

>>>>>> Lesson 22 <<<<<<<

- 1) Chapter 14 marks the changing of John’s visions back to what God is going to do and away from what Satan and his crew are doing.
- 2) There are three visions.
- 3) We begin with verses 1 thru 5, the first of the three, in which we see the return of Christ and the 144,000 Jewish evangelists appearing with him on Mount Zion

Rev 14:1-5 (NIV)

- 4) John opens his description of this vision with Christ, the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion.
- 5) Some view this passage as a vision of heaven.
- 6) Instead, I must agree with those who put forth that this passage describes the return of Christ to the earthly Mount Zion.
- 7) The whole point would be lost if Mount Zion refers to heaven, because that would mean that the one hundred and forty-four thousand had died.
- 8) In which case, their sealing with the mark of God (7:3-4; cf. 9:4) would be rendered meaningless.
- 9) John goes on to describe a combined worship scene – combined in that the heavenly chorus was joined by the 144,000 on Mount Zion singing a new song that only they on the earth could know.
- 10) In the last part of verse 3 and verses 4 and 5, John paints a picture of the 144,000.
 - a) They are redeemed from the earth and purchased from among men.
 - b) This statement actually applies to all of us but, what makes these 144,000 different are several things:
 - i) The tribulation – a time of exceeding sexual immorality, and corruption.
 - (1) Also a time that many would be falling away because of the massive persecution we discussed last time.
 - ii) In all that, these “followed the Lamb wherever He goes” indicating an unwavering dedication to Christ.
 - iii) Because they were sealed with the seal of God and Christ, they could not be harmed.
 - iv) No lie was found in them, and they were blameless means simply that they led absolutely exemplary lives.
 - v) Finally, they were “offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb”
 - vi) This is most significant.

The 144,000, like the firstfruits offering, will be set apart for divine service. As previously noted, the number 144,000 does not symbolize all the Tribulation saints, but rather designates a group of Jewish evangelists. The purpose of their lives will

be to serve the Lord by proclaiming the gospel to the lost, perishing, Christ-rejecting world.

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- 1) Now, we move to the second of the three visions.
- 2) Laid out in verses 6 thru 12 is an appeal, the judgment, and a warning to unbelievers being proclaimed by three angels.
- 3) The first angel proclaims the gospel – the good news that there is still a chance for “those who live on the earth” to repent.
- 4) The second angel pronounces judgment.
- 5) The third angel has a dire warning which is pointed at anyone who worships the beast and his image.
- 6) Another way of looking at this vision is that it contrasts the destinies of believers with that of unbelievers.

Rev 14:6-7 (NIV)

- 7) The angel is flying in midair – basically, he is in a place where his message can be heard by all the peoples of the earth.
- 8) Here, dealing with the mechanism is not important and, frankly is difficult to even imagine but, we know that all things – especially at this time – are under God’s control.
- 9) The crucial point here is that the angel’s message.
- 10) He is saying that there is still time for “those who live on the earth” to repent and start giving glory to the one and only true God.
 - a) Not Satan, the Antichrist, or the false prophet – only God

Rev 14:8 (NIV)

- 1) As I am sure you recall, in the Old Testament, Babylon was the name of both an evil city and an immoral empire.
- 2) It was a world center for idol worship.
- 3) As with the false prophet and the statue of the Antichrist, Nebuchadnezzar built a great statue to himself and had required everyone to worship it.
- 4) Just like Nebuchadnezzar they (the antichrist and false prophet) will find themselves judged by God.
- 5) Here we have another of those things that John’s original readers would without doubt associated with their current situation.
- 6) Just as Babylon had been Judah's worst enemy, the Roman Empire was the worst enemy of the early Christians and will remain so until 300 ce when Constantine makes Christianity the religion of the empire.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- 7) The angel's words here are a prediction: the actual fall of the city will not occur until the judgment of the last bowl (16:19).
- 8) When we place this in context and look at this from the perspective of the future actual hearers of the angel's pronouncement, it will come as a shock to that unbelieving world.
- 9) That the Antichrist's mighty empire, the most powerful in human history, could be destroyed will be inconceivable to his followers.
- 10) Babylon in this passage refers not just to the city, but, as we will see, it refers to the Antichrist's worldwide political, economic, and religious empire.
- 1) On to the third and final angel.

Rev 14:9-13 (NIV)

- 2) The first verses of this passage is a horrific if not straightforward statement of the fate of those who, fail to remain faithful to God and Christ and who instead receive the mark of the beast and worship him.
- 3) The description is not just of the torment but in general what God's final wrath for anyone who deserves it will be like.
- 4) The angel here has another sobering thought – hell is forever!
- 5) If one considers the possibility that this phrase “the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever” means that the smoke caused by their torment rises is really frightening.
- 6) Verse 11 also removes any doubt regarding what God considers bad here.
 - a) In verse one, those who worship... **and** receive the mark.
 - b) Lest we think we can skate by and just get the mark but not actually do the worship, the phrase here removes any doubt – worships... or receives the mark!
- 7) In contrast to the description of the fate of the unbeliever, verses 12 and 13 state the reward of the faithful.
- 8) I really like the New Living Translation of the last statement of this section of verses:

Rev 14:12-13 (NIV)

- 9) What else does one need to say – that really brings our requirements and rewards into focus.

Rev 14:14-16 (NIV)

- 1) There has been debate regarding the identity of the person on the white cloud, however, most commentators agree that it is Christ.
- 2) In the Greek, His crown in this case is not a regal or royal crown but a victor's crown.
- 3) He is waiting for the appointed time which is then heralded by another angel coming out from the temple.
- 4) Lest there be any doubt, Christ is not being ordered by this angel.

Revelation – NOTES – 2021

- a) As you recall, Christ himself said that God is the decider of the when the end of time and the judgment will take place – only he knows!
- b) In that regard the angel is merely bringing the signal that God has decided.
- 5) Without any further detail, the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.
- 6) There is some debate about who was being harvested — God's people, or the sinners.
- 7) Some scholars have suggested that 14:14-16 pictures the harvesting of God's people, while 14:17-18 which we will get to momentarily, pictures the harvest of sinners.
- 8) Most likely, however, 14:14-16 indicates the harvest of all people.
- 9) Again, this is a general picture of the final judgment, with the elect being taken to heaven and the unbelievers being sent to eternal punishment, as recorded in the following verses.

Rev 14:17-20 (NIV)

- 1) Here we see two more angels – one with a sickle to reap the grapes (sinners) of the earth.
- 2) The second from within the temple with fire.
- 3) Gathering of the grapes here represents gathering of the sinners and unrepentant from the earth to meet God's final wrath.
- 4) Here again, I have to turn to MacArthur. He appears to have a clear explanation of the connection of the fire, altar, and this sixth angel.

“That the angel had power over the altar's fire (the definite article is present in the Greek text, which literally reads "the fire") indicates that he had been ministering at the heavenly counterpart to the earthly incense altar. Unlike the angel in verse 17, this angel does not come from the throne of God, but from the altar associated with the prayers of the saints. His appearance means that the time had come for those prayers to be answered. The time had come for God to take fire associated with intercession and use it for the destruction of His enemies and the enemies of His people.”

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- 5) I think it is obvious that we are now moving swiftly to the final scenes of the Tribulation.
- 6) One point here – these events depicted in these last verses are not happening at this point. They are symbolic of future events as we will see in the next 4 chapters.