

The Preaching of God's Gospel

Revelation 14:1-20

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: This chapter concludes the parenthesis begun in chapter 12. These 3 chapters (12, 13, & 14) are not written chronologically, but prepare for the series of judgments that resume in chapter 15. Someone has said, "The prophecy of chapter 14 would provide a soothing balm for the weary & afflicted believer. The chapter presents a triumphant & joyous people worshipping the God Who redeemed them. It also pictures the judgment that God would inevitably inflict upon the enemy. The assurance that the upright would eventually have dominion would be a source of renewed trust & comfort" (Barrett). Note with me today the Messengers, the Message, the Missing, & the Mission of God's gospel.

I. The **Messengers** of this Gospel (:1-6)

A. The martyred **saints** of the Tribulation (:2-7).

1. Their voice (:2) - like the sound of many waters, a great thunder, & many harps.
2. Their victory (:3) - a new song (cf. 7:10).
 - a. A song of redemption - see 5:9-10, "*by Thy blood.*"
 - b. "The music of heaven, though elevated & joyous, is sweet & harmonious; & perhaps one of the best representations of heaven on earth, is the effect produced on the soul by strains of sweet & solemn music" (Barnes).

B. The protected **Jews** through the Tribulation (:1, 3-5)

1. Their **position** (:1) - "*on the mount Sion*" - Jerusalem, cf. Hebrews 12:22-24.
 - a. Their *source* - first seen in 7:4-8 at the beginning of the Great Tribulation.
 - b. Their *safety* - now seen preserved & standing triumphantly with Christ.
 - c. Their *song* - unique to them alone, no one else able to understand it.
2. Their **protection** (:1) - "*Father's name written in their foreheads*" - their seal.
 - a. This seal speaks of *possession* (their identity).
 - b. This seal speaks of *protection* (their security).
 - c. This seal speaks of *purpose* (their ministry).
3. Their **perfection** (purity) (:4-5).
 - a. A *love* for the Lamb - "*they are virgins.*"
 - (1) A necessary abstinence from marriage because of their ministry & hardship.
 - (2) Chaste & pure in general; devoted to Christ, separated from idolatry.
 - b. A *loyalty* to the Lamb - "*which follow the Lamb.*"
 - (1) Wherever Christ goes, they go.
 - (2) "They are His disciples; they imitate His example; they obey His instructions; they yield to His laws; they receive Him as their Counselor & their Guide" (Barnes).
 - c. A *likeness* of the Lamb:
 - (1) "*No guile*" (*pseudos*) - cf. I Peter 2:22 -- complete truthfulness.
 - (2) "*Without fault*" cf. I Peter 1:19, "*without blemish*" -- Sacrifice & Standing.
"How important this makes the life & testimony of any believer who seeks to emulate these who in this most trying time are found in no compromise with error & no defilement of their purity" (Walvoord).

How about your testimony in the world today? Do you have a love for the Lord? Do you have a loyalty to the Lord? Do you have a likeness of the Lord? How is this possible, you ask? Only by God's grace, as you consider Noah in Genesis 6:8-9 & Paul in I Corinthians 15:10.

C. The flying **angel** in the heavens (:6)

1. In this Church Age: preaching the gospel has been the "unique privilege & responsibility of Christian believers" (H. Morris). [Illustrate: Preaching to Cornelius in Acts 10.]
2. At the close of the Tribulation: "Mid-heaven is (the angel's) pulpit, & all nations, tribes,

tongues, & peoples are (his) auditors. Hell may slay, imprison, & silence every human witness for God, but cannot chain the proclamation of His truth. God's Word cannot be bound. It liveth & abideth forever. It must be heard" (Seiss).

II. The Message of this Gospel (:6-7)

A. Defining of this "everlasting gospel" >

1. "Gospel"

- a. The word "gospel" appears 101 times in Scripture; first in Matthew 4:23; last time here.
- b. The central occurrence is found in I Corinthians 15:1-4.
- c. Compare other 'titles': "gospel of the kingdom", "glorious gospel", "gospel of salvation."

2. "Everlasting" - From Barnes:

- a. "Its great truths have always existed, or it is conformed to eternal truth."
- b. "It will remain forever unchanged."
- c. "Its effect will be everlasting - in the redemption of the soul & the joys of heaven."

It is "permanently valid... & universally applicable" (L. Morris). [cf. "different Gospel"?]

B. Declaring of this "everlasting gospel" >

[Note: God's last call of grace to a world that persists in rejecting Him & that openly defines Him" (Ryrie).]

1. "Fear God" - One's **attitude** towards God (an *inward* response).

- a. This attitude of fear is reverence for God, a willingness to honor & obey Him.
- b. The absence of fear is seen in the lives of unbelievers - cf. Romans 3:18.

2. Glorify God - One's **acknowledgment** of God (an *outward* response).

- a. Give glory: to magnify, extol, praise, ascribe honor.
- b. Give recognition of His attributes & actions: as Creator & Judge.

3. Worship God - One's **adoration** for God (an *upward* response).

- a. Consider the need of praise & thanksgiving in our hearts & by our hands.
- b. Contrast those who worship antichrist.

"If a man heeds this message, he will have to refuse to receive the mark of the beast, which will show clearly as possible a heart change. In those days people will not risk their lives at the hands of the beast for a mere outward profession of salvation" (Ryrie).

Note: "The hour of His judgment is come." This everlasting gospel that will be preached during the closing days of the Tribulation is needed today. The Bible declares in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

III The Missing of this Gospel (:8-11 & verses 14-20)

A. The prophecy of God's wrath (:8) cf. Jeremiah 51:7-8.

1. The **declaration** of Babylon's doom. [Note: First mention of *Babylon* in Revelation.]

- a. "*Babylon*" may refer to the literal city, a religious system, or a political system. Here it probably refers to the literal city.
- b. The aorist (past) tense is used & repeated, denoting an imminent & certain fall.

2. The **determination** of Babylon's doom.

- a. Because of her *immorality* - "The word *fornication* here is used to denote spiritual uncleanness; that is, heathen & superstitious rites & observances. The term is often used in the Scriptures as applicable to idolatry & superstition" (Barnes).
- b. Because of her *infection* - "The influence of Babylon, both ancient & future, is age-long & worldwide; its system of evolutionary pantheistic humanism has damned unnumbered souls through the centuries" (H. Morris).

B. The punishment of God's Wrath (:9-11)

1. The **recipients** of His wrath (:9-10).

- a. Those who *worship* the beast - cf. 13:16-18.

- b. Those who *drink* of Babylon's cup - 14:8 (will also drink the cup of God's wrath).
2. The **results** of His wrath (:10-11).
- a. Eternal *fire* - the lake of fire; cf. 20:10 & Matthew 25:41.
 - b. Eternal *fatigue* ("*no rest*") - no sleep or relief.

"The modern vogue of dispensing with hell has no counterpart in Revelation. John is quite sure that the consequences of sin follow sinners into the life to come. Here on earth they may rejoice over their misdeeds, there they will suffer for them" (L. Morris).

Note Christ's preaching on "*hell*" (11 of 12 references to "*hell*" are by Him; 12 of 19 references to "*hell-fire*" are by Him).

C. The pictures of God's Wrath (:10 & verses 14-20)

1. As **unmixed wine** in a cup (:10).
 - a. "*Unmixed*" - undiluted; untempered by God's grace & mercy; judgment is severe.
 - b. Compare Psalm 75:7-8 & Jeremiah 25:15-17.
2. As a **harvest** (:14-16).
 - a. The Judge - Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Upon a "*white cloud*" - speaks of His glory & His purity.
 - (2) "*Golden crown*" - absolute sovereignty (cf. His former crown of thorns at His humiliation; His diadem of 19:12; & this garland [stephanos] of victory, won in conflict).
 - (3) "*Sharp sickle*" - His scepter, a reaping hook (swift & decisive judgment)
 - b. The Judgment.
 - (1) Compare Joel 3:13 - reference to Battle of Armageddon & see Jeremiah 51:33.
 - (2) Consider that the harvest is "ripe" - dried, 'overripe rottenness' - "The fact that God withholds judgment until they are overripe is a demonstration of His longsuffering & the inexcusable nature of their sin" (Barrett).
3. As a **winepress** (:17-20).
 - a. Its *comparison*.
 - (1) Compare Isaiah 63:2-4; Lamentations 1:15 & Joel 3:13.
 - (2) "*Fully ripe*" - "Sinners have added iniquity to iniquity until all hope is gone" (Barnes).
 - b. Its *comprehension*.
 - (1) The distance - 1600 furlongs is about 180 miles; Jordan River Valley of Palestine.
 - (2) The description - blood up to the horses' bridles or a liberal spattering of blood.

See more details of the battle of Armageddon in chapters 16 & 19. ["Battle Hymn of the Republic"]

IV. The **Mission** of this Gospel (:12-13)

A. There is reassurance to the saints (:12)

1. Fulfilled **promises**.
 - a. "The early Christians had been exhorted to patience & long-suffering, in confidence that God would eventually reward their faithfulness & judge their persecutors (Mt. 5:10-12; Rom. 12:19; II Thess. 1:6-8; & Rev. 6:9-11).
 - b. "*Here*" - The promises are accomplished, their patience is justified.
2. Faithful **persons**.
 - a. "Those who exercise that '*patience*' in these long-continued persecutions & trials will show that they belong to those who keep the commandments of God, & are His true children" (Barnes).
 - b. "Those who truly have the saving faith of the Lord Jesus love His commandments (I John 5:3-5)...A living faith is an obedient faith & a long-suffering faith, destined finally for satisfaction & reward" (H. Morris).

B. There is rest for the saints (:13)

This is the 2nd of 7 "beatitudes" in Revelation (1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 & 22:14).

1. "*Rest from their labors.*"

- a. Because of salvation rest (Matthew 11:28), there is a future rest (Hebrews 4:9).
 - b. "Labours" - toil, hard & wearisome.
2. *"Their works do follow them."*
- a. Results of one's labor (testimony, witness, preaching, tracts) may well bring forth fruit after one is gone
 - b. "This is all that can follow a man to eternity. He can take with him none of his goal, his lands, his raiment; none of the honors of this life; none of the means of sensual gratification. All that will go with him will be his character, & the results of his conduct here, & in this respect, eternity will be but a prolongation of the present life" (Barnes).

Conclusion: Have you come to Christ for that rest of salvation? Are you assured of a future rest in heaven? Are you identified as one having a living faith, evidenced by obedience to God & His Word? Are you prepared to die? All mankind, including believers, have an apprehension (fear) of death. But we all have an appointment with death, if the Lord tarries His coming. And for all, there is an appearance after death: believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, while the unsaved will stand before God's White Throne Judgment. How about you here today? Are you ready to meet God? Amos told Israel, *"Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel"* (Amos 4:12). The only way to be prepared to meet God is to meet first His Son at the cross of Calvary. The Lamb of God shed His blood for you & me. Have you accepted Him as your Savior?

This chapter gives a frightful picture of the coming wrath of God. Are we doing our part to warn others about this coming day? Are we burdened for the lost who are destined for that eternal fire & eternal fatigue? Will we be a faithful messenger of God's gospel, proclaiming to a lost & dying world, *"Be ye reconciled to God"* (I Corinthians 5:20)?