

Don't Take That Mark

Revelation 14 – June 27, 2021

“Don't Take That Mark” is an ominous title for this message but fits the context of this passage. Remember, Revelation 14 sits right in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period. Up to this point, many things have happened that has shaken the world to the core. There are still many more things that will occur. In our immediate context, the False Prophet is commanding everyone to take the mark of the beast. This mark shows allegiance to the Antichrist and solidarity with his war against the Lamb.

God now sends three angels to warn every one living to **NOT** take the mark.

Let's review so we can better understand the context of Revelation 14.

1. After the signing of the covenant (the one mentioned in Daniel 9:27 made with Israel and many) the Tribulation Period begins.
2. In Chapter 6, a **world leader** is pictured luring the world into a false sense of peace. But that does not last long. Soon a **global war** breaks out. This is followed by **famine** and **death**. Tragically, one-fourth of the earth's population is wiped out in this judgment. (This is known as the Seal judgments.)

The world's hatred of believers increases and **martyrdom** spreads.

This period ends with **physical disturbances** appearing globally.

3. At this point, the book of Revelation takes a brief pause. Chapter 7 describes the appearance of **144,000 Jewish witnesses** who are sealed by God and sent out into the world to share the gospel. They will be seen again in Chapter 14.
4. Following this, the seventh seal is opened and **silence sweeps heaven for a half hour**. The next series of judgments (called the trumpet judgments) are about to be poured out.

The Trumpet judgments bring a series of ecological and cosmic disasters on earth. **One third of the trees**, one third of the **seas**, one third of the **rivers**, and one third of the **light** (Sun, moon and stars) are afflicted. During this time, **painful sores** break out on men and torment them for

nine months. This ends with **another third of the earth's population perishing.**

By now, ½ of the world's population has perished. Terror, anger, and confusion fill those that remain. Again, at this point, the book of Revelation pauses to reveal more detail.



1. In Chapter 10, a **mighty angel** appears with a little book and makes an oath . . .

“by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, **that there should be time no longer: . . . the mystery of God should be finished, as he (God) hath declared to his servants the prophets.**”

2. In Chapter 11, we are met with another sight. **Two witnesses** appear in Jerusalem for 1260 days testifying of God.

This chapter ends with another heavenly scene where the angel announces, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” – Rev. 11:15-19

3. In Chapter 12 we find the **sweeping history of Israel** and the travail of the nation as she is assigned the task of bringing the Messiah into the world. Satan is pictured as tormenting the nation and seeking to destroy her and her Child. Israel finally gives birth to the Child and at the end of days **Israel flees** into the wilderness for 1260 days (3½-years).
4. In Chapter 13 we find the wounding and reviving of **the Antichrist**, the appearance of a **False Prophet** who mandates that the world worships the beast and **takes his mark** as a sign of allegiance and worship.



WHAT IS TO COME:

1. A summary of what lies ahead.

Chapter 16 lists the final bowl judgments: **Sores, Seas, Rivers, Heat, Darkness, Armageddon, Worldwide Destruction.**

While these judgments unfold, we will see

- a. The rise and demise of **religious Babylon** (chapter 17)
- b. The rise and demise of **political and commercial Babylon** (Chapter 18) and
- c. The **Second Coming of Christ** (Chapters 19).



2. Again, that ominous title “Don’t Take That Mark” sits right in the middle of all these events.

Let me read Revelation 14:9-11

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

Why? What is happening here?

As stated before, we will see five features appearing in this passage. (1) **Hope**, (2) **Three warnings**, (3) **A Promised Blessing**, (4) **The Coming Reaping** and (5) **the Final Staging** for the Bowl Judgements.

Revelation 14 & 15

144,000 Witnesses Revelation 7:1-8 & 14:1-5



HOPE

The way you interpret the first five verses of chapter 14 is key to understanding the purpose behind this revelation.

There are five different views. I have published them online in my notes. Today we will look at the one I believe to be the correct view. It is also the most popular one.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” – Rev. 14:1.

1. This group of 144,000 men is the same group of Jewish believers that were sealed and protected by God in chapter 7. They are appointed by God to evangelize the world throughout the tribulation period.

Note in Revelation 7 they were sealed after the seal judgments and before the Trumpet judgments began.

Rev. 7:3 - “Saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’”

The sealing protected this group of men from death, enabling them to evangelize the earth.

2. In Revelation 14:1, they are prophetically seen as standing triumphantly with their Lamb at the end of the Tribulation. They are seen intact and preserved by God through the most horrible time in history.
3. They are identified as belonging to the Father and the Son, by having the Father's name written on their foreheads.

Triumphal View of the End of the Tribulation

1. This vision pictures the triumphal end of the tribulation period. It is revealed before the bowl judgments are poured out in order to encourage the believers to be faithful to the end.

“These were redeemed from among men, **being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb**” – Revelation 14:4

2. The 144,000 are described as **“the firstfruits.”** The firstfruits of what? I believe they are the firstfruits of those who will enter the Millennial kingdom.

Some say they are the firstfruits of Jews redeemed after the rapture of the church. This view does not take into account Revelation 7:3 where their sealing takes place at least one year into the tribulation period (after the seal judgments and before the trumpet judgments). To hold this view would mean the unlikely scenario that no one of Jewish descent turned to Christ until the seal judgments were finished.

A Voice from Heaven – Revelation 14:2-3

“And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: ³ And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

John now directs our attention to heaven where he hears a voice of many waters. . .of great thunder. the voice of harpers . . . and they sung.

It is a sound of joy when all of heaven will resound with loud praise when Christ returns to earth in triumph to establish His earthly kingdom.

A new song [vs. 3]

- This song began in Rev. 5:9-10 with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders.
- Shortly afterwards, the angels joined in [5:11-12] and all living creatures [5:13].
- Next the tribulation martyrs joined this musical crescendo [7:9-10] and
- now in this vision [Rev. 14:3], the 144,000 join this heavenly praise at the end of the tribulation period.
- The song will be new in respect to the 144,000 for it will be unique to them because “no man can learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand.” Why the song is restricted to the 144,000 is not stated.

This is hope. They were persevered. They are (or will be) rewarded. The Millennial Kingdom is real. Their word is true.

The Godly Characteristics of the 144,000

- 1. They Remained Pure** – *“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins”* – Rev.14:4a

In a time of unrestrained sin and sexual perversion, these chosen servants of God will keep themselves pure and undefiled with women [1 Thess. 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:13, 18]. They are spiritually pure because they are not part of Satan’s world system. Their lives shine forth as testimonies of purity against the backdrop of grossly, immoral, and sexual perversion.

- 2. They Remained Devoted** [14:4b] – *“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”*

Another characteristic of the 144,000 is that they are loyal to the Lamb, no matter what the cost. Jesus still seeks individuals that are unreservedly, devoted to Him in all areas of their lives [Matt. 16:24; John 10:27].

- 3. They were protected as promised** [14:4c] – *“These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”*

Although God has purchased all believers, these 144,000 Jewish men have been redeemed and chosen for a specific purpose. **Hand chosen by God these Jewish men were to proclaim the gospel to the lost souls of the**

tribulation period. They are the firstfruits of Israel enter the Millennial Kingdom; thus, foreshadowing Israel's salvation as a nation when Christ returns at the end of the tribulation [Zech. 12:10].

4. Their Word Is Truthful [14:5a]– “And in their mouth was found no guile”

These 144,000 will not propagate Satan's lies but will only speak God's truth [Zeph. 3:13]. They will not support the “false wonders” [13:13] nor the deception of wickedness promoted by Antichrist and his False Prophet. Without hesitation, the 144,000 will accurately proclaim God's word.

5. Their Intend Is Blameless [14:5b] – “for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

Being without guile does not mean sinless [Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:10-12; 1 John 1:8-10], but the 144,000 will be set apart in their service to the Lamb. Since they lead lives of purity, devotion, singleness of purpose and truthfulness, they will be blameless in God's sight. They will live lives above reproach that will bring forth the greatest spiritual revival the world has ever seen.

HOPE

THREE WARNINGS

John now directs our attention to three angels with a proclamation for all those on earth.

1. Receive the Everlasting Gospel

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” – Rev. 14:6-7.

a. Don't take the Mark, rather receive the everlasting gospel.

This angel appears in mid heaven with a loud voice where everyone can see and hear the gospel being preached throughout the world. The angel is high enough in the heavens that Satan and his demons cannot

reach him, since their demonic activities have now been restricted to earth [Rev. 12:12].

- b. Although millions have been saved through the preaching of the two witnesses and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, many others have not made a decision.
- c. God shows his incredible grace on mankind [Matt. 24:14] by offering them another opportunity to repent before the unleashing of the final and terrifying bowl judgments. The angel appeals to sinners to turn to the Creator because creation declares God's power and glory and warns them that this same Creator will also be their Judge.
- d. Therefore, fear and worship Him instead of the Antichrist. This gospel is everlasting because it brings eternal life to those who receive it.

Receive the Everlasting Gospel

2. Remember, this World's System will be Destroyed.

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” – Rev. 14:8.

- a. Unlike the first angel who came before him, this second angel pronounces the bad news of judgment instead of the good news of salvation. This judgment is on Babylon, the Antichrist's mighty empire – the most powerful empire in history – will come to a destructive end.
- b. Babylon in scripture is the symbol of all that is evil and rebellious against God. This end time Babylon [comprised of political, economic, and religious ties] will seduce the world into sexual perversion and spiritual immorality.
- c. Her judgment is certain for even though the angel is speaking of Babylon's future judgment [see Rev. 17 & 18], it can be spoken of as if Babylon's destruction has already taken place.

Receive the Everlasting Gospel Remember, this World's System will be Destroyed.

3. Return to God, Don't Take That Mark

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” – Rev. 14:9-11.

This angel will deliver his message **loud** and clear – do not give homage to the beast or his image and do not receive the mark of the beast. Disobedience of the angel's message will result in God's undiluted wrath and judgment.

Their fate will be unending damnation in the lake of fire. Not only will they have no rest to their torment but to add to their shame and humiliation, they will be tormented in the presence of the Lamb and His holy angels [Ps. 139:7-8; Matt. 10:28].

**Receive the Everlasting Gospel
Remember, this World's System will be Destroyed.
Return to God, Don't Take That Mark**

HOPE

THREE WARNINGS

BE PATIENT: THERE IS A PROMISED BLESSING

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.’”

1. Here again God gives encouragement to his followers, in the midst of judgments pronounced on an unbelieving world. This is the most startling blessing in all of Scripture, and this is the second beatitude of seven in Revelation [cf. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14].
2. This introduces one of the most important doctrines in Scripture.
 - a. How will these saints be able to persevere in such a time as this?

b. Why are the dead in the Lord considered blessed?

The Scripture tell us in two ways – in how they lived and in how they died.

How they lived [v. 12]

The perseverance of the saints will be manifested in their obedience to God's commandments. No group of believers has nor will ever face the strong assaults on their faith like the Tribulation saints.

They will endure the most intense time of persecution in human history. God will intervene by shortening the days [Matt. 24:21-22]. Even in the face of deprivation and certain death, their genuine saving faith will not waiver in their obedience to God and His word.

How they died [v. 13]

Here God pronounces a blessing on the dead. How can this be?

This is the tenth time that John is told to write something down; it is that important. The voice tells John that those who have died and those who will henceforth die will be blessed. How are they blessed?

a. The promise of rest from their labors [v. 13b]

These tribulations saints will experience excruciating hardships and sorrow – seeing the torment and death of their loved ones, struggling daily to eat and survive, living as fugitives because they have not taken the mark, etc. Death will come as a welcome relief from the struggles and fears of the tribulation period. They gladly die for Christ and experience His promised rest [Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 21:4] than to live for the Antichrist and experience a life of torment [no rest] in the lake of fire [Rev. 14: 11; 20:15].

b. The promise their works will follow them [v. 13c]

These believers are given a promise by the Spirit. When these loyal followers of Christ die and go to heaven, their diligent labor will follow them. God will reward believers in heaven for their earthly service [Heb. 6:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8].

HOPE THREE WARNINGS BE PATIENT: THERE IS A PROMISED BLESSING

THE COMING REAPING

The Reaper: [14:14, 16]

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. . . . And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

After the brief pause to encourage the faithful in the Lord [vs. 12-13], the theme of divine wrath resumes in verses 14-20. These pronouncements describe God’s righteous judgments in the imagery of a reaper harvesting a grain harvest and a wine harvest [cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Joel 3:12-13].

This passage is in fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel [Dan. 7:13-14] of Christ coming to establish His kingdom. The term “the son of man” was Christ’s favorite title of Himself during His incarnation.

The brilliant, white cloud represents His glory and majesty [Rev. 1:7] and the crown on His head represents Him coming as a victorious conqueror over His enemies [Matt. 24:30]. Christ, the reaper, will have a sharp sickle in His hand. Jesus will use this sickle to mow down His enemies.

What a tragic and sobering act as the Son of man executes divine judgment on the earth. This reaping is carried out in detail in the bowl judgments of chapter 16. These terrifying bowl judgments mark the first phase in the final reaping of the earth.

THE REAPING ANGELS

The Fourth Angel [v. 15]

“And another angel came out of the temple . . . for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

The first three angels proclaimed that judgment was coming. This fourth angel now brings the command to execute these judgments.

This angel comes from God’s throne and delivers the message from God the Father to God the Son that it is now time for judgment. God’s wrath is full. There is no more grace; there is no more delay for the earth is ripe [the idea of overripe or rotten] for judgment [Matt. 13:40-43].

The Fifth Angel: [v. 17]

“And another angel **came out of the temple** which is in heaven . . . having a sharp sickle. . .”

This [fifth] angel that came out of the temple of heaven that had a sharp sickle. Angels have been used in Revelation to summon the four horsemen, sound the seven trumpets, defeat Satan and his demons, etc. Therefore, it is of no surprise that angels will assist the Son of Man in pouring out the bowl judgments on earth.

The Sixth Angel [v. 18]

“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.’”

As John watches, another angel [the sixth angel] appears on the scene. **He is designated as the angel “which had power over fire.”**

This designation is, no doubt, connected to the fact that he “came out from the altar” [Rev. 8:3-5]. Unlike the angel in v. 17 that comes from the throne of God, but from the altar associated in heaven with the prayers of the saints. In answer to the saints’ prayers, the time of the reaping of God’s judgment has come.

The sixth angel is told to thrust in his sickle. The word “ripe” here refers to something fully ripe and in its prime; therefore, the unregenerated people of the earth are described as clusters of grapes, ready to be cut down by the angel’s sickle.

The Reaping Begins [vs. 19-20]

“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth . . . and blood came out of the winepress.”

When the angel put forth his sickle, the enemies of God who survived the seven bowl judgments will not escape the wrath of God in this judgment. They will meet their end outside Jerusalem for God will protect His holy city from the carnage of the battle of Armageddon [about 60 miles north of Jerusalem]. There will be millions of people from all nations that gather in the valley of Armageddon to fight each other but then will turn and unite to

fight against the army of God. This will not be a battle but rather a bloody slaughter [14:20] for Jesus Christ will defeat the armies of the world by the power of His word [Rev. 19:11-21].

Don't miss the point of this passage.

Those who heed the warnings will find everlasting life and eternal blessing.

Those who do not heed to the repeated warnings of God to repent and turn to The Lamb will face a terrifying future on earth and a more devastating future of eternal punishment in the lake of fire. Those who face Christ as their Judge instead of their Lamb will learn firsthand that "it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" [Heb. 10:31].

If only they would heed to David's admonition in Psalm 2:12: Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little [soon kindled]. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.