud indicates this is at the point of the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Dan 7:13-14; Matt 24:30; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9-11; Rev 1:7

ii. The vision of the sickle

This is an instrument of harvest.

iii. The cry of the angel – vs. 15

The angel from the heavenly Temple implores Christ to exercise judgment.

iv. The readiness of the earth – vs. 15

“...the harvest of the earth is ripe...” The marginal reading of ‘ripe’ is ‘dried’, i.e. “over-ripe”. Sin has pushed God’s long-suffering beyond reasonable limits. Jer 51:33

Luke 10:2 “Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”

v. The reaping of the earth – vs. 16

What a solemn statement! “...the earth was reaped...”

Yet this is a law of God. Gal 6:7

b. The Reaping of the Harvest – vs. 17-19

i. The angel with a sickle – vs. 17

There are two possible scenarios here:

- The sickle judgment of Christ is a general judgment of sin in the earth, and the sickle judgment of the angel has to do particularly with the gathering of the nations of Armageddon. Matt 25:31-32
- There is but one sickle judgment – by Jesus Christ using His holy angels as instruments. Matt 13:30, 41

ii. The angel from the altar – vs. 18

This angel is the same one as in Rev 16:8

iii. The gathering of the nations – vs. 19

As part of the harvest of judgment, the angels will bring the nations (their armies) to one place:

- Armageddon means the “hill of Megiddo”, a location in Northern Israel overlooking the Valley of Jezreel.
- The Valley of Jehoshaphat – Joel 3:2, 12-16

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This is a location just outside of Jerusalem. These gathered armies will in fact cover the land of Palestine, but particularly direct their attention to besieging Jerusalem. Zech 14:1-3

c. The Results of the Harvest – vs. 20

i. The wine-press of God's wrath

This will occur at the second coming of Christ

See: Is 63:3; Rev 19:15, 17-19, 21

ii. The volume of human blood

Many have scoffed at the suggestion of blood running up to 2 meters deep for a length of 320 km.

During the violent overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD, Josephus the Jewish historian tells how the dead made the whole city run down with blood to such a degree that the fires of many of the houses were quenched by it.

- The Bible indicates millions of soldiers will be involved in this final battle. Joel 3:14
- The Bible says it will be a devastating battle. Is 34:1-8