

Revelation 14 (NASB)

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion

*14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. 3 And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.*

As Revelation 14 begins we are back on earth. The 144,000 are the Jews from Revelation 7:4. Revelation 7:4 says "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." We have reached the halfway point or the last 3.5 years. This 144,000 Jews is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 3:17 which says "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." The 144,000 Jews are standing with the Lamb, Jesus. This depicts the Jews being preserved through trials just as Paul describe in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. These 144,000 Jews were saved from destruction just as Lot, Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), Azariah (Abednego), Isaac, David, Noah, Jonah, Paul, Rahab, the Nation of Israel from the plagues, etc.

Verse 1 fulfills the prophecies of Isaiah 23:23, Joel 2:32, Obadiah 1:17 and Micah 4:7 because Jesus will be standing on Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion is a mountain/hill just outside a wall of Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 1:14-15 says "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name." These verses are similar to Revelation 14:1 because there is only one name that you can be claimed by, the name of Jesus. The voice in verse 2 is that of God/Jesus. In Revelation 1:15 and 4:5 as well as Ezekiel 43:2 refer to His voice as being like many waters. We see harpists like we saw in Revelation 5:8 which were the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders.

Read these verses again, they teach us that praise and prayer are taking place on earth but this praise and prayer is heard in front of the Throne of God. Only these 144,000, out of the millions of redeemed souls, learn this song. Henry Morris says that this is because they are the most persecuted people of all time.

14:4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

The word for virgin is 'parthenos' and can refer to males or females but in this verse it refers only to males that have not defiled themselves with women. These 144,000 are Jews but also they are believers. They are praised for remaining virgins because the only follow the Lamb. That they are the "firstfruits" shows that they will be first to be saved after the Rapture. If they are the first to be saved, the Rapture had to have already taken place.

Zephaniah 3:13 says ""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." This prophecy is fulfilled verse 14:5 says "No lie was found in their mouth". This verse compares with our Christian calling because we are to speak the truth without shame. See Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 4:24-25, 2 Timothy 2:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:2. Verse 5 also says "they are blameless".

Blameless does not mean sinless. See 1 Kings 8:46, Job 14:15-16, Psalm 143:2, Proverbs 20:9, Ecclesiastes 7:30 and 1 John 1:8 and 10.

Vision of the Angel with the Gospel

14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters."

Angels appears in every chapter of Revelation from 4 through 14. The phrase "midst of heaven" or "midheaven" is the Greek word 'mesouranema' and refers to the point in the sky where the sun reaches its apex or highest point. Satan and his demons no longer have access to heaven. See the Good news of Jesus Christ/salvation. It is another period of Grace. God does not want anyone to perish. The outcome of all these chance and all of this preaching was that still all of the people did not repent. Revelation 9:20-21 says that they refused to repent. Revelation 16:9 and 11 say that they blasphemed or cursed God. The Gospel is the Good News. See Matthew 4:23 (Gospel of the Kingdom), Mark 1:1 (Good News of Jesus), Mark 1:14 (Good News of God), Acts 20:24 (Good News of God's grace and love), 2 Corinthians 4:4 (ESV or NASB – Gospel of the Glory of Christ), Ephesians 1:13 (Gospel of your Salvation), Ephesians 6:15 (Gospel of peace), 1 Timothy 1:11 (NASB – Glorious Gospel) and Revelation 14:6 (Everlasting Gospel). The "Everlasting Gospel" is forgiveness of sin to everlasting life. When the verse says "give glory to God", everyone will do it by love or force (Philippians 2:9-11 – "so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth").

The whole world will hear this angel's message. To everyone or to all who dwell on Earth refers to Non-believers (see Revelation 3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8, 13:12, 13:14, 17:2 and 17:8). Matthew 24:14 says "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." The Matthew 24:14 prophecy is fulfilled by Revelation 14:6. The phrase "The hour of His judgment has come," means that this is it, this is the final chance to chose Christ. Up to this point the word wrath has been used. This is the first time the word judgment is used in Revelation.

14:8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

This angel has no good news, only bad news. This shows that the message of the first angel was mostly ignored or rejected. Babylon here can refer to 3 things, political system, religious system or a literal city. Babylon is south of Bagdad, Iraq on a current map. Because of the beast's apparent unlimited power, this will be completely inconceivable to the inhabitants of the Earth. Babylon was established by Nimrod and is where the Tower of Babel was built. The work "passion" in Greek is "thumos" and means strong lust and desires. The adultery here though is spiritual. It is idolatry.

Doom for Worshipers of the Beast

14:9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."

This makes three different angels in the past four verses. The people who receive the mark of the beast will do it fully knowing what they are doing. The deceived followers will be surprised that

they chose the wrong path or leader. To drink the cup of the wine means to receive God's full wrath. We learn that the wrath will be poured out on nonbelievers. Job 21:20 says they will see their destruction. Psalm 75:8 says they will be forced to drink and get drunk. Isaiah 51:17 says they will drink until they are drunk. Isaiah 51:22 says the saved will not drink. Jeremiah 25:15 says the unsaved will be forced to drink. We learn that this cup of wrath means that there is no mercy or compassion. The vengeance of God is complete showing no quarter. Romans 12:19 says *"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but [a]leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."* The word "Tormented" is a present tense verb and means a ceaseless infliction of unbearable pain. Jesus tried to avoid taking this cup but took it anyway in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:39) Those sent to this place are alive. See Revelation 19:20 The word "death" in Revelation 21:8 means spiritual separation from God. This doesn't mean that they are out of God's presence. We are never out of God's presence. See Psalm 139:7-8. They are aware of where they are and what is happening.

14:11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

This place is never ending punishment. The following verses all say that it is permanent, Isaiah 66:24, Daniel 12:2, Matthew 3:12 (NLT best), 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 18:8, Matthew 25:41, Mark 9:43 and Mark 9:48. The phrase "forever and ever" translates as the ages of ages.

14:12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

The one description of what Heaven will be like in these verses is a place of rest. We "earn" that eternal rest through perseverance under trial and James 1:12 says *"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* Luke 8:17 says *"For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light."* This tells us that God will help us to know our unseen because He knows all and sees all. We can know that Heaven and Hell are alike in that they are both everlasting/eternal. (See John 3:16, 36, John 5:25 and 1 John 2:25) Sayings like "blessed are those who die in the Lord" and "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His loved ones", tell that we are blessed and precious because we are finally home. The ones who die in the Lord are all the saved. The Holy Spirit affirms these verses and puts an exclamation point on them. Verse 14:13 shows us that it is a voice, the trinity is one.

The Reapers

14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Luke 19:10 says that Jesus came the first time to seek and to save. Jesus comes a second time to judge the living and the dead. (2 Timothy 4:1) Jesus described this time in Revelation chapter 14 as a calamity with anguish and a shortened time. He called it a Great tribulation. If He didn't shorten it, the Earth would be destroyed. The first person in the New Testament to describe this time in Revelation 14 was John the Baptist. (See Matthew 3:7) This wrath is directed against the

unrepentant or unbelievers. Remember the golden bowl. The prayers of the saints came before God. ½ hour of silence. Then God's wrath was thrown to Earth. God brings His wrath to Earth here instead of simply wiping everyone out because of the way the world has treated His people (believers) (See 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7). Peter describes Revelation 14 in 2 Peter 3:7 as God stores up fire for this day. He will be judging with fire. Prophet Joel uses similar words to describe these very events in Joel 3:12-13. He says *"Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great."* He uses the words winepress, sickle and harvest. The valley of Jehoshaphat is the Jezreel valley or Megiddo.

Early in His ministry Jesus gave details, using the same imagery as shown here, about Revelation 14:14-20 using the parable of the weeds and tares in Matthew 13:39-43. These three verses, 14-16 give three points, the reaper, the ripeness and reaping. The first thing that catches John's attention here and Daniel's in Daniel 7:13 was that He was sitting on a cloud. John describes this as the Son of Man. We know this was Jesus because numerous other times in the Bible Jesus describes Himself as the Son of Man. See Matthew 9:6, 24:27, 24:30, Mark 8:31, 9:9, Luke 6:22, 7:34, 9:22, 12:8, John 5:27, 6:62 and 8:28. Jesus is referring to Himself as the Son of Man. This is the last time Scripture refers thus to Christ. If we contrast the first time this phrase is used in Matthew 8:20 with the last time it is used here in Revelation 14:14-16 we see that in Matthew He owns nothing but in Revelation, He has everything.

This crown is not the 'diadema' crown, worn by kings, but rather the 'stephanos' crown worn by conquerors. It is the crown of triumph. The same Greek word is used in the following verses. Believers will wear this crown. See 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Corinthians 9:25, James 1 :12 and 1 Peter 5:4. At this juncture, Jesus is not coming as the savior but as the triumphant conqueror. This is now the 4th angel mentioned in chapter 14. This angel is different from the first three angels proclaim (verses 6,8,9) but this one sends judgment. These verses in Revelation 14 are the fulfillment of prophecy in John 5 and Acts because they say that Jesus is given authority to judge. See John 5:22, 27, Acts 10:42 and Acts 17:31. The verb "ripe" actually translates as withered, dried up or rotten and shows that it has passed the point of value or usefulness. Chapter 14 of Revelation is the same as chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. (Genesis 1 :27 and 2:7 / Revelation chapter 14 and Revelation 16:1) Think about this. . .

14:17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

This verse gives us the 5th angel in chapter 14 showing the angel working hand in hand to carry out God's judgment. This angel comes from the temple. We find out what angels do in Revelation. In Revelation 16:1, they announce the bowl judgments. In Revelation 19:17, they call the birds for the battle of Armageddon. In Revelation 20:1-3, they bound Satan and threw him in the pit. Also in the Bible, in Matthew 13:39, angels harvest, in Matthew 13:49, they separate the wicked from the righteous and in 2 Thessalonians 1:7, angels return with Jesus at His 2nd Coming.

14:18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

This is now the 6th angel. This angel comes from the Altar. This angel is sent in response to the Martyrs. The altar is in the presence of God. We are introduced to this angel in Revelation 8:5. He appears to be in charge of fire. He appears to be in charge of the incense which is the prayers of the

saints. (Revelation 5:8 and Revelation 8:3-4). Revelation 5:8 says that the elders had the bowls filled with the prayers and the incense. But they are not in charge of them. This angel is because the elders gave the bowls to this angel. (see Revelation 8:3) These prayers come up to God two times a day. So does God only hear our prayers in the morning and the evening? He hears all of our prayers, regardless of when we pray. See Matthew 27:51. When Jesus died the veil to the Holy of Holies was torn in two which gives us full access to God anytime. The previous word for ripe as we learned last week meant rotten, good for nothing. The word for ripe here however is 'akmazo' and means at their prime. This angel brings about the conclusion of the ability to accept Christ. See verse 4:9-11. Time has run out. We see angels are with Jesus as judgment is being carried out. This verse was the inspiration for one of our greatest patriotic songs, "the Battle Hymn of the Republic". The clusters of grapes are nonbelievers. The clusters of grapes are stuck in the winepress of God's wrath. In the following verses the vine is Israel/Jesus. Psalm 80:8, 14-15, Isaiah 5:7, Jeremiah 2:21 and Hosea 10:1. John 15:4-5 says that the vine is Jesus and that believers have been grafted into the vine of Israel. Believers and church attenders look the same but they will be separated at this the final harvest here in Revelation.

14:19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles for a distance of two hundred miles.

These verses are a preview of Revelation chapter 19. The angel cuts the grapes from the vine, but God takes their lives. Blood is the grape juice being squeezed out. Read Isaiah 63:1-6. Jesus is the "I" speaking of in these verses. The following verses are describing Armageddon, Joel 13:13-14 and Revelation 16:16. This battle takes place outside Jerusalem, we know this because verse 20 says it is "outside the city". Megiddo is about 60 miles North of Jerusalem and was called a perfect place for a war. He said that all of the armies of the world would fit on this valley. Armageddon will not be a battle but rather a slaughter. The battlefield is 200 miles long. The blood will be literally up to a horses bridle. (4 feet deep). It will not merely just splash to that height.